

**PROMISE OF ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND THE
POSSIBILITIES OF LIVELIHOOD EXPANSION
THROUGH MICROENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter, I provided a historical overview of the body of literature (and its epistemological and ontological influences) which has been preoccupied with Jamaica's experiences with non-indigenous technology for development. This chapter now provides an overview of the current global discourses on another type of technology now being promoted as a development tool – information and communication technology (ICT). Such discourses have epistemologically and ontologically influenced ways of acting, organizing, representing and being in Jamaica where development is concerned today.

In addition to providing an overview of the current global dominant discourses on ICT for development, I also outline those discourses specific to information and communication technologies for livelihood expansion through microenterprise development (ICTLEMD), a genre of the dominant ICT for development discourse. I will highlight and draw attention to both the dominant and alternative discourses on ICT for development. These alternatives, I argue, have several implications for existing ways of thinking about ICT for development generally and specifically in terms of ICTLEMD as well as ICT for livelihood expansion through microenterprise development in the tourism industry (ICTLEMD-T). The principal aim of this chapter is to introduce the key epistemological and ontological elements which have influenced how I have interpreted the data collected for this research.

3.2. THE LEAD SINGERS: INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSES OF ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT

3.2.1. ICT for Development

Contemporary discourses on non-indigenous technology for development (non-indigenous to many Third-World countries that is) focus attention on the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Such a discourse and the associated technologies behind the discourse, have emerged in an era that has seen rapid shifts on a global scale in the way in which information is shared, the productive processes are enacted and how people communicate. Arguably, this may very well be constructed as the fourth period of major technological transformations (Chapter 2 discusses the first three periods).

This discourse emerges from a series of World Bank empirical and theoretical work on the use and implications of ICTs in the developing world during the early to mid 1990s (See for example Hanna, 1991, 1993 and 1996). The discourse was popularized by scholarly texts such as Mansell and Wehn's (1998) *Knowledge Societies: Information Technology for Sustainable Development*. It was put on the development agenda by many different forces. These include policy texts such as the World Bank's 1998 *World Development Report* titled 'Knowledge for Development' as well as UNDP's 2001 *Human Development Report* titled 'Making new technologies work for human development'. Projects to popularize ICTs as a development tool also include events such as the 1997 Global Knowledge Partnership Conference in Canada, the 2000 Global Knowledge Partnership Conference II in Malaysia, and the 2002 Global Knowledge Partnership Conference III in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Such popularization projects continues today with the World Summit on the Information Society. In addition to this, it has also included the formation of institutions such as the DOT-Force which was created in 2000 and the UN-ICT Task Force created in 2001 as well as policy actions such as those outlined in the UN's Millennium Development Goals (UNDP, 2006). Many of these policy actions have been put into practice by international development agencies, governmental organizations and civil society bodies with the implementation of ICT for development initiatives in many developing countries around the world and there are several articles on the digital

gateway community of the World Bank's Development Gateway website under the key word MDG.

As mentioned above, there are many other different bodies (scholarly and policy texts, development agencies, governments, and so on) that promote the use of ICTs for development. In this section however I will focus on three of these bodies – all development agencies – whose discourses I believe best represents (and has significantly influenced) the ICT for development phenomena. These bodies are the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). These organizations have helped to shape ways of acting, organizing and representing development as well as ways of thinking about being developed in many countries around the world.

3.2.1.1. The World Bank

One of the key architects of this discourse is the World Bank, an institution which many have labelled neoliberal, based on its role in the implementation of several structural adjustment initiatives around the world and links with the United States of America (the nation which stands out as the uncontested quintessential neoliberal advocate, and a veteran in the development business) promotes the idea that ICT provides developing countries with access to vast amounts of knowledge from the industrialized world (World Bank, 1998a). This knowledge, propounded as doctrine, provides the poor and underprivileged peoples of the developing world with what is claimed to be the capacity to access international markets, world-wide databases, financial information and critical development information on subjects such as nutrition, investment, services, products, weather patterns, fertilizers and new technologies (all of which are critical to the development process). According to the World Bank, with the use of ICTs, poor and underprivileged people in the developing world should and ought to improve their livelihoods. This process (providing the poor and underprivileged of the developing world with access to the knowledge of the industrialized world), the institution suggests, should and ought to have an even wider impact on the development processes of poor countries.

The rationale behind the World Bank's assumptions is that by providing developing countries with access to 'quality knowledge' is that many people in these countries, particularly the poor, lack the knowledge needed to achieve development. According to the Bank "poor countries — and poor people — differ from rich ones not only because they have less capital but because they have less knowledge" (World Bank, 1998a: p. 1). This lack of knowledge causes markets to collapse and children to die of diarrhoea (p. 1). Knowledge is often "costly to create, and that is why much of it is created in industrial countries. But developing countries can acquire knowledge overseas" (World Bank, 1998a: p. 4). The Bank further states:

KNOWLEDGE IS LIKE LIGHT. Weightless and intangible, it can easily travel the world, enlightening the lives of people everywhere. Yet billions of people still live in the darkness of poverty — unnecessarily. Knowledge about how to treat such a simple ailment as diarrhoea has existed for centuries — but millions of children continue to die from it because their parents do not know how to save them (World Bank, 1998a: p. 4).

Based on this statement the people of the developing world seem to be living in darkness (without knowledge – despite hundreds of World Bank Policies in the past). To obtain light or knowledge these people will need to use the ICTs to transfer knowledge/light from the industrial world (which seems to have it in abundance) of the information needed to develop this knowledge. Additionally, it must be noted that the technologies which are usually promoted as those which can 'capture the light' are those which are owned, patented and regulated by corporations in the industrialized world – foreign technologies¹⁵. I will address the implications of such a discourse further in this chapter and in depth further in this thesis.

According to Valden, (2002a), this belief, this model of knowledge for development and the use of ICTs to acquire 'light' promoted by the World Bank (a model which has now preoccupied development thinking) originated from corporate experiences of Knowledge Management (KM) in the industrialized world. According to Valden (2002a), it is an "organizational management tool

¹⁵ These institutions promote the use of Foreign Technologies such as Microsoft Windows (the Microsoft Corp) Dell Latitude (Dell Corp), Nokia 3100 (Nokia Corp) and so on.

which has been successfully used by the Bank itself, other international organizations and corporations and, based on its successful use in these agencies, it was thus deemed appropriate as a development tool by the Bank” (Valden 2002a p. 2). It must, however, be noted here that this is a model which is based on the presence of several processes and structures regarding ways of acting and organizing in the corporate world of these industrialized countries such as communicating and interacting between and among, subjects, objects and processes through various ICTs.

The Bank, I am sure, is aware of this given that its:

concern with the connections between knowledge, development and ICTs is not altogether new. Some 30 years ago, key protagonists of the Modernization school focused their attention on the connections between knowledge, communication and development (Schech, 2002: p. 14).

Thus, this new discourse of the World Bank in reality merely represents a repackaging of its philosophy and ideas – old wine (to some extent¹⁶) in a new bottle – which may have been resuscitated by corporate experiences of Knowledge Management or perhaps brought to the forefront of the World Bank’s policy agenda after decades of work on ICT for development by the World Bank staff such as Hanna (1991, 1994, 1995, 1996). As well as being, hypothetically speaking, influenced by ICT TNCs. Certainly, a genealogy of the Bank’s experiences with ICT for development may unlock the real truth, agency and agenda behind the ICT for development explosion. This is indeed necessary and will be part of my post-doctoral work.

3.2.1.2. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), another architect of the current ICT for development drive since 1992 (UNDP, 2002d) and a development

¹⁶ I say ‘to some extent’ because whereas the Rostowian Modernization model, which was adopted by many Third World countries including Jamaica during the post World War 2 era, had elements of a state led policy, the current approach has seen international development agencies and non-government agencies taking the lead. More recently, however, in some countries, power has slowly been transferred to the government. Jamaica is a good case. The government of Jamaica has, for example, developed the Central Information Technology Office, a government agency seeking to regulate and coordinate ICT for development activities.

agency which is considered the leading and most influential development arm of the UN, promotes the notion that ICTs have the potential to create jobs, improve access to basic services for development, increase the effectiveness of governments and facilitate the sharing of information with people, especially the poor and women, living in even remote parts of developing countries (UNDP, 2001a). The development agency represents ICTs as a “basic component of development, not a luxury” (UNDP, 2001a:p. 12). In other words, it is something that developing countries must have and, cannot live without.

In their 2001 Human Development Report which focuses on ICT for development, this arm of the United Nations suggests:

Technological innovation is essential for human progress...people can use technology to eradicate poverty. These breakthroughs are creating new possibilities for improving health and nutrition, expanding knowledge, stimulating economic growth and empowering people to participate in their communities....They are also altering how — and by whom — technology is created and owned, and how it is made accessible and used. A new map of innovation and diffusion is appearing. Technology growth hubs — centres that bring together research institutes, business start-ups and venture capital — are dotted across the globe, from Silicon Valley (United States) to Bangalore (India) to El Ghazala (Tunisia), linked through technology development networks. But these new networks and opportunities are superimposed on another map that reflects a long history of unevenly diffused technology, both among and within countries. No individual, organization, business or government can ignore these changes. The new terrain requires shifts in public policy — national and global — to harness today’s technological transformations as tools for human development (UNDP, 2001a: p. 27).

In the report UNDP had declared that ICT was indispensable in the development of the developing world and thus urged every country, especially poorer countries, to include ICTs in their national development policy agenda (Ojo, 2004: p. 141). In another publication, UNDP suggests that ICTs allow “leapfrogging, which means that in their development, countries and societies can leap across several generations and stages of technology, introducing and applying directly state-of-the-art technologies. Previously, such a process took several years, if not decades” (UNDP, 2001b: 4). Indeed, it may be argued that such a metaphor situates the approach of UNDP within the Modernization Theory or at least promotes what

Schech (2002) refers to as “the continuity of modernization thinking” (Schech, 2002: p. 13). It may thus be constructed as another ‘catch-up’ approach to development.

3.2.1.3. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), yet another one of the many architects of the current ICT for development drive and an organization which has funded several non-indigenous technology-for-development projects in the last four decades (based on the contents of its Website), follows a similar line of argument. According to this development agency (and using the tourism industry as an example):

Globalization and new information and communication technology (ICT) are radically transforming the tourist industry. The demonopolization of information flows and the disintermediation brought about by growing Internet use mean that developing countries can now make the most of their tourism resources by targeting the potential tourist directly. Well used, ICT can make these countries more self-sufficient in constructing their own brand images and promoting their own tourist attractions and, by involving all concerned, can also reduce the usual capital flight. Developing countries can thus maximize their comparative advantage in this sector, adjust their tourism services to suit their own development strategies and become better integrated in the world economy. This potential rebalancing of the international tourism system is today becoming necessary as more and more tourists make use of the Internet.

The tourist industry is heterogeneous and fragmented. It involves many different players, both private and public, and draws on the widest possible range of cross-cutting skills. As in developed countries, cooperation mechanisms and public and private partnerships centered on ICT need to be established in order to enable new product ranges to be developed and make it easier to promote them on new markets. The question which now needs to be addressed is how to use local, national, sub-regional and global partnerships and alliances to maximize the benefits offered by the ICT medium ... The aim of the tool, the country platform, is to help countries to identify, standardize, coordinate and propose tourism and craft services in response to varying world demand.

ICT is one of the most effective ways of doing this, as it enables developing countries to take charge of their own tourist advertising, generate revenue for the local economy and remain competitive. Bridging the digital divide brings additional freedom and greater

autonomy to the destination countries. These countries can partially free themselves from "the tyranny of the transaction" ..., create their own tourist "brands" and promote their images according to their own national strategies. This would be in addition to existing systems for promoting tourism, while incorporating more of the local players who may be shut out of traditional packages. (UNCTAD, 2004a: p. 1).

Like UNCTAD, several other development agencies have also sought to illustrate how ICT can be used as a tool to address other sectoral problems which many developing countries face today. Some of these agencies include: the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (Anderson, 1999); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Jensen, and Esterhuysen, 2001); International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) (a newly created development assistance organization which focuses primarily on ICT for development) (IICD, 2005); the British Department for International Development (DFID) (KPMG, 2000); the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (Kenney, and Hendi, 2000) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2005). And, some of these sectors include mining, agriculture, culture, education, governance and so on.

The next section will illustrate how and in what way these discourses (ICT for development) have influenced social practices in the developing world.

3.2.2. Social Practices and Empirical Research

Discourses on ICT for development are not merely rhetoric. In the last seven years, various bodies in many developing countries have bought into this technocentric and technological determinist approach to development. For example, a review of various policy documents reveal that many governments of the developing world have incorporated various ICT for development related projects in various aspects of their national planning agendas (UNDP, 2001b, 2002a; See also OECD, 2003 which provides an overview of hundreds of such initiatives).

In addition to ICT for development projects being undertaken in developing countries, there have also seen a number of 'empirical' studies undertaken in the developing world to ascertain the implications of these ICT initiatives. Some of

these studies have included: the use of ICT to address poverty in Bangladesh (Ahmed, 1998; Muller-Flacke, 1998; Bayes, Braun, and Akhter, 1999; Lawson and Meyenn, 2000); in Trinidad (Miller, and Slater, 2000) and other parts of the Caribbean (Chambers, and Boissiere, 1995); Colombia, (Mansell and Wehn, 1998), and other parts of Latin America (Proenza, 2002; O'Farrell, Norrish, and Scott, 1999); remote sections of the Middle-East (Hazan, 2002); in parts of China (Baark and Heeks, 1998); in South Africa (Benjamin, 2000), Botswana (Duncombe and Heeks, 2001c, 2002), Kenya (Moyi, 2003; Kibati, 1999), Ethiopia and Zimbabwe (Boer and Walbeek, 1998) and various other spaces in Africa (Barlow, 1998, Benjamin, 2000; Lefebvre and Lefebvre, 1996)

Many of these research projects have been funded by several of the aforementioned international organizations. Not surprisingly, the conclusions of a large number of these studies are indeed similar to the institutional discourses on ICT for development – that ICTs have the potential to lower transaction costs, enhance differentiation and change competitive scope; enhance democracy, improve environment conditions, improve health and education access, increase the productivity and performance of enterprises, allow them to participate in regional and global markets, reduce information costs and increase information quality. Such accounts specifically assert that ICT for development policies are particularly helpful to the poor and disadvantaged in the developing world. One area which has generated a great deal of excitement among policy makers and intellectuals has been the use of ICTs in the microenterprise industry of the developing world – ICT for livelihood expansion through microenterprise development (ICTLEMD) (O'Farrell, Norrish, and Scott, 1999; Muller-Flacke, 1998; Duncombe and Heeks, 2001c, 2002; Bayes, Braun, and Akhter, 1999; Lawson and Meyenn, 2000; Lefebvre and Lefebvre, 1996; Barton and Bear, 1999).

3.3. ICT FOR LIVELIHOOD EXPANSION THROUGH MICROENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (ICTLEMD)

3.3.1. The microenterprise industry and its significance for developing countries.

The importance of the microenterprise sector to the development processes of developing countries is thoroughly documented in the international development literature and has been acknowledged in all spheres of academia (See in Sebstad, Neill, Barnes, and Chen, 1995; Duncombe and Heeks, 2001a, 2001c, 2002; Honig, 1998; Mead, 1994, 1999). There is growing evidence of a significant causal relationship between entrepreneurship, economic growth and poverty reduction as well as livelihood expansion (Bridges.org, 2001). In Jamaica, for example, the microenterprise industry has been labelled an indispensable component of the economy (Witter and Kirton, 1990; Chen Young and Associates, 1994; PIOJ, 2000-2004) and microenterprise entrepreneurs have significantly contributed to the country's Gross Domestic Product and job creation annually (PIOJ, 2000-2004).

The microenterprise sector in the developing world contributes to the development of new and innovative techniques necessary for the evolution of a country's business processes and to the net generation of new businesses (Mead and Liedholm, 1998). For developing countries, the social gains from this sector ranging from poverty reduction, empowerment, and skill enhancement to the encouragement of community-based organizations such as co-operatives. It is for these reasons that this sector is viewed as indispensable to the overall progress of a developing country (Duncombe and Heeks, 2001a, 2001b, 2002; Dutta and Evrad, 1999; Government of Jamaica, 1997).

3.3.2. The Microenterprise Problematic and ICTs as a solution

According to the literature reviewed, microenterprise entrepreneurs in many developing countries, especially those living on or below the poverty line, face a panoply of social, economic and political problems and challenges inhibiting their capacity to achieve full potential (UNDP, 2001b; UNDP, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c; UNCTAD, 2001a-2003a; d'Orville, 2000; Moyi, 2004; Muller-Falcke, 1998; Duncombe and Heeks, 2001, 2002; O'Farrell, Norrish, and Scott, 1999; UNCTAD, 2001a-2004a; Barton and Bear, 1999; Biggs, Goussard, Constance and Bytheway, 2000; Mansell, 1999). For example, according to Muller-Flacke (1998), in many developing countries "product markets are small, access to manufactured inputs is limited, human capital is scarce, infrastructure is poor, financial markets are thin, macro volatility is high, the legal system functions

poorly” (Muller-Flacke 1998: p.18). In addition to this, it has also been argued that they are inhibited by restricted and unreliable access to information and communications services/networks; highly informal structures; poor communication skills and channels, ineffective business ethics and processes, little or no computer literacy; poor business skills, especially inadequate record keeping including financial recording; poverty and major transportation woes (Moyi, 2004; Duncombe and Heeks 2002; UNCTAD, 2001b-2004b; UNCTAD, 2001a-2004a).

In Jamaica, microenterprise entrepreneurs living close to, on or below the poverty line lack access to the many resources (financial, technical support, information and technological) needed to execute livelihood development. A large number of these entrepreneurs are illiterate and operate in the informal economy – the grey or black economy (Witter, and Kirton, 1990; Allen, 1993; McBain, Alleyne, Boodraj, and Hextall, 1994). This inhibits their access to various resources needed for microenterprise development (Katzin, 1959; Witter and Kirton, 1990). This is especially so in cases where legal documents such as tax numbers and business certificates are required (PIOJ, 1997-2001; McFarlane, 1997; IDB, 1997; Roberts, 2000; McFarlane, 1997; Honig, 1998; Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 1990, Davies, Fisseha, and Kirton, 1981; Anderson, 1992). These entrepreneurs are at a distinct disadvantage when compared to their formalized small to large enterprise counterparts or even the formalized elites and middle income microenterprise.

Recent global discourses on ICT for livelihood development have reduced the aforementioned problems and challenges which microenterprise entrepreneurs in developing countries such as Jamaica today face to a problem of ‘lack of information and knowledge’ and the absence of ways to acquire this information and knowledge. ICTs have been identified as one way of doing so.

According to one UNDP text:

ICT enables solution sharing between local people and communities, providing access to practical information on small business accounting, weather trends and farming best practices, for example. Timely access to market information via communications networks also helps farmers make astute decisions about what crops to plant and where to sell their produce and buy inputs. In

Chile, for example, an Internet network among farmer organizations has dramatically increased farmers' incomes by providing information about crop status, weather, global market prices and training. ICT is also providing unprecedented access to rural finance. The financial and information service network provided by Pride Africa offers micro-finance opportunities for local people and small enterprises that previously had no access to flexible financing due to rigid banking regulations and the information monopolies of government and large businesses (UNDP, 2001b: p. 17).

From this it can be inferred that ICT enhances the efficiency and competitiveness of enterprises especially those at the micro end, giving them the opportunity to compete even against their large counterparts (See also UNDP, 2001b). ICT allows these microenterprise entrepreneurs to compete as vendors in the global marketplace and to interact with global consumers at greatly reduced costs (UNCTAD, 2002a). This, in turn, enables them to generate income and increase earnings. Ostensibly, this has wider implications for poverty reduction and job creation, and thus an even wider implication for development in these countries. On the UNDP's ICT4D Social Enterprise toolkit website (UNDP, 2005), which they claim is a source of information for many groups, institutions and organizations in the developing world seeking answers to how to effectively enact ICTs to achieve enterprise development, the organization states that:

Enterprise development in developing countries requires adoption of ICTs by SME. Duncombe and Heeks conducted a study for DFID and found the most direct benefit (employment, growth and local capacity) within the ICT sector itself. Raising local ICT-sector capacity was identified as a key enabler for other sectors - government, private and NGOs - particularly those concerned with regard to implementing ICTs within wider poverty alleviation programmes - in health, education, environment, and governance (UNDP, 2005: p. 2).

There are several models which various UN institutions have proposed for achieving these goals (UNDP, 2005; UNCTAD, 2001-2004, SDNP, 1999). The most common of these models include the use of such technologies to build awareness about ICTs, providing access to ICTs, training people to use ICTs, encouraging developing countries to provide outsourcing services and promoting the use of ICTs in the electronic trade of goods and services. Each model has its own set assumptions about ICT for development which is linked to the general approach to ICT for development discussed above.

3.3.3. The Structural Problematic affecting Microenterprise Entrepreneurs

Those who promote the use of ICTs to achieve livelihood development highlight and draw attention to ‘structural problems’ – the resources and rules - which they represent as factors which usually undermine the use of ICTs to foster development (inclusive of inhibiting the poor from achieving livelihood development). These structural problems include: the affordability of ICTs (Mansell and Wehn, 1998; Hazan, 2002), lack of awareness about ICTs (Owen and Darkwa, 1999), access to ICTs (Duncombe and Heeks, 2001; Moyi, 2003), operational consideration of ICTs (Baark and Heeks, 1998), poor infrastructure to support ICTs (Latchem and Walker, 2001; O’Farrell, Norrish, and Scott, 1999; Barton and Bear, 1999), the technical knowledge/skills to use ICTs (Duncombe and Heeks, 1999a, 2001a, 2002), the lack of political will to implement ICT initiatives (Proenza, 2002) and the lack of management capacity and technical support from the private sector and government to regulate ICTs (Lefebvre and Lefebvre, 1996). Research specific to the implications of ICTs on microenterprise entrepreneurs in the tourism industry in the Townships of Cape Town in South Africa also promote this structural discourse (see for example Biggs, Goussard, Constance and Bytheway, 2000). In analyzing ICTLEMD these structural problems have been the main units of analysis. And, although this has become the norm in all spaces of ICT for development, there are alternative strategies. One alternative has been the focus on ‘discourse’ (for reasons discussed in Chapter 1).

3.4. ALTERNATIVES TO THE DOMINANT DISCOURSE ON ICTs FOR DEVELOPMENT

3.4.1. Alternative Discourses on ICT – The Issue of Representations

In her essay "The Link between ICT and Economic Growth in the Discourse of Development", Avgerou (2003) is critical of the way in which ICTs are marketed as a development panacea. In her analysis of the ICT for development discourse, Avgerou (2003) suggests that “there is hardly any evidence to date that delivers its promised results” of development (p. 385). She further states that:

The argument does not suggest that ICT is inappropriate for developing countries, but it does indicate the misguided nature of the universalist visions of economic and institutional development

that currently accompany efforts to promote the diffusion of the technology. These visions frustrate efforts to make sense of locally meaningful ways of accommodating ICTs in socio-economic activities. They prescribe what ICT is used for and restrict the scope for improvisation that is necessary for making technology a trusted actor amidst the negotiations which bring about effective course of action for change industry of government (Avgerou, 2003: p. 384).

Here, Avgerou (2003) is preoccupied not only with the structural problematic ICT for development but also with how these technologies are represented, that is, the discourse surrounding these technologies which structure and are structured by their application and implementation in development contexts.

There are indeed several other scholars who share a similar concern. Some of these include Valden, (2001a), Wilks, (2002), Thompson, (2004), and Wade, (2002). It is this body of literature which I draw on to help in my analysis and interpretation of the data collected. Emerging from such a concern are issues such as how and in what way the ICTLEMD by the World Bank, UNDP and UNCTAD influences or are influenced by hegemonic relations of control and power, how these representations preserve, are preserved by or destroy the status quo and the processes involved in them, and who or what (processes, objects, subjects, events, phenomenon) are foregrounded, backgrounded, marginalization, demonized, mystified, de-mystified, normalized/naturalized and camouflaged in these discourses and why as well as the configuration and implications of such discursive strategies.

Although those occupying this space have primarily been preoccupied with ICT for development generally and the governance structures of ICTs specifically and not particularly with ICTLEMD issues or for that matter tourism related issues, and, although much of what has been produced by them is based on secondary data and may not be considered by many, especially positivists, to be empirically sound, there is indeed much that can be learned from this alternative if not more holistic and empowering approach to studying ICT for development.

This learning process begins with the presentation of the work of Valden (2001a). Valden (2001a) suggests that the ICT for development drive is controlled by

dominant neoliberal groups who regulate knowledge and monitor information through the use of surveillance technologies. Using the World Bank as an example of one of these neoliberal groups, he suggests that this organization (the World Bank) has represented itself as a global knowledge bank. This has been accomplished with the establishment of websites such as the Development Gateway (a website that many would consider to be a powerhouse of information regarding best practices in ICT for development) and bodies such as the Global Knowledge Partners (an institution which many would believe to be an authority on ICT for development issues based on its membership of well-regarded professionals in the field of ICT for development).

According to Valden (2001a) through these bodies, the Bank has effectively represented ICTs as a tool to access development knowledge from the industrialized world. This has been a discourse which many have bought into, or for that matter tried or encouraged to fit into, out of ignorance about ICTs, about development and about ICT for development. For Valden (2001a), there is indeed a danger in this power over discourse which the World Bank now possesses, given the Bank's history and alleged role in the implementation of neoliberal policies of external domination that hurt the poor (Harrigan, Mosley and Toye, 1991) and led to the underdevelopment of the 'third world' (albeit heavily contested)¹⁷. Valden (2001a) has highlighted a legitimate fear that the institution has positioned itself as the centre of knowledge in a time where knowledge has become synonymous with power. The institution thus has power over development discourses. According to Schech (2002), however, (who is concerned with connecting notions of knowledge [modernization type discourses] and power [dependency type discourses] in the ICT for development discourse), "the World Bank's conceptualization of knowledge can be criticized for ignoring its political dimension, presenting it instead as a public good that is essentially innocent of power, but at the same time enabling" (p. 20) This control over discourse, Schech, (2002) contends, can mean that the institution is positioned to represent one

¹⁷ It is often argued by many scholars in or of the developing world that the Bank, through its structural adjustment policies, influenced several poor countries to implement policy initiatives which served the ends of U.S. TNCs at the expense of their own populations [see also Joseph Stiglitz' insider view (Stiglitz 2003)]. The consequences of the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) intellectuals argue, have been high rates of unemployment, inequality and poverty as well as indebtedness, among many developing countries such as Jamaica. (Anderson and Witter, 1994).

position, or one group and not another, while at the same time foregrounding its knowledge, disqualifying other kinds of knowledge, and constructing development, development problems and those who they believe to be in need of development. In other words, it has the power to exclude and marginalize competing social practices, discourses, social actors and their knowledge. Schech (2002) further suggests that:

...the World Bank's self appointment as the manager of the creation, transfer, and management of knowledge...can be interpreted as another step in establishing the hegemony of Western knowledge, into which the profitable aspects of non-Western indigenous knowledge have been incorporated. It continues the dominant trend in development studies to construct the West as holding the key to the development of the South – first capital and technology, now ideas and knowledge. At the same time, the recipe of development through knowledge delivered through new ICTs sits comfortably with a long tradition in Western thought that seeks the solution of the world's ills, and ultimately, salvation, in technological breakthroughs (p. 19).

Valden's (2002) work has suggested that this is already a reality. According to him, the Bank has "framed poverty as a lack of knowledge, positioned its poverty alleviation objectives in an analysis of the knowledge economy and introduced the development sector to the corporate approach to managing and sharing knowledge" (Valden, 2002: p. 1). This corporate approach to managing and sharing knowledge is the knowledge of the industrial world. Other knowledge, such as the knowledge of the developing world, the knowledge of other ways of achieving development, has been effectively marginalized on a global scale. Valden (2002) explains how this is possible:

...neutral knowledge does not exist. As shown in Foucault (1972), knowledge accepted in society is the result of a negotiation of the intertwined relationships embedded in power and knowledge. Therefore, the new development paradigm is likely to be shaped by the institutions and experts positioned to exert the greatest influence and control. It is their knowledge and their understanding of the role of knowledge in development that informs the new development discourse (2002: p. 3).

In other words, those who are perceived as powerful and knowledgeable (because of their status and use of expert language which often packs a mighty polemical influential punch) are able to manipulate discourse and social practice. The World

Bank is often perceived in this manner. And this has always been the case. And, it may be noted that the discourse of the Bank itself contributes to this perception. For instance, the World Bank is housed in close proximity to the major institutions of US political life in Washington DC, those influencing its policies are likely to represent significant factions within the current dominant political groups in contemporary US orthodoxy on economic theory, international relations and political philosophy. For this reason the World Bank is indeed perceived by many as powerful and knowledgeable, since it is politically and geographically close to those sources that define both power and knowledge.

Valden (2002) has analyzed the discursive structures of the World Bank's Global Development Gateway (GDG). The findings of his analysis indicated that the GDG is used by the World Bank to frame and regulate discourses and social practices in many developing countries globally where ICT for development is concerned. This is accomplished through:

- the establishment of what is valuable ICT for development content as criteria for funding;
- the shaping of LDC's government strategies through representations of what ought and should be important ICT for development policy areas at conferences and forums;
- the standardization of software platforms through collaboration with ICT corporations such as Microsoft as well as the criteria for country gateway websites and
- the type of knowledge to be used in development by setting the agenda for dialogue as well as the terms of reference for agreements.

Valden (2002) contends that organizations and individuals have expressed concerns about the World Bank's new status. According to these critics, many important development issues such as the problems of neoliberalism, dependency and exploitation (and those who support the inclusion of such discourses) have been effectively marginalized by the Bank in its representation of ICT for development. The Bank, Valden suggests, seems to have "a closed attitude" and blinkered approach to development and seem to be operating with a perceived

notion that the Global Development Gateway (GDG) website will “replace existing information on the Web” (Valden, 2002: p. 11). These actions and this ‘project in marginalization’ is seen by Valden (2002) as an indication not only of how the Bank views and represents development and ways of achieving it, but also how it excludes competing discourses.

If this is true then such a position is indeed frightening as there is a certain level of arrogance and ignorance in assuming that the knowledge which the developing world possesses is of little or no worth and incapable of any sort of fecundity. This is certainly an indication of the value placed on the knowledge of the peoples of the developing world generally and the poor in these countries specifically. This should, however, not come as a surprise to the schooled developmentalist, given that the industrialized worlds and their acolytes, in addition to having the capacity for economic, political and military domination, have always exercised hegemony in the control of the whole infrastructure of the production of knowledge (Tucker, 1999). According to Tucker (1999), the “production of knowledge is one of the ways in which the West controls and even creates the Third World politically, economically, sociologically and culturally” (p. 7). Tucker is not alone in such thinking. Sardar (1999), for example, has always maintained that the real power of the West lies not in its great economic development and technological advances but in its power to define (Sardar, 1999: p. 44). Similar arguments have been promoted by Escobar, (1995) who suggests that this philosophy is what has contributed to the marginalization and exclusion of non-Western knowledge systems for years as well as Holtendahl et al, (1999) who have argued that “the reproduction of western hegemony is assured through long established practices of production and dissemination of knowledge” (9. 16). Certainly this represents an extension of such a process.

As stated before, while all this should not be surprising to the keen developmentalist, it is indeed ironic if not surprising that the World Bank's downplaying of the knowledge of the developing world has now become the doctrine and practice of this and other international organizations (see the UNDP's 2001 Human Development Report for example). This is a fundamental contradiction, given that some of these very same organizations, in other spaces

and through other bodies, have attempted to promote the importance of indigenous knowledge as local pathways for global knowledge (World Bank, 1998b, 2004a). Additionally, and possibly most importantly, is that one should not forget that the literature on the significance of the use and utility of indigenous knowledge in development has illustrated the dangers of not recognizing this type of knowledge in the development process (see Brokensha, Warren and Werner, 1980; Michie and Linkson, 1999; Yakuba, 1994).

Certainly, this is not the approach that the Bank takes. Valden's (2001a) analysis of the GDG suggests that the:

...GDG promotes a centralised, large-scale system, based on exclusive technology and governance, to organise a global knowledge flow. This raises concerns about the legitimacy, validity, and diversity of information and knowledge for development. The well funded global and country gateways with their compatible technical, editorial, and content management applications will promote a standardisation of development information and knowledge. Their content management systems will fit only certain types of information and knowledge, produced in certain languages and formats, and in ways that fit the topic taxonomy. The effect will be that development-related information and knowledge will be produced and presented to fit the emerging standard while information and knowledge that cannot be made to fit will disappear from the Gateway's 'radar screen'. This may be especially true for indigenous knowledge that cannot be organised and managed as 'western' knowledge (Valden, 2002: p. 10 - 12).

In other words then, representing development as something which is dependent on the knowledge of the industrialized world can, in many ways, lead to the loss of previous learning concerning ways of achieving development, threaten the diversity of indigenous knowledge and even possibly marginalize if not exclude such knowledge and systems required for development.

Valden concludes that the approach taken by the Bank's Development Gateway "may actually result in the de-legitimization, invalidation and loss of diversity of knowledge relevant to development" (Valden, 2002: p. 16). ICT for development, he suggests, should focus on the process of learning among the peoples of the developing world. They should be taught to manipulate information and knowledge and taught to create their own knowledge to meet their own needs.

Similar concerns were expressed by Wilks (2002) based on his analysis of the World Bank's Global Development Gateway's (GDG's) representation of development through the use of ICTs.

According to Wilks (2002), the Development Gateway "is in fact conceived, designed and operated in a way that systematically excludes certain voices and perspectives" (Wilks, 2002: p. 1). In attempting to validate his arguments he cites a comment by Michael Gurstein, Visiting Professor at the School of Management, New Jersey Institute of Technology, who at that time had stated:

there is, as many have observed, the very real danger (likelihood) of this having the result of crowding out/unfairly competing/defunding all the other "realities" – many of which may be closer to the interests and activities of folks on the ground or in the trenches – the NGO's, the implementers, the communities, the development activists (Gurstein, 2001 cited in Wilks, 2002: p. 4).

Wilks (2002) further suggests that through semantics, the Bank has strategically used specific terms and jargon to structure its themes, topics and focus on the Development Gateway Website to represent development in a manner which directs attention away from many critical issues such as the effects of neoliberalism on developing countries and their populations. Like Valden, he also suggests that this is evidence that the World Bank now has the capacity through its power in and over discourse to define, normalize, mystify or demonize objects, processes, subjects and their value as it sees fit. Thus, there is a distinct possibility that the Bank can reproduce networks of power in support of dominant discourses. This means that it can promote the interests of dominant groups, the exclusion of other groups and the preservation of social structures through the use of ICTs.

The discourses of the World Bank where ICT for development is concerned have also been of interest to Thompson (2004). Thompson uses the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology of Fairclough to examine current development constructions captured in various ICT and development texts of the Bank by analyzing the discursive structures of a World Bank senior personnel's speech. Based on his analysis Thompson (2004) suggests that the ways of talking about and doing development by the Bank where ICTs are concerned act as "both a

medium and the subject of discursive power” (Thompson, 2004: p. 1). He further suggests that the Bank’s representation of ICTs seem to suggest that ICTs:

...work to mediate development discourses at both the micro and macro level. At the macro level, ICT is structurally integrating communities into wider, uneven networks of power. Although usually remaining on the periphery of flows of knowledge and wealth, less developed countries (LDC’s) are nonetheless integrated involuntarily within global networks of capital, production, trade, and communication, increasingly mediated by ICT ... At the micro-level, power relations surrounding the development and use of ICT in development contexts are more ubiquitous (Thompson, 2004: p. 349-350).

Thompson (2004) thus suggests that the way in which the Bank represents the use of ICTs for and in development can indeed foster both global and local inequalities and “replicate a wider discourse of marginalization” (p. 350). Thompson, not unlike Valden, also sees the World Bank’s status in development today as the central nexus of knowledge. This status, he argues, emerged through its self representation as a ‘knowledge bank’ – a repository of knowledge – through its many writings on ICT, knowledge and development, its cadre of ICT for development ‘experts’ and the hundreds of ICT projects it has funded. Thompson’s conclusions are similar to those of Valden and Wilks. According to him, a number of the components of the World Bank’s discourse surrounding ICT and development:

...amount[s] to the creation and systematisation of a set of discursive relations which support and extend a markedly North American worldview. These relations are a fusion of ‘traditional’ developmental discourse – technocratic expertise..., combined with ‘poverty’ as an undisputable need for such expertise... – with more ICT-specific components, such as the assumption of ICT as a neutral force in development..., the display of expertise in the corporate terms with which ICT is often surrounded and discussed..., technological optimism bordering on determinism..., and a show of ICT pragmatic use on the ground, thus ensuring ‘results’...the appropriation and discursive deployment of ICT, with its association with progress and rationality, offers a powerful opportunity to further the interests of technocratic, often ‘mainstream’ stakeholders, acting as a magnifier for dominant discursive interests by creating new ‘subjects’ for objectification (Thompson, 2004: p. 21-22).

Wade (2002), in his analysis of the discourses surrounding the ICT for development space, offers a similar conclusion. According to him, the notion of 'ICT for development' "is like saying cheap books can cure illiteracy". He raises the important point that in reality "giving illiterate people cheap book does not solve illiteracy" and suggesting that ICT for development may just be another in a long line of fads.

For Wade, the current representations of ICTs as a development panacea by international organizations such as the World Bank may even be counterdevelopmental. The Bank, he argues, has in some instances projected cues the demagogic caricature regarding actual outcomes of ICT for development projects by overemphasizing, foregrounding and mystifying some aspects while backgrounding and excluding others. According to Wade, many ICT for development reports of the World Bank lack specificity; they do not provide information regarding the exact configurations of objects, subjects, events, processes and phenomena which are necessary to achieve success or avoid failures. Rather, 'success stories' and representations of leapfrogging are merely generalizations, and blurry ones at that (p. 445). Such omitted information, he contends, can provide insights into what worked or did not work for whom and under what circumstances and conditions.

One of the many examples Wade highlights is "The Networking Revolution: Opportunities and Challenges for Developing Countries - a World Bank policy paper on ICT." According to Wade, this document "talks about plans, intentions, and opportunities provided" through the use of ICTs. This document however "blurs the distinction between these and verified actions on the ground" (p. 446).

Wade further argues that:

Like much of the ICT-for-development literature, it talks about plans and intentions and opportunities provided...It talks about benefits not costs. It makes no comparisons between returns to investments in various types of ICTs and returns to other kinds of investments – in improving crop varieties in tropical Africa, for example. It largely ignores issues of sustainability, such as the financing of recurrent costs of computer servicing and training. And it explains cases of failure, when noted, in ways that protect the assumption that ICT investment is a top priority (p. 446).

Wade's work forces one to question the many representations of achieving development through ICTs offered by the Bank. Many of these representations have been based on so-called best practices and success stories similar to the one mentioned above by Wade. Certainly, in many if not all these reports, there is not much detailed information about what worked or did not work for whom and under what circumstances and conditions. Rather, what is presented are sweeping generalizations that the development of the 'Third World' can only be achieved with the technologies of the 'First World', or following in the footsteps of other developing countries who have attempted to do this.

Heeks (1996), however, is doubtful of this possibility. For example, he questions whether other developing countries can follow in the footsteps of India (a software development success story). According to him, the country's investments in infrastructure and education (something which that country has been doing for decades) have clearly positioned India to take advantage of the digital revolution in terms of software development. Even if it were indeed possible to follow in the footsteps of India (based on existing documentation by various international organizations) this may be problematic given that, and as Wade suggests, the representations about India's successes at absorbing ICTs are very abstract and seem to be exaggerations. They ignore the social and economic history, culture and politics of the country and present only a partial picture of the events on the ground – the positive picture and the opportunities – or as Mills would say the “lyric upsurge ... earnest optimism, out of which we step forward fresh and shining” (Mills, 1959: p. 78). They ignore the many problems which these initiatives have faced.

According to Wade the aforementioned World Bank paper “talks enthusiastically of the ICT programmes in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh”. He cites a text from the World Bank report:

Andhra Pradesh was the first state in India to design a state-wide computerization programme covering all levels of the administrative spectrum from the smallest – Mandal Revenue Offices – to the largest...ICTs have provided opportunities for government to redefine the relationship with citizens by encouraging (1) economies resulting in efficient government, (2) personalized service, (3) equal access to government for all, (4)

speed and responsiveness, and (5) responsible and measurable government (Wade, 2002: p. 446).

Wade critiques the World Bank's representations in suggesting that:

The paper refers only to opportunities intended to be provided. According to my own informal survey of friends who live in Andhra (where I used to live), the changes on the ground are largely confined to (1) easier registration of property transactions, especially land; and (2) easier communication through videoconferencing between government ministers and the government secretariat, on the one hand, and district collectors, on the other – although at a very high cost per minute. All the other programs – such as computerized one-stop Integrated Citizens Service Centers (ICSCs) to handle services such as paying utility bills and property taxes, issuing certificates, issuing permits and licenses, providing information, and facilitating common transactions like changing an address and transferring vehicle ownership – hardly function (Wade, 2002: p. 447).

Wade further states that

Another World Bank ICT-for-development paper reports that an Andhra Pradesh program 'to computerize the issuance of caste certificates essential for obtaining government services and access to educational scholarships, managed to decrease the time for certificate issuance from twenty to thirty days to only ten minutes. My contacts in the capital city of Hyderabad suggested that the real time facing any real applicant is scarcely less time than before' (p. 447)

If Wade's findings are indeed valid, it is an indication of misrepresentations about the possibilities of ICTs (such as its leapfrogging properties) on the part of the World Bank.

Wade further suggests that a similar situation exists with the representations of an ICT for development telecentre initiative in Mexico. He highlights how an 80 per cent failure rate in the project outcomes of this initiative in Mexico was backgrounded in the aforementioned World Bank report to give an indication that leapfrogging was still possible with the right ICTs.

My own research in Jamaica has also revealed that discourse does indeed play an important role in shaping developmental outcomes. This empirical study sought to analyze the discourses surrounding an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for livelihood development initiative in Jamaica, introduced by

the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – the Jamaica Sustainable Development Networking Programme (JSDNP). The primary objective of this initiative is to provide the poor in Jamaican communities with access to, and training in ICTs. In this research, I specifically focused on the discourses surrounding the JSDNP Cybercentre Project for a group of microenterprise entrepreneurs in the Jamaican tourism industry to access the epistemological assumptions of this initiative. Fifteen persons who were involved with the project at various different levels – Project Managers, Policy Developers and Beneficiaries – were interviewed in-depth and Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis Approach was used as the methodology and dominant analytical tool.

At one level, it was found that the discourses surrounding the JSDNP Cybercentre initiative discouraged the indigenization of non-indigenous technologies, represented the achievement of livelihood development through the use of specific commercial technologies while at the same time marginalizing and/or excluding other more democratic (fluid/flexible) local ones. Based on this it was found that it is not only the lack of access, infrastructure, training and ICT-related resources that contribute to the inability or ability of microenterprise entrepreneurs operating in Jamaican tourism sector to use and or benefit from ICTs but also how this access, infrastructure, training and ICT-related resources involved in benefiting from ICTs were represented (the discourses) as well as the particular social practices which were encouraged by these discourses which the social practices themselves encouraged. For example, some entrepreneurs perceived the achievement of livelihood development being dependent on Dell Personal Computers and Internet Connection organized in a particular spatio-temporal configuration based on what they were told by Project Managers and what they had seen at project sites. Other more trans-temporal technologies such as the mobile phone were excluded from the list of livelihood achieving ICTs by those responsible for the management of the Cybercentre Project.

Consequently, and on one hand, these discourses were more favourable to the operational and structural dynamics of microenterprise entrepreneurs whose mode of operation was more spatio-temporal (existed in one place and was structured in a timely manner) and who could afford and access these particular configurations

of technologies which were represented as necessary for the achievement of livelihood expansion. On the other hand however, it was also found that the discourses were incompatible with the operational and structural configurations of those microenterprise entrepreneurs working in the Jamaican tourism industry that had represented themselves as poor (could not afford or access these particular configurations of technologies which were represented as necessary for the achievement of livelihood expansion) and lived a more trans-temporal business and social life (who had many different business at various locations and operated at varying unstructured times). Among many different things, what this suggested is that the discourses surrounding the JSDNP Cybercentre played a fundamental role in perpetuating already existing entrenched inequalities through the preservation of social practices, along with their associated systems and structures.

At another level it was also found that these modalities promoted by the discourses of the JSDNP Cybercentre limited the operational processes of all microenterprise entrepreneurs who were exposed to the Cybercentre Project. More specifically, these entrepreneurs had limited control over the configuration of non-indigenous technologies; their technological and creative capabilities were restricted; their ability to indigenize non-indigenous technologies impaired; and they were highly dependent on non-indigenous technologies (which themselves had a number of limitations). All this significantly undermined their true potential to achieve livelihood expansion.

3.5. Possible Outcomes

Wade sees developing countries being tied more and more tightly into hardware and software networks of global corporations because of the ways of acting, organizing and being encouraged by many discourses surrounding the ICT for development debate. And, escaping these networks, he believes, is increasingly difficult with organizations such as the World Bank and other influential development agencies representing ICTs and the knowledge of the industrialized world as a solution to the problems of the developing world and, developing countries both inculcating and enacting such a discourse. According to him, this is a new form of dependency which he refers to as 'digital dependency'. With digital

dependency developing countries become tied to ICT-related global capitalists for upgrades, updates and add-ons¹⁸. According to Wade (2002):

The technologies and ‘regimes’ (international standards governing ICTs) are designed by developed country entities for developed country conditions. As the developing countries participate in ICTs, they become more vulnerable to the increasing complexity of the hardware and software and the quasimonopolistic power of providers of key ICT services. Worse, the Western aid industry...may be reinforcing the overall dependency of developing countries (p. 444).

Wade reminds us of the cosmologies of an earlier campaign by several international organizations in the 1970s which sought to bridge another divide, the ‘tractor divide’. The tractor divide was the gap which existed between the developing and industrialized world with regard to tractors for agricultural production and development. It was argued by international organizations that development was dependent on outfitting the developing world with tractors. This discourse had influenced a number of policies to achieve this goal. The 1970s, for instance, thus saw policy documents developed to promote the transfer of tractors to developing countries from the industrialized world for agricultural development. According to Wade:

Developed countries had lots of tractors, African agriculture had hardly any: therefore the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the British government, the World Bank, and the East Germans promoted tractors as a techno-fix that could avoid or help to moderate the institutional obstacles to higher land productivity in Africa (p. 450).

The exercise, however, failed in many parts of the Third World because of several problems which, Wade notes, were cited as cultural issues and insufficient political will. Ernest Mandel, for example, argues that agribusiness successfully capitalized LDC farming by engineering the shift from multi-crop subsistence farming, which was “indigenous” to cash-crop monoculture, This can certainly be seen as an outcome of the tractor transfer, and very possibly as a goal. (One result was the increased vulnerability of monoculture to pests, and hence the increase of famine – which, along with erosion and lowering water tables, could have been avoided if the agencies had listened to local farmers instead.)

¹⁸ A similar argument was also made by Castels (1996) regarding Africa’s position in the global information network society.

A number of elites in the industrialized world as well as the developing world did, however, benefit from several of these initiatives. According to Wade, although the drive to bridge the tractor divide was executed by various international organizations, it was instigated by tractor companies facing stagnant tractor sales in the industrialized world and who saw the developing world as a new market and a way to increase corporate profits.

Wade concludes that the dynamics of ICT for development may be playing out in the same way (p. 463), that it is the latest in a long line of development projects which the industrialized world uses as a way to reconfigure or redesign the South to meet their (the West) economic need through the use of international organizations.

There are others who also share similar views regarding the outcomes of the ICT for development drive. Bruno Lanvin, for example, the head of the World Bank's Information for Development Programme, has also connected the current discourses and social practices surrounding ICT for development to the Dependency discourse of the 1960s. According to him, "the debate over ICT integration once again raises the issue of developing countries technological dependence on the industrialized world" (Lavin in Burnand, 2003: p. 1). Blakemore and Dutton (2003), in a similar tone, have suggested that there is an emerging pattern of social relations in the ICT for development space which may lead to the technological dependence of the developing world on firms in the industrialized world. This technological dependence on multinational information technology corporations, they contend, is a concern for developing countries. According to them:

Even when nations are connected to the Internet the dependence on the IT companies of the West is considerable, since an IT infrastructure requires maintenance, enhancement, and new sophisticated levels of infrastructure security (Blakemore and Dutton, (2003: p. 10).

The consequence of such a discourse, Luyt (2004) believes, is the perpetuation of hegemonic relations of power and domination by one group (the industrialized world) over another (the developing world) or, at the local level, the rich over the

poor. Such relations Luyt hypothesizes may work to sustain global exploitation and global inequalities. To build a case for his arguments, Luyt convincingly draws on the discourses and social relations surrounding the ways ICTs can contribute to development as is promoted by international organizations such as the World Bank. According to Luyt, several developing countries have been encouraged by international organizations to establish inexpensive data processing institutions such as telecentres, and offer cheap outsourcing solutions to ICT-related multinational corporations such as Microsoft (many of whom are always on the hunt for cheap(er) resources – in this context, labour)¹⁹. Other developing countries, who are perceived as being unable to execute such projects because of what is represented as capacity and resource-related limitations, are encouraged to invite ICT related multinationals such as Cisco Systems to establish training centres in their countries to develop the technical skills of the people (thereby making available cheap labour to meet the outsourcing needs of the industrialized world).

According to Luyt, much of what is offered as ICT solutions can be considered low-end solutions – training in the use of low-end applications. Such training is not substantive enough to trigger any meaningful innovations and technological development. Not much knowledge-transfer can result from such an exercise since both data entry and telecentre work is low-skilled, and since developing countries are limited in what they can do because of licensing agreement protecting patents and copyrights. Thus, more advanced training such as programming (learning how to modify and create or re-create ICTs) is not encouraged. My own study of the JSDNP Cybercentre Project in Jamaica also led to similar conclusion.

Drawing on the history of development, in particular during the phase of mercantile capitalism, Luyt has suggested that the developing world is once again

¹⁹ The discourses surrounding data processing institutions by ICT for development proponents is that they ought to provide avenues for the generation of employment opportunities and income for the poor in the developing world. Some of these outsourcing solutions include data-entry and contact services as well as geographic information services, facilities which offer legal, business and market research, medical transcription, space to store information and data analysis for first world institutions. Jamaica for example has established over 50 large data processing institutions in the last five years and has also created an environment which encourages foreign investors to ‘set-up’ shop in Jamaica.

positioned as a distributor of raw materials, based on their location within the network of social relations surrounding ICT for development. According to Luyt:

Just as mercantile capitalism coveted the raw materials of Africa, Asia and Latin America, and industrial capitalism increasingly used it as a manufacturing platform; information capitalism has plans of its own for the South as a market and a site for offshore international processing” (p. 2).

Thus the ways in which ICTs are presented by developing agencies as tools for achieving growth is an unsustainable approach which can only work to benefit the multinationals or a few local elites in countries such as Jamaica. Jimba (2000), another critical of the current ICT for development discourse, would be in agreement with many of Luyt’s assumptions and conclusions. Jimba argues that giant computer firms, such as “Apple, IBM, Compaq, Packard Bell, Siemens, Microsoft, Dell and Epson” (p. 256) (whose technologies are represented as the tools for achieving development) stand to gain the most from the ICT for development discourse through contracts and agreements. Jimba predicts that this will result in “stifling” local technological capabilities (p 256). He compares the situation to the era of colonialism. According to him:

...one side-effect of colonization was the inability of the local intellectual class to build a body of knowledge on local innovations. Since they were linked up with the metropolises, the indigenous peoples were satisfied with products which were the result of the knowledge and information base of the colonizer. Thus the capacity for scientific research and analysis which will translate into a theoretical base for innovation became glaringly lacking among the colonized peoples.... This creates a situation where traditional ... knowledge is completely marginalized by Western science, thus creating a dependence on Western knowledge (Luyt, 2004: p. 256)

3.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an overview of two of many discourses (really genre’s) regarding the contemporary discourses on information technology for development. I have discussed the dominant discourse on ICT for development as well as institutional discourses regarding ICTLEMD. I have also sought to present an alternative discourse - one which is preoccupied with the ways in which ICT for development is represented by development agencies and the implications of

these representations. Based on these discussions, it is possible to argue that discourses do indeed play an important role in shaping ICT for development outcomes. Critically analyzing discourse is unarguably vital in the understanding of the ICT for development phenomenon because it functions 'ideally' as a space of debate between, as stated earlier, social structure, as well as social action and agency in terms of values, norms, and goals of activities in ICT or perhaps in thinking about and/or representing what kinds of ICT? for whom? to what purpose? Researchers therefore need to overcome the aforementioned hurdles and incorporate discourse in the already existing cadre of ICT for development units of analysis. Only then can one truly speak of a holistic approach to studying ICT for development and be able to understand as well as better explain this phenomenon. I have attempted to address some of these hurdles elsewhere (Waller, 2006) as well as to demonstrate one method of systematically analyzing discourse. The following chapter will discuss the methodology, sample, and methods of data collection as well as the techniques used to analyze the data collected.