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The Development Context: The Call for Reorientation

In the early 1970s, international development agencies announced a concerted effort to address the plight of the 'poorest of the poor' in less developed countries. These agencies chose the term nonformal education to refer to local-level programs for the adult poor. (LaBelle & Ward 1994: 4141)

The debate about non-formal education debate arose at the end of the 1960s and persisted during the 1970s within the context of discussions on education in developing countries. There was very little discussion at that time about NFE per se in relation to more industrialised societies. It is important to appreciate this context of development, including the changes which have taken place in the understandings, and to a lesser extent in the practice, of development over the intervening years for any understanding of what NFE meant at the time.

DEVELOPMENT AS DISCOURSE

'Development', in the sense of "the idea that deliberate action can be undertaken to change society in chosen directions considered desirable" (Youngman 2000: 240), has been operating on a global scale since the late 1940s. Recent examinations have suggested that the field of activity known as 'development' is in fact a construct of Western aid agencies; what can be seen as members of a well-funded aid industry created the concept of development (Mitchell 1991). They defined the societies which they termed as 'under-developed', they formed 'the Third World' (Crush 1995; Escobar 1995; see King & Buchert 1999: 183-184) through a dichotomy of 'them' and 'us', of 'modern' and 'traditional' (Leach & Little 1999: 295-296), implicitly setting such countries in juxtaposition with what was seen as a typified Western way of life (Cooke & Kothari 2001: 12, 170). More recently they have divided this 'Third World' into two categories, distinguishing the so-called 'highly indebted poor countries' (HIPC) from the rest.

This is not of course the language of the 'developing societies' themselves, although in their desire for aid assistance, they have often come to use and sometimes

even internalise the discourses of the West. And the discourses which the Western agencies (both government and NGO) have employed have helped to create the activities they approve of and engage in, including non-formal education (Robinson-Pant 2001). We therefore need to look at the discourses within the development field at this time in order to understand non-formal education (de Beer 1993: 343-363).

Discourses and Development

Discourse is not of course the same as language.

A discourse is a collection of statements (involving knowledge or validity claims) generated at a variety of times and places, in both speech and writing, ... which hangs together according to certain principles as a unitary collection of statements. A great variety of discourses can be generated within any one language. And moreover, a single discourse can include statements in a variety of different languages. (Think of scientific discourse). (Blake et al. 1998: 14)

But a discourse is more than this. "A 'discourse' is not just a set of words, it is a set of rules about what you can and cannot say and about what" (Apthorpe & Gasper 1996: 4).¹ "Discourse not only includes language, but also what is represented through language" (Grillo & Stirrat 1997: 13). Discourses are "power-knowledge configurations, systems of ideas and practices that form the objects of which they speak. Discourses are not about objects but rather constitute them 'and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention' " (Hall 1999: 134 citing Foucault 1972: 49).

One of the most detailed analyses of discourse has come from the writings of James Gee.

A Discourse is composed of ways of talking, listening, reading, writing, acting, interacting, believing, valuing, and using tools and objects, in particular settings and at specific times, so as to display or to recognize a particular social identity... The Discourse creates social positions (or perspectives) from which people are 'invited' ... to speak, listen, act, read and write, think, feel, believe and value in certain characteristic, historically recognizable ways, in combination with their own individual style and creativity.

There are innumerable Discourses in modern societies: different sorts of street gangs, elementary schools and classrooms, academic disciplines, police, birdwatchers, ethnic groups, genders ... and so on. Each is composed of some set of related social practices and social identities (or 'positions'). Each Discourse contracts complex relations of

¹ I owe this and other references to Dr Anna Robinson-Pant. I am greatly indebted to her in what follows, both through her paper presented at the Uppingham Seminar 2000 and through several exchanges on this and other matters.

complicity, tension and opposition with other Discourses ... Discourses create, produce and reproduce opportunities for people to be and recognize certain kinds of people. (Gee 1996: 10)

Few people actively make a choice or decide to use this or that discourse. It is more a question of identifying when a discourse (as part of communicative practices) fits a particular situation at a point of time and with a particular set of people. For a discourse is an act of people: "Discourses are composed of people, of objects (like books), and of characteristic ways of talking, acting, interacting, thinking, believing, and valuing, and sometimes characteristic ways of writing, reading, and/or interpreting ... Discourses are out in the world, like books, maps and cities" (Gee 1992: 20).

And a discourse creates a community of people:

... any Discourse is defined in terms of who is and who is not a member, and sometimes in terms of who are 'higher' and 'lower', more 'central' and 'less central' members ... any Discourse is ultimately defined in relationship to and, often, in opposition to, other Discourses in the society ... If we define 'ideology' as beliefs about the appropriate distribution of social goods, such as power, prestige, status, distinction, or wealth, then Discourses are always and everywhere ideological. Each Discourse necessitates that members, at least while they are playing roles within the Discourse, act as if they hold particular beliefs and values about what counts as the 'right sort' of person, and the 'right' way to be in the world, and thus too, what counts as the 'wrong' sort and the 'wrong' way... (Gee 1992: 142; see also Gee 1999)

A discourse however not only creates new models of the world; it also determines the range of activities which the members of the discourse community approve of. The point of a discourse is not just to alter the way we look at the world but to alter the world. "A discourse (e.g. of development) identifies appropriate and legitimate ways of practising development as well as speaking and thinking about it" (Grillo & Stirrat 1997: 13). A discourse "is not the expression of thought; it is a practice, with conditions, rules and historical transformations. To analyze development as a discourse is 'to show that to speak is to do something – something other than to express what one thinks; ... to show that to add a statement to a pre-existing series of statements is to perform a complicated and costly gesture'" (Escobar 1995: 216, citing Foucault 1972: 209). "The discourse of development is not merely an 'ideology' that has little to do with the 'real world' ... The development discourse has crystallized in practices that contribute to regulating the everyday goings and comings of people in the Third World. How is its power exercised in the daily social and economic life of countries and communities? How does it produce its effect on the way people think and act, on how life is felt and lived?" (ibid: 104). "Discourses are ... multi-layered, verbal and non-verbal, they are rule-bound, the rules being either manifest or latent, they determine actions and also manifest them, they are embedded in forms of life (cultures), of which they are simultaneously co-constituent" (Wodak 1996: 17).

Because of this, a discourse contains within itself diverse and even conflicting viewpoints. An example sometimes cited is that of the discourse of criminology: "It is possible [within that discourse] both to affirm and deny a connection between crime and mental pathology. What is shared by both those who affirm and deny this are the concepts of crime and pathology and, moreover, access to research and argument both supportive and conflicting but couched in similar terms and referring to shared criteria for judgment of the evidence" (Blake et al. 1998: 14). Any discourse can in fact become a site of contest between different perspectives. And discourses change over time and under stress. The members of a discourse community are not "trapped within some coherent but unpliable metaphysical framework" (Blake et al. 1998: 14-15); they are active creators of that discourse.

Discourses of Development: The analysis of development in the light of discourse was elaborated most effectively in a collection of essays edited by Jonathan Crush (1995) and in the writings of Arturo Escobar (1995), drawing on the works in socio-linguistics of writers and philosophers such as Foucault (1972). They see development as a construct imposed on or 'sold to' developing countries by Western agencies so that the inhabitants of such countries come to define themselves in the terms of this discourse (as 'under-developed', for example).

... development discourse is embedded in the ethnocentric and destructive colonial (and post-colonial) discourses designed to perpetuate colonial hierarchies rather than to change them. It has defined Third World peoples as the 'other', embodying all the negative characteristics (primitive, backward and so forth) supposedly no longer found in 'modern', Westernized societies. This representation of Third World realities has provided the rationale for development experts' belief in modernization and the superiority of the values and institutions of the North. (Parpart 1995a: 253)

Development 'discourse', then, is more than a new way of labelling the ideologies behind the various trends in development policy ... it is a 'regime of representation' that 'constructs the world' (Crush) and 'constructs the objects of development.' It is the framework which enables us to see and helps us to assign value to those things that we have seen. (Robinson Pant 2000)

Thus the definitions of 'developing countries' and of 'development' themselves created a grouping of nations and states who had nothing else in common. But at the same time, the definition created a sense of common identity among these disparate states. Discourses carry with them a set of values. Those who look at development in terms of discourse then will "deal neither with development as technical performance nor with development as class conflict, but with development as a particular cast of mind. For development is much more than a socio-economic endeavour, it is a perception which models reality" (Sachs 1992: 1).

There are of course many discourses, even within a field such as development or education. But these tend to fall into what may be called families of discourses. For example, within the development field, there is a family of discourses based on ideologies of modernisation, "...a modernist regime of knowledge and disciplinary power" (Crush 1995: xiii).

And in one sense discourses are transferable: the language of one discourse may be used within quite different kinds of programme.² For example, the Freirean discourse of conscientisation and empowerment is often used to try to justify activities which are directive, with pre-set agency-determined goals and which cannot lead to liberation. Youngman points out that the language of what he calls the populist model of development "was co-opted by the aid providers" such as the World Bank (Youngman 2000: 105). This is one possible interpretation of the many programmes of so-called 'non-formal' education which display all the same characteristics as formal education.

Voice and discourse: A discourse then is an expression of power. The concept of 'voice' expresses this – for 'voice' represents those whose interests are being served through any particular discourse (Aronowitz & Giroux 1991). It is not always clear who constructs discourses, whose 'voice' is being heard. Nor are the reasons for the construction of discourses such as those surrounding development always clear: they seem to relate to issues of control, hegemony, very similar to colonial issues of order and stability.

Dominant discourses are often taken up by subaltern groups, so that the real voice is not always heard. When talking about development, they frequently speak in terms which are primarily in the interests of dominant groups. Equally, there are many cases of a changed discourse but continued practice, where existing activities remain untouched but are clothed in a different language. Argyris and Schon's concepts of espoused theory and theory in practice are especially valid here (see above p.6).

FRAMEWORKS AND DISCOURSES OF DEVELOPMENT

Since the 1950s, I would suggest, three main paradigms may be discerned in discussions about development, three frames of reference which have influenced the planning and implementation of development programmes. Each of these has its own family of discourses. We can define these as the paradigms of **deficit**, of **disadvantage** and of **difference**. All three continue today; but the dominance of the deficit construct which was challenged in the 1970s by the construct of disadvantage, is now being challenged by the construct of difference in 'an alternative development' (Sachs 1992; Burkey 1993; Rahman 1993; see Corbridge 1995; Hettne 1995).

² Aid agencies often use the language of partnership to obscure their relative power relations with local bodies, as B L Hall 1986 has pointed out.

It may be helpful to set out these three paradigms and their associated approaches to development in diagrammatic form to help to establish what I see as their relationship, before examining each of them in more detail.

Table 2.1:
Different sets of development discourses, their interaction and their implications for education

DEFICIT	DISADVANTAGE	DIFFERENCE
1. Approach of a) modernisation and growth (higher and elite education) b) Human Resource Development (vocational education)		
2. Approach of Basic Human Needs (mass education for both young and adults; literacy campaigns)	1. Approach of Dependency (compensatory education; popular education; NFE)	
3. Approach of Post-welfare Development a) SAP (UPE and continuing education) b) poverty eradication (livelihoods education)	2. Approach of Social Transformation; exclusion/inclusion (UBE)	1. Approach of Participatory or Alternative Development (decentralised/diversified education)

While there is some connection between these different sets of discourses and the passing of time, it may not be helpful to see one as succeeding an earlier discourse, even incrementally, for earlier discourses do not die out with the emergence of another contradictory discourse. The deficit paradigm is alive and well today, although it is multi-faceted and contested. It may instead be more helpful to see them as three strands which are woven into a plait, with one or another emerging more prominently at a particular time or in a particular context.

A study of these changing paradigms will help us to locate and account for the emergence of non-formal education and the language in which it was clothed at the time.

The Framework of Deficit

The framework of deficit or ‘deprivation’ is still the paramount paradigm for most development today. “Hundreds of millions of people living in the South suffer from hunger, malnutrition, and preventable disease, and are illiterate or lack education and modern skills” *South Commission* 1990: 23). The argument is that “countries are undeveloped because of their internal characteristics, such as the lack of educated and skilled people” (Youngman 2000: 56), not from any external factors.

In this paradigm (e.g. McClelland 1961; Lerner 1958; Schumpeter 1961), the ‘problem of under-development’ is constructed as a deficit on the part of the ‘less developed countries’. These ‘backward’ countries are thought to ‘lack’ various elements which the ‘more developed’ areas of the world possess and which lead to economic growth – things like capital, infrastructure, communication systems, power supplies, technical know-how etc.. ‘Traditional patterns’ are seen in opposition to modernity and entirely negatively. Their “traditional value systems, social structures, technology, and behaviors ... are not conducive to the achievement of development goals ... The assumptions underlying the deprivation-development thesis suggest that progress is achieved by spreading modernism to backward areas through the application of technology and capital” (LaBelle 1976a: 329). It is the self-imposed task of the more ‘developed’ countries to help these selected countries to acquire what they lack – partly out of self-interest, and partly out of a sense of guilt for the exploitation which had characterised the relations between the West and the colonised countries and which still characterises these relationships in many new forms.

This framework uses the language of ‘needs’ to identify the deficits; and such needs tend to be assessed (i.e. created) by outsiders, with all the cultural problems and dangers of the misidentification of needs in culturally inappropriate terms. Thus ‘needs assessments’ precede and justify development interventions which are often described in terms of ‘inputs’ leading to specified ‘outcomes’. There is an attainable goal for development, a model of which can be seen in Western industrialised democracies. It is argued that once the identified deficits had been met, all will be well; the ‘backward countries’ will ‘take off’ and become self-sufficient growth areas within a global economy. Much of the inputs needed will come from outside of the developing societies. Indeed, behind much of this deficit frame of reference lies an assumption that the people in developing countries cannot by themselves get out of the hole in which they have become trapped. They ‘need’ help (aid).

Five main sets of approaches to development can be seen in this strand (see table above).

Modernisation and growth: Development in the deficit paradigm was at first seen largely in terms of economic growth. Modernisation (especially the industrialisation of agriculture and production) was (and for many still is) the key aim of development; the means to the creation of a modern economic sector (Foubert 1983). The problem was seen as one of low productivity despite abundant labour. Less developed countries were to be encouraged and helped to leap across the successive stepping stones to a modern industrialised economy in a similar but accelerated process to that which the Western societies had undergone in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and in this process, helped to avoid the pitfalls which such leaps had entailed.

Needs-based development then was seen as linear, a universally valid sequence from a pre-capitalist society through a proto-capitalist stage (if necessary) to a modern capitalist system, a progression to be followed closely in all cases (Rostow 1960; Moore 1964; see Webster 1990, 1995). Developing societies were encouraged to ‘catch up’ with their Western colleagues. At first, aid agencies concentrated on resource

exploitation, but later they encouraged industrialisation within the developing countries themselves, both for home consumption and for export. The industrialisation process might consist of ‘trickle down’ (E M Rogers 1976), promoting major national economic sectors in the expectation that the benefits of a growing supply-led economy would diffuse themselves downwards and outwards throughout the whole of society, especially the poor. Or it might consist of bottom-up development, promoting more integrated local and/or regional economic development which in turn would encourage demand and thus build up further economic development. In both cases, the formal employment sector was seen to be the key to development and therefore the object of development programmes; and growth was seen to be unlimited.

Human Resource Development: A second strand within the deficit approach to development spoke of needs as including modern techniques of production. This approach saw the poorer populations of developing countries as the problem. They needed to change, to overcome their resistance to change, to embrace scientific attitudes and new ways of living and working (Harbison 1965). The major cause of under-development was felt to be the complex of traditional attitudes and practices of the poor; what was needed was the acculturation of the working population, their inclusion within a formal economic sector (Inkeles & Smith 1974). Thus farmers were encouraged to adopt modern production techniques and large scale cropping for the market (especially for export). The development of factories in both urban and rural areas became a hallmark of this kind of development. To accomplish these ends, Human Resource Development became a key component of development programmes (Rogers et al. 1981). Education and training were important parts of this process of developing human potential: “It is simply not possible to have the fruits of modern agriculture and the abundance of modern industry without making large investments in human beings” (Schultz 1961: 322). Development came to be seen as “a process of enabling people to accomplish things that they could not do before – that is, to learn and apply information, attitudes, values and skills previously unavailable to them. Learning is not usually enough by itself. Most aspects of development require capital investment and technical process. But capital and technology are inert without human knowledge and effort. In this sense, learning is central to development” (Wallman 1979: 353). People were often spoken of as if they were tools, to be honed to fit their required economic functions.

Basic Human Needs: In a major reaction to this economic approach, worried about the increasing disparities (especially in wealth) which the modernisation approach to development was leading to and which the emerging disadvantage paradigm was revealing (see below), and responding to concerns expressed by many ‘developing countries’ (King & Buchert 1999: 100), the deficit discourse changed course. There thus arose in the West from the late 1960s a concern with a more mass poverty (and rural) oriented approach to development rather than the elitist modernisation approach (Seers 1969; Myrdal 1971; Russell & Nicholson 1981).

At the time, this was seen to represent a major turning point in development approaches, responding to criticisms being made by the disadvantage construct. The World Bank Education Sector paper of 1974, recirculated in 1975 under the title *The Assault on World Poverty: problems of rural development, education and health* (World Bank 1975) with its poverty-focus led the way. "Questions of employment, environment, social equality and above all participation in development by the less privileged now share with simple 'growth' in the definition of objectives, and hence the model, of development toward which the effort of all parties is to be directed" (World Bank 1974: 10). Integrated rural development became a key theme. "Development ... was re-defined as progress towards reduction of poverty, illiteracy, disease, malnutrition and social inequality" (Mickelwaite et al. 1979; see Ayers 1983).

Such 'welfarism' laid emphasis on various social indicators of under-development. In an even stronger deficit discourse, ILO and other international development agencies created the Basic Human Needs school of development. There is no point, it was argued, in encouraging and enabling men and women to engage in new production techniques if their health and nutrition needs are not met. Stress was laid on improving 'the quality of life' of the poor, especially the 'poorest of the poor', as the main goal of development: "a process of change that enables people to take charge of their own destinies and realise their full potential. It requires building up in the people the confidence, skills, assets and freedom necessary to achieve this goal" (J Clarke 1991 cited in Touwen 1996). Without this social democratic form of development (sometimes called 'welfare capitalism', Youngman 2000: 70), economic growth would not be possible. Poverty-focused growth was the aim of much development assistance at this time. Indeed, the purpose of aiming at economic growth was to meet the country's social needs: instead of economic growth being an end in itself, now economic growth has become a means to the improvement of the quality of life of 'the people' (UNDP 1990; see Leach & Little 1999: 10-11).

Post-welfare/neo-liberal development: The fourth member of this family of needs-based approaches to development within the deficit paradigm is the more recent neo-liberal approach. It is inspired by the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) of Western governments imposing conditionalities on aid-receiving countries (despite much rhetoric about 'partnerships'), with their insistence on the shrinking role of governments, multi-party democracy and the responsibilities of civil societies in the provision of development inputs and by the movement for debt relief. Just as the Human Resource Development approach, in response to the pressures of the new paradigm of disadvantage, changed into Basic Human Needs, so the Basic Human Needs adapted into a new and very Western monetarist approach to development. Market forces are the predominant consideration rather than state intervention (Leach & Little 1999: 203). 'Global capitalism with a human face' leads to a changed role of government as facilitator rather than as provider of services, with emphasis on free markets, privatisation and partnership with civil society, and the creation of safety nets for the most vulnerable.

The language that is being used here derives in part from the older discourses of modernisation and Human Resource Management and in part from the newer discourses of disadvantage (see below pp.23-26). Thus for example, this discourse speaks of grass-roots, people-centred development. "In Latin American societies, collective protests and local movements ... have become institutionalized, ... [they] make up a Third Sector different from the state and the market. Structurally these organizations are mediators between the state and the demands of the masses, between international movements and organizations and local needs ... The national NGOs ... are becoming a new actor in the social scene. Their work is becoming ever more important at times when the predominance of neo-liberal policies is increasingly limiting state action on social policies" (Jelin 1996 cited in Jung & King 1999: 15-16). Through decentralisation and capacity building of local organisations, each community must accept responsibility for its own development.

But it is rarely as disinterested as this. The post-welfare approach seeks to encourage community participation in the form of cost- and resource-sharing; but the goals are still being set by the aid agencies and their partner governments. Civil society is to be encouraged to help the state to meet the state's targets. Participation is designed to reduce opposition to centrally planned programmes (Cooke & Kothari 2001). NGOs have been co-opted into the development programme of the international and national agencies, causing at least one African writer to express his doubts: "NGOs are one of the instruments for the continued conquest and occupation of the South. They join in the marginalisation of Third World governments and indigenous NGOs and leadership ... This way, the North's latest conquest would be complete ... all of this is usually done in the name of empowering the grass roots" (Wangoola 1995: 68).

But the thinking behind all of this is economistic: a new monetarism, stressing both the essential call for sustainable development (Carley & Christie 1992; Carew-Reid et al. 1994; Fitzgerald 1997) and also the responsibilities of civil society, the role of the market, the promotion and facilitation of demand, the increase of competition and the consequent importance of the private sector in meeting needs. On the one hand is the major change from a view that resource exploitation and economic growth could be unlimited to a realisation that resources are limited and need conservation. On the other hand, responsibility for sustainable development is thrown onto 'the people' through decentralisation (Shepherd 1998). This approach emphasises the importance of capacity building, and uses the language of comparative advantage as the basis of economic growth. Several writers have termed this discourse 'neo-liberal' (Colclough & Manor 1991; Youngman 2000; Schuurman 1993), but since this approach "sees inequality as a source of individual incentive ... rejecting the concern of welfare capitalism with the issue of equity secured through state intervention" (Youngman 2000: 70), the term would seem to be less than satisfactory. While this approach does stress such 'liberal' values as (ostensibly) 'free markets' (they are in fact anything but free), the responsibility of the individual, the importance of personal choices, and the privatisation of state services for the achievement of what remain its essential goals, modernism and economic growth, nevertheless it is at the same time working for further

exploitation and the accumulation of capital in a few centres, while denying space to other forms of economic activities. The newly current term of 'post-welfare' seems more appropriate (Tomlinson 2001).

Poverty eradication: The most recent facet of this paradigm is of course the poverty eradication (sometimes alleviation or reduction) goal now being set for most donor and aid agencies (see for example DFID 1997; McGrath 2001). Most countries have been urged by the World Bank to prepare Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans as a condition for continuing inputs.

The voice of deficit development: This in brief is an outline of some of the various deficit approaches in which development programmes have been clothed. Once the deficits had been met, it is argued or assumed, all will be well. This has led to a development process based on inputs (cash, equipment, scientific information, technical advisors, training programmes etc.). The problem of under-development lies with the people (in general terms or more specifically with the poor) and with the poor countries themselves. If these could be persuaded (motivated) to change, to take up and use the inputs, then development will inevitably take place.

It may be argued that the voice behind this deficit discourse is that of the capitalist West. The aim of development is two-fold – a) the export to the West of, first, the resources and later the products of developing country economies, and b) the opening up of wider markets to goods made in the West. The major tools of this include bodies such as the World Trade Organisation and GATT. Aid is seen as investment, and lending is normally to be repaid. Such approaches are of course highly contested.

The Framework of Disadvantage

By the late 1960s, the modernisation and growth model of development came under acute attack and an alternative set of discourses to the deficit paradigm became more prominent, based on concepts of disadvantage (or sometimes discrimination, see Bhabha 1994). As with all discourses, these formed the basis of discourse communities which shared much the same set of ideologies and pursued much the same set of development practices. They were quite different from the deficit discourse communities with their ideologies and practices, and as we have seen, they influenced the deficit discourses, changing the language, some of the under-lying assumptions and some of the activities of development.³

The disadvantage discourses (e.g. Frank 1967; Galtung 1971; Carnoy 1974) felt that the deficit discourse communities tended to blame the victims, to demean the populations of the less industrialised nations, to assert unjustifiably that such

³ The language of disadvantage is at times used within the deficit discourses to indicate multiple deficits; the key however is that the deficit paradigm is largely focused on changing the poor countries and persons, not on changing the systems, see Thompson 1983: 43.

societies could not engage in their own development, to stress their needs rather than the causes of their needs. The deficit paradigm seemed to absolve the richer and more powerful elements in society from any responsibility for under-development. The paradigm of disadvantage, on the other hand, pointed out that the causes of poverty and under-development lay outside of the poor communities, with social, political and economic systems; that even if 'the people' could receive all the inputs needed, they would still remain poor. Contrasting the deficit and the newer paradigm, Goulet and Hudson wrote in 1971,

The first view postulates that while some nations are unfortunately 'backward', they can evolve in the direction of 'developed' nations, if they adopt acceptable behavior and modern goals. The second view rejects this language as historically unreal. Underdevelopment is not rooted in providence, inferior personality traits or traditional values. Rather, it exists because the Third World has been the object of systematic subjugation action by the dominant nations. (Goulet & Hudson 1971: 9)

The causes of under-development thus are here seen to lie in oppressive systems which deprive the poor of the needed elements for their own development, and it is these systems which need to be changed. For example, to train and assist farmers to produce more is of no value to the farmers if there is no access to appropriate markets; the provision of irrigation to large areas is of no value if control of the flow of water continues to lie with small elite groups who favour their own; the industrialisation of poorer countries will bring no benefit if the rich countries continue to deny full access to international outlets or if local corruption misappropriates the profits.

In other words, the causes of under-development are being constructed in this set of discourses as lying in oppression, not in the deficits of the poor. This discourse community asks the question, *why* are the poor poor? rather than the earlier question, *how* are the poor poor? They suggest that the reason why some people are poor is because the systems devised by the dominant groups oppress the more marginalised and keep them poor. And they see the answer to development issues such as these as lying in social and community action.

Whereas the deficit paradigm sees the world in a single normative framework which all persons and nations need to come to, the disadvantaged paradigm sees the world in terms of dichotomies – the oppressed and the oppressors; the rich and the poor; the industrialised and the non-industrialised; the indigenous and the colonisers; the literate and the illiterate; the core and the periphery etc.. And in development, they felt that both sides needed to change, not just the poor and the oppressed.

This paradigm then has moved the focus of analysis from the individual to the social, from individual choice, abilities and behaviour to a consideration of the historical and structural context within which individual action takes place. These are the development workers who construct under-development in terms of external rather than internal factors, seeking to demystify patterns of domination, as Freire put it

(Youngman 2000: 3, 37; see Coben 1998; P Mayo 1999). These are the discourse communities which embraced the search for equality and which thus provoked the modernisation approaches to development to move towards a more socially integrative approach. This is the paradigm which began to explore more systematically issues of gender, colour, race, sexual inequalities, as well as poverty; that looked for good governance and human rights. This is the framework that suggests that access to education is not simply a matter of the lack of motivation of the poor but rather a matter of the exclusion of the poor through barriers which the providers of education have erected. The issue at the heart of the disadvantage development discourses is power. This was the age in which critical theorists like Adorno and Marcuse arose to power in the academic and development debates (Giroux 1983; Held 1980; Horkheimer 1972; Carr & Kemmis 1986; see Darder et al. 2003).

And, like the deficit discourse communities, as the ‘disadvantage development’ theorists and practitioners became increasingly dissatisfied with the effectiveness of their activities, their paradigm showed change. Two main discourses can be detected in this paradigm.

Dependency: The first is the so-called Dependency and Self-Reliance discourse, which argues that the rich keep the poor (both persons and countries) in a state of dependency, and that true development will only come about when local populations become self-reliant. Using the language of marginalisation, it is argued that the major powers in the West have created a system by which there is a continuous transfer from the poorer countries to the richer, which results in “the development of the core and underdevelopment of the periphery” (Foubert 1983: 69; Schuurman 1993: 5). Nyerere in Tanzania was one of the exponents of this view (Frank 1967, 1969; Rodney 1972; Thomas 1974). Dependency is not simply economic; it is in fact just as much or even more cultural, needing (as Freire put it) ‘cultural action’ to break it (Freire 1972, 1975). ‘De-linking’ became a key term in this strand of the discourse. The debate surrounding post-colonialism was under-pinning much of this discourse (Spivak 1987, 1990; O’Hanlon & Washbrook 1992; Bhabha 1990, 1994)

The 1970s was the age of confrontation, of dichotomy and polarities, of typifications and binary oppositions, of absolute certainty of right and wrong (Escobar 1995). The world of reality came to be seen as polarised, and the aim of development is to try to change the balance between the two opposing elements. Some saw (and still see) this as an act of redressing injustices once and for all; others saw (and see) it as a constant dialectic between the different elements in society, battling over hegemony. The discourses of disadvantage or deprivation owe much to the class polarities of Marx (Youngman 2000). It is this which lies behind the move of some people to define development more in terms of fulfilment of rights than of the provision of services.

Social transformation: The dependency discourse constructs ‘the people’ as a singularity. Freire for example, saw the world as a battlefield between two unitary forces, the oppressed and the oppressors, for whom the same social action process would lead to the liberation of both oppressed and oppressors. But under pressure

from the third major paradigm, that of diversity or difference (see below pp.27-29), the disadvantage/discrimination paradigm too changed away from dependency to the discourse of social transformation. This laid greater stress on the diversity of 'the people', especially indigenous peoples (Youngman 2000 therefore calls this discourse 'populism') who are exploited by the rich, the powerful, the elites. Whereas the dependency discourse sees the development of the formal economy within developing countries as an essential part of the delinking process, the social transformation discourse stresses the necessity for redistribution of incomes and the consequent importance of the informal economic sectors (Leach & Little 1999: 18). For the first time, some differentiation is being introduced into the construction of 'developing countries', and the final goal of development (transformed societies) is not seen to be the same everywhere (Sachs 1993; Sen & Grown 1987; Rahnema 1991).

The process of development as constructed by these two discourse communities lies in participation in social action. The inclusion of marginalised or excluded groups is the major goal of development within this paradigm; the complete transformation of social structures and values of the elites is the process. Access for the 'excluded' continues as a key theme of development; but whereas the deficit discourses suggest that the barriers to access lie in the reluctance of the non-participants, laying stress therefore on motivating them, changing them, the disadvantage discourses suggest that the barriers to access lie in the surrounding society which – if transformed – will allow the people's natural wishes to assert themselves. What is needed is for the poor to be helped to recognise their oppression (conscientisation) and to be enabled to take action against their oppressors. Unless the poor take control and exercise the power which lies latently within their own communities, unless they liberate the oppressors by dispossessing the powerful of their power, there will be no development. The empowerment of the poor through social and community action has become in this model the answer to the problem of oppression. Unlike the deficit model, the disadvantage model takes a more positive attitude towards the target groups. Instead of not wanting 'development', it is argued that the people want development but that they are unable to act for their own development until they have freed themselves from the constraints which tie them (Mohanty et al. 1991).

The Framework of Difference

More recently, new voices have been heard constructing development in the language of ‘difference’ or ‘diversity’ (two recent case studies are in Leach & Little 1999: 95-110 and 283-299; see also 81-93; Benhabib 1996).

In part, this construction owes much to the post-modern debate on ‘difference’ (Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault etc.). To cite one example, “The concept of autonomy refers to the existence of a multiplicity of social subjects and agents, demanding their own space, their own voice in society and exerting pressure to satisfy their particular demands. Autonomy is the concept that better than any other appears to refer to the recognition of diversity, differences, plurality” (Meynes & Vargas 1991, cited in Jung & King 1999: 20). But although undoubtedly influenced by the accompanying post-modernist relativity and increased lack of certainty, this new development discourse does not seem to have built itself solely on this basis (Apter 1987; Barnett 1988; Usher & Edwards 1994). Rather, it has emerged from ethnographic studies of different cultures and from the anthropological insights of culture as being “ongoingly built and contested” (Apple 1988: 119 cited in Youngman 2000: 36), together with an emphasis on a more fully participatory approach to development (Chambers 1983, 1997; Shepherd 1998).

The argument for the difference development paradigm goes like this (Grillo 1998; Crossley & Watson 2003). If, as the disadvantage discourse community argues, “development is not a cluster of benefits ‘given’ to people in need but rather a process by which a populace acquires a greater mastery over its own destiny”, then universal solutions to what were once seen as common problems cannot be the outcome of the development process. There is a “difference between being the agent of one’s own development as defined in one’s own terms and being a mere beneficiary of development as defined by someone else”. Local self-determination rather than the adoption of generalised solutions is (in this framework) the process of development. Instead of the dualism of the disadvantaged approach, the difference approach stresses the multiple nature of society – moving indeed from difference (between two forms) to diversity (multiple differences). In place of the essentialism which (for example) sees all indigenous groups or all poor, all farmers or all fisherfolk, or indeed all women, as having essentially the same identity and interests, internal as well as external differences are being stressed. Multiple identities are constructed as well as ascribed. This is the language which speaks of indigenous peoples instead of indigenous people. Such a model stresses the value and importance of cultural diversity and seeks to promote multiple ethnic and other identities within society (Stavenhagen 1986). “Western models taken as the norm for ‘one world’ are to be replaced by ‘a prospect of a pluri-cultural world’ ”.

There is then, in development as elsewhere, a Third Way, between the capitalist and neo-capitalist modernisation and growth models and the social engineering ‘disadvantaged’ model calling for action to redistribute wealth and power. “The Third Way is about simple material living standards, local self-sufficiency, grassroots participation and ‘village’ democracy, living in harmony with the environment, co-

operation and zero economic growth. It is also about development defined more in terms of personal, ecological, community and cultural welfare and progress than in terms of the mere accumulation of economic wealth" (Trainer 1989: 6).

In particular, this frame of reference of diversity takes an even more positive attitude towards the potentialities of those whom the other discourses construct as 'under-developed' (Kitching 1989; Sen 1999). Whereas the deficit discourse says that the people lack motivation, and the disadvantage discourses say that the people want to act but cannot because of the systems, the diversity discourse asserts strongly that the people can and often do act in their own development, but that these people define development in terms which are frequently different from those of the major aid and development agencies.

But if people are to be 'allowed' (indeed encouraged) to define development in their own terms, the result will be a wide diversity of 'developments'. It will not be the agenda of the development agency which predominates; indeed, the agenda of the development agency will not necessarily be fulfilled. Village groups may prefer to build a cinema rather than a community learning centre; men and women may use their new literacy skills for reading film, fashion and sports magazines rather than newly prepared 'post-literacy developmental literature' on health, sanitation and nutrition. But instead of this being seen as a failure, any resultant self-determined activity will be seen as fulfilling development goals as seen in terms of the participants.

The discourse of diversity does not see the world as built around polarities. Rather there are a multitude of different interest groups, different cultures, different voices all interacting with each other. There are multiple sources of oppression in society, not just one. A simple construct does not describe any society adequately; it is in fact very complex, many-hued, multi-cultural and constantly changing. Identities are constantly being formed and reformed (Rogers 2003: 49-51): 'One man in his time plays many (sometimes contradictory) parts'. People who lack confidence when faced with a written or printed text cannot be described for all time as powerless or oppressed; they often in other situations display great confidence and ingenuity in achieving their ends. Diversity and the encouragement of increased diversity are the key elements in this construct.

Development practices will thus be built on the 'aspirations and intentions' of the participants (Rogers 1992: 148-155) rather than on 'needs' (however defined). Instead of seeing the poor as lacking against some externally set standard, instead of seeing them as powerless and oppressed, within a culture of silence, this paradigm constructs the poor in positive terms, as having the ability, the desire and potential of speaking their minds and acting in their own behalf – 'walking the road' (Horton & Freire 1990) in their own way rather than in a prescribed way in order to meet their own goals rather than the goals of the development workers. These discourses speak of local control: the evaluation of development, for instance, will be undertaken by the participants, not the aid agencies, and success will be defined in local terms through the sense of satisfaction of the participants.

The chief theme within this family is participation – participatory or people-centred development (this term is claimed by several different development discourses)

or people's self-development, an alternative development (Burkey 1993; Rahman 1993). The language of participation (like that of gender and environmentalism) can of course be seen in every development discourse, but participation is interpreted in different ways by each of these discourse communities (see below pp.22, 26-27). Much of the programme of development is to be found in 'the new social movements' – women's movements, CBOs, grass-roots development organisations, environmental campaigns, human rights and legal aid pressure groups, and other, often single issue, associations (Youngman 2000: 24-26; Foley 1999) which serve as an indicator of the need for and the processes of social transformation. These views are often expressed in the form of resistance, turning against both politics and parties and frequently the state (Laclau & Mouffe 1985; Carnoy 1989: 20-21). There are then multiple developments rather than a single development; development itself is a site of contestation.

The discourse involved here can be confused with the discourse of the post-welfare neo-liberal discourse – for both talk about each community accepting responsibility for its own development. The significant differences between these two approaches may on occasion be obscured by the use of the same terms but with different underlying assumptions as to control and the value systems which underpin the outcomes of the development interventions.

Conclusion: from global to local: We have seen in the development field three main families of discourses. It is interesting that these three paradigms seem to move from the global and uniform to the local and pluralist (for globalisation and local, see Hall 1999: 133). It can be argued that the deficit discourses tend to stress the global, the universal. All poor societies are seen to be the same and need the same processes; the problems of under-development and their answers are universal. The disadvantage discourses emphasise cultural elements: oppression takes different forms in different cultures. But the processes of overcoming oppression are much the same, social and community action. But the difference/diversity discourse, while still global, tends to stress the local: each community will take their own decisions based on their own experiences and expectations, their own lifeworld constructions.

CHANGING PARADIGMS AND DISCOURSES IN OTHER FIELDS

These three paradigms can also be seen in other areas of social activity (see Fox 1996).

Gender: For example, in gender debates, the same three approaches appear. Cameron (1994) has argued that in one construct, all women can be seen as having a common set of *deficits*, to lack what men have, and the process of women's equalisation is to help them to get what they need. The concentration is thus laid on women's immediate and practical needs rather than the structural issues which confront women. Development programmes are aimed at overcoming the barriers to women's participation, helping generalised women to cope with their multiple roles. The answers are functional and universal. A second approach to understanding gender inequalities is

through a *dominance* discourse. Women are deprived by male-dominated structures and systems. What is needed is a change in structures. Gender is a matter of power. But a rather different stress is laid by some on *difference*. Not only are women different from men; there are many differences within the construct 'women'. Universal answers no longer hold. Women's liberation is being interpreted at very local levels (see also Leach 1998a, 1998b, 2000).⁴

Discrimination and disabilities: Much the same range of approaches seems to apply in discussions of racial emancipation and to discussions of disabilities, moving from concentrating on the immediate needs of the participants to changing the whole of society to bring about new relationships of power, and finally to seeing these in terms of the encouragement of differences rather than uniformity and integration.

To give just one example of how this works, the issue of dyslexia. At first, this was constructed in deficit terms, leading to extra training for those identified and constructed as 'dyslexics'. The dyslexics needed to change to fit in with existing society norms. Then dyslexia was constructed in terms of exclusion; those who were identified as 'having dyslexia' were constructed as disadvantaged. Organisations and institutions were required to change to accommodate them (e.g. extra time for examinations). But more recently, dyslexia is seen as an otherness, similar to other othernesses (e.g. being very tall or short) which can cause problems or issues *in certain circumstances*. The dyslexic is no longer constructed as a dyslexic; there is more to them than their dyslexia. They are now encouraged to reassume agency for their own development – to assess each situation in which they encounter problems with their dyslexia and to take appropriate (but different) action in each such situation. Universal categorisation and universal solutions are not the answer. The same range of constructs and discourses from deficit to disadvantage to difference can be seen in many such cases.

Literacy: Recent explorations of literacy reveal the same picture. For many, literacy is constructed in terms of a single and universally applicable (what has been called an 'autonomous') set of skills which many people (defined by the literate as 'illiterates') lack. The lack is both immediate and personal. Only one kind of literacy is legitimated and this norm is imposed on the learners in a one-shot literacy teaching programme which is thought to convert those who have been constructed as 'illiterates' into agency-defined 'literate' (Bhola 1984; see e.g. Ong 1982; Goody 1977). Development, in literacy terms, comes from supplying the deficits through inputs (training). The learning programme is uniform, not context-dependent. 'Participation' in deficit literacy is expressed in terms of motivating attendance (access) and preventing drop-outs.

In an alternative construct (under the influence of Freire among others), literacy is interpreted in terms of power. Non-literates are defined as being oppressed by the literate; and the general purpose of learning literacy skills is to achieve 'empowerment' and to change the systems, to help the oppressed through literacy to achieve their

⁴ Cameron deliberately sequences these paradigms as deficit, difference and dominance.

liberation. 'Participation' in this paradigm means not just attending literacy classes but joining in the group activities rather than being passive learners. 'Drop-outs' are reinterpreted in terms of 'push-outs'.

The difference discourse appears in the New Literacy Studies. Literacy is being rewritten in terms of social practices. There is no one universal literacy; there are rather many different literacies and they form only one part of a wide range of communicative practices. Local literacies is the argument (Barton 1994; Street 1984, 1995). Literacy practices within different contexts are being examined; literacy communities are being identified (Street 2001). Literacy is part of the cultural processes within any one society. Participation in this kind of literacy discourse is seen as helping individuals and groups with the different literacies they are already engaged in, working within *their* literacy context (Rogers 1994, 2002; DFID 1994).

Changing Frameworks for Education

Paulston has drawn attention to similar "representations" within the field of education. First he identifies a representation of *orthodoxy* – "the hegemonising and totalizing influences of functionalism and positivism". In this view, "adherents of the existing orthodoxy assume their metanarrative contains truth and insights about how progress can be achieved ... and [they] force consensus, and do not tolerate and appreciate other perspectives" (Paulston 1996: 32-33). Such truths are universally valid. Thus education is the same in every society. Education through schooling is primarily to incorporate the younger generations into society, either consciously through socialisation or less consciously through hegemony. Its aim is to reproduce and strengthen the dominant culture, to provide what people lack, meet what others have identified as their needs in social terms, to bring about social change in strictly limited and controlled directions only. Education in this understanding is a universal good. Learning is behavioural change. This 'orthodoxy' view can be equated closely with the deficit set of discourses.

A contrary representation of *heterodoxy* emerged, "where critical and interpretive views successfully competed with and challenged orthodoxy" in a binary opposition. The 1960s, he argued, had "abandoned the notion of fixed intelligence and abilities, emphasising rather the power of [the] environment ... on intellectual growth", and this presented a challenge to the orthodox and universal form of education. At the school level, the expansion of primary education and its concentration on child-centred approaches are (within this representation) thought to help to bring about greater equality. At adult level, an education that springs from the people, 'popular education', will enable adults to act to transform their lifeworlds. Education in this frame is thus aimed at social transformation, overcoming inequalities which traditional schooling is perpetuating and even strengthening. Transformative learning, the making of meaning, forms a mainstay of discussions about the nature of learning. Alternatives to schooling are being sought, and many experimental reform programmes have been created. In part, this can be seen as a resistance to incorporation. Critiques of 'orthodox' education appear in "a struggle for power, an attempt to dethrone the

pervasive view and replace it. ... This struggle is one of ‘either/or’ competition, a closed defense of the favored paradigm and total disdain for opposing paradigms ... [in] antagonistic and partisan dramas of orthodoxy and heterodoxy ... a period of combative heterodoxy” (Paulston *ibid*). Whereas orthodoxy (the deficit approach) tends to stress a universal educational provision through or supported by governments, the heterodoxy strand (disadvantage) tends to set out the new paradigm in terms of polarities. Dore’s (1976) contrast between education for qualifications and education for learning is one example. Carl Rogers’ (1983) distinction between teaching and learning is another.

Paulston suggests that a good deal of current interest in educational circles now focuses on *heterogeneity*, differences in educational provision, purposes and take up. Paulston sees this discourse as “consisting of disputatious yet complementary knowledge communities, that have come to recognize, tolerate and even appreciate the existence of multiple theoretical realities and perspectives ... what we have left is ... *difference*” (Paulston *ibid*, original emphasis), what others have called the celebration rather than the suppression of the other (Sampson 1993). There has been a breakdown of consensus and a stress on the relativity of experience. Increasing diversity in education with multiple providers and multiple forms of provision, different curricula and clientele, the emergence of new forms of religious education – all these reflect increasing diversity in education. Multi-cultural and inter-cultural education (Aikman 1999) are key issues – the stimulation of “cultural identity and assertion ... the idea that national unity requires a positive recognition of cultural differences between ethnic groups” (Youngman 2000: 189). Even curricula are not exempt: “All our liberal reflexes resonate when we consider the idea of schools developing and teaching their own curricula, adapted to the unique constellation of factors which make up each and every school’s milieu” (Gordon & Lawton 1987: 29). The decentralisation or localisation of control and provision, the democratisation of education, the promotion of different educational cultures, the increase in participatory education are some of the emerging issues of contemporary discussion and debates.

Paulston locates these contesting paradigms of education within a wider context of changing climates. He sees these as successive stages, orthodoxy characterising the 1950s and 1960s, heterodoxy the 1970s and 1980s, and heterogeneity the 1990s, rather than as competing, overlapping and continuing frames of reference and discourses. And he goes on to suggest that these changes correlate closely with the wider ‘climatic’ changes in modernism, post-colonialism, and post-modernism⁵

Now, it is true that the denial of meta-narratives, the stress on the local as a balance to globalisation, the construction of society as a collection of organised or unorganised interest groups which bring pressure to bear on each other and on the state, and the attack on capitalism as being only one description (and a partial and

⁵ Mundy has proposed rather similar phases in King and Buchert 1999: 94-96; and Bagnall 2001: 35-36 speaks of the “three progressive sentiments” which have informed “lifelong learning ideology, theory and advocacy, over the last four decades”, the individual (deficit), the democratic (disadvantage), and the adaptive (diversity).

inadequate description at that) of the economy, let alone of political systems, are all features of contemporary debate. But this does not mean that the diversity discourse has replaced both the deficit and the disadvantage discourses. Rather, the deficit paradigm still remains predominant, while at the same time the disadvantaged paradigm is still growing in strength (especially through the social exclusion/inclusion policies), while the diversity paradigm still struggles to get its voice heard.

Table 2.2
Summarising the three main paradigms in different development areas

development	literacy	gender	education
<i>deficit</i> needs; inputs; human resource development; basic human needs	<i>deficit</i> autonomous literacy; technical, universal skills; motivation and drop-outs	<i>deficit</i> practical needs; fitting in	<i>orthodoxy</i> socialisation/ reproduction; access; incorporation
<i>disadvantage</i> liberation, social action, transformation, critical theory	<i>oppression</i> empowerment, Freire, push-outs	<i>dominance</i> structural needs special development for and with women	<i>heterodoxy</i> resistance to incorporation, exclusion/ inclusion – social transformation, transformative learning
<i>diversity</i> participatory development; alternatives; social movements; intentions rather than needs	<i>cultural</i> ideological; local literacies; literacy practices; communicative practices	<i>difference</i> difference from and difference within	<i>heterogeneity</i> diversity in provision; multi- cultural and inter- cultural

Changing discourses and the role of education

All of the different paradigms of development and the discourses in which they have been clothed have had and continue to have profound implications for the *practice of education*, especially but not only in the contexts of developing societies which is where non-formal education first emerged. The modernisation and growth discourses concentrate their efforts and aid on manpower planning, on specialist technical and higher education of elites, on human capital theories and human resource development. And Basic Human Needs with its Integrated Rural Development approaches have changed this to concentrate on mass education,⁶ especially for rural areas, including adult education: as USAID put it,

General social progress cannot be achieved by a small elite commanding a huge constituency of illiterate and disoriented people. Success in development requires that at least a majority of people be supplied with knowledge and the opportunity to participate to some reasonable degree in economic, social and political activity. (cited in ODA 1986: 156)

The post-welfare discourse of today concentrates its attention on universal primary education and on continuing education (expressed often in terms of lifelong education and learning for work-related activities), with the heavy involvement of civil society (including the local community and private commercial interests) in the provision of all kinds of schooling, education and training.

Equally the disadvantaged discourses see education as a tool of development rather than as a goal of development – education for economic and social transformation. The Dependency Theory concentrates on vocational education and training to build up local economic capacity for self-reliance, while the social transformation approach focuses on alternative education and non-formal education. Universal Basic Education (UBE) has to some extent replaced Universal Primary Education (UPE). The difference paradigm however sees education in terms of the diversity of provision, of multi-cultural and inter-cultural education, of the involvement of civil society in education, especially community schools, an educational free-for-all.

Locating non-formal education in these paradigms and discourses

Seen within this context of changing discourses of development within changing paradigms, it is possible to see the non-formal education debate as growing up at a time when an alternative approach was emerging in the deficit paradigm, opposed to the dominant modernisation and growth approach to development and its concentration on human resource development, elitist urban-oriented education for the

⁶ For an interesting example of this change in terms of science education, away from science for elites to mass science education, see Leach & Little 1999: 284.

modern formal economic sector. This new construction concentrated on basic human needs, integrated rural development and social welfare. NFE was seen as the way of meeting the new developmental goals, mass education coping with the educational and training needs of the rural poor and other under-educated populations and aimed mainly at the informal economic sector.

The fact that it was quickly taken up by those working within the newer disadvantaged paradigm and then became a football between the various discourses is part of the theme of what follows. But its origin lay in dissatisfaction with the existing approaches to education in developing societies which were seen as being inadequate, partial and ineffective, and this led to the search for new descriptions of developmental education. The deficit discourses were felt to be perpetuating and even strengthening inequalities. The newer discourses of disadvantage sought to articulate the views of subaltern groups against the dominant groups in a new polarity. Agencies now tried to identify themselves and their programmes with the oppressed.

It was in the course of this contest that NFE emerged as one answer to the pressing problems of development and education. NFE did not yet know of diversity, of difference; it was born within the deficit discourses and grew to maturity in the disadvantaged discourses. I see NFE as a single discourse. It constructs the world of education into two (or at times into three, as we shall see) sectors; all who participate share this view. But it contains different and often conflicting perspectives and different action plans, and it is these which form the subject of this study.



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