

Chapter 2: Theoretical Review

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the theoretical point of departure and to give an overview of Bhutan. It starts firstly by examining a range of theories with which the book is concerned. Particular attention will be paid to discourse analyses of development and theories about development alternatives. Works which investigate Occidentalism as a counter discourse and which explore the production of multiple discourses will be reviewed, as will ideas about the homogenising and heterogenising effects of globalisation. Bourdieu's framework will also be introduced. In addition, the chapter will provide basic information about Bhutan, its development activities, its education system and its regional geo-political circumstances, and discuss the relevance of these various theoretical approaches to Bhutan's situation.

2.1 Theoretical points of departure

The present study concerns the perception of modernisation, culture and tradition amongst young people in Bhutan. The first part of this section reviews development theories in terms of their stance towards local culture and tradition.

Local culture and tradition did not draw much attention as a focal point of analysis in the study of development until the mid-1980s. Economic development was overemphasised, and economic indicators were supposedly powerful enough to classify and accurately describe all countries from the least developed to the developed, despite inherent shortcomings of these indicators.¹

¹ For instance, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the prime indicator of development, but its definition is the total monetary value of all goods and services produced within the geographic boundaries of the nation during a given year, and it is calculated by valuing the output of all final goods and services at the actual prices at which they are bought and sold (Todaro, 1992: p. 16). GDP therefore can only count goods and services which are actually bought and sold, and effectively excludes goods and services produced for the producer's own consumption or barter. Thus a significant amount of goods are not counted for this reason. A practice which tries to classify all countries in the world according to GDP simply reveals an

Unilinear thinking about development as a progression from the pre-modern to the modern appears to have preoccupied the study, as well as practice, of development. In modernisation theories, for instance, local culture was seen as simply backward and Western society as the model which non-Western society should attempt to realise. Harrison (1988: pp. 35-36) writes that in Talcott Parsons' theory society evolves from the primitive stage to modernity, which is seen as primarily the result of new, more efficient social arrangements, with bureaucracy and the money market pre-eminent. Harrison continues:

Parsons goes further, when he states that it was English Common Law and its application to the English-speaking world that is 'the most important single hallmark of modern society'. (Harrison, 1988: p. 36)

Local culture in developing countries is seen as an obstacle to development or projected as something which is destined to become extinct. For modernisation theorists the West is universal and mobile; as a result their theories cannot accommodate the diversity of the world. Their narrow perspective has infused many development activities, which accordingly embody the ignorance, arrogance and rigidity of Western attitudes towards different cultures.

Since the mid-1980s two new approaches have increasingly gained recognition and popularity in studies of development. One of these approaches has largely been pioneered by the work of Robert Chambers, and its methodology is widely known as PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal).² Chambers' approach tries to put the poor first, rather than development

ignorant assumption that economic activity all over the world is more or less the same as what is observed in the West, namely that the market is central to economic life.

²There are several approaches similar to PRA. Chambers points out the following as sources and cousins of PRA: action-reflection research, agro-ecosystem analysis, applied anthropology, field research on farming systems and rapid rural appraisal (RRA) (Chambers, 1997: p. 106).

professionals from North or South. The PRA and its family embody “changes and reversals - of role, behaviour, relationship and learning” (Chambers, 1997: p. 102). Outsiders - development professionals from outside the “community” - have to facilitate, sit down, listen and learn from local people rather than lecturing and transferring knowledge. In this approach, outsiders are not supposed to impose their views, but to encourage and enable local people to express their own reality (Chambers, 1997: pp. 102-103). He insists that rural people are themselves knowledgeable on many subjects which touch their lives. What became known as indigenous technical knowledge, he continues, has been increasingly seen to have richness and value for practical purposes (Chambers, 1997: p. 111). In this approach, local people are consulted primarily because of the technical and utilitarian value of their knowledge. Quoting Hatch, Chambers says that the small farmer’s expertise represents the single largest knowledge resource not yet mobilised in the development enterprise (Chambers, 1983: p. 92). When arguing for the strength of the PRA approach, he appears to claim that local people’s knowledge is “correct” more often than that of development professionals (Chambers, 1997: pp. 15-32). What he means by encouraging and enabling local people to express their own reality seems to be largely concerned with the means to achieve development rather than considering the meaning of development itself. He does not doubt the necessity of development - his focus is more on its methodology. In this sense PRA is understood as “a development alternative” since it offers a different way of doing things from conventional development, but nevertheless shares many of the same values of the development paradigm. Another new set of approaches which emerged in the mid-1980s can be understood as “alternatives to development” as they represent a rejection of the whole concept of development. This body of work is largely inspired by Foucault’s discourse analysis. Foucault investigates the specific ways in which the deployment of power has taken place and focuses upon the discursive practices whereby power and knowledge are joined together. He argues that in every society the production of discourse is controlled,

organised and redistributed in a specific manner. In the face of this critique, Western ideas and knowledge can no longer be taken as universally applicable, and local culture is seen more positively. Esteva (1987) and Parajuli (1991) radically reject the conventional Western model of development and emphasise the indigenous way of development. Esteva argues:

It is now becoming more easy to arrive at a consensus on the evaluation of the damages wrought by development. ... the experiment is over, ... development is dead (Esteva, 1987: pp. 136-137)

Parajuli's work on new social movements in India gives the impression that all people in the Third World are victims of development and that they resist it. Furthermore he argues (p. 183) that knowledge of indigenous people, women and other marginalised groups has been subjugated in the process of development activities, and that through new social movements these groups reassert their own knowledge which reflects their autonomy and identity.

His work however, can be seen to bolster a Western paternalistic attitude, namely that "we" have to help "those victims". Also the picture we get from the work focusing on the new social movements is fairly monocolour, and there is no diversity in the views and opinions of the people he is describing. Both Esteva (1987) and Parajuli (1991), I would argue, romanticise people living in non-Western societies in the sense that their arguments tend to praise the "purity" of local culture. They can be criticised for providing a mirror image of conventional development thinking, since calling for purely indigenous ways of living is also a projection of a Western idea of what non-Western society should be.

The works of Escobar (1984, 1995a), Ferguson (1990), Crush (ed. 1995) and Du Bois (1991) focus more on analysing development as a regime of representation by the West, and as a system of power relations between the West and the non-West. They maintain that the West has obtained hegemony over non-Western societies through the power of discourse,

and that conventional development thinking on the lines of both modernisation and Marxist theories is the force behind the power relation. Development is a discourse created in order to claim Western superiority and to justify Western intervention in the non-Western world. As Western experts and politicians started to see certain conditions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America as a problem, Escobar argues (1995a: p. 6), a new domain of thought and experience, namely development, came into being, resulting in a new strategy for dealing with the alleged problems, such as poverty, hunger and sustainability. Using Said's work on Orientalism, development is analysed as a Western style of dominating and restructuring Asia, Africa and Latin America after World War II (Escobar, 1992). In this anti-development thesis, development is portrayed as a battlefield in which the hegemonic West controls non-Western societies successfully. The nature of the analysis has thus turned towards cultural analysis, and the present book also shares the same sort of concern.

Discursive analysis, however, contains some weaknesses also. In a similar way to Said's *Orientalism*, which investigates Western representations of the Orient using Foucault's discourse analysis, discursive analysis is largely concerned with what is articulated in the West. The scholars in this tradition analyse how the West has represented the non-West; in other words they articulate a Western perspective. They leave out of the picture the perspective of people in non-Western societies, let alone the *diverse* views which exist within a non-Western society. Certainly Escobar (1992, 1995a, 1995b) realises this point, and he suggests (but does not engage himself in) a new direction of research, the new social movements, which he feels will reflect different voices coming from the so-called Third World.

Modernisation and Marxist theories of development as well as the "development alternatives" approach insist on the necessity of development in the Third World, while discursive analysis is rather more critical about it. For modernisation

and Marxist theories local culture means backwardness, whereas the PRA approach and the anti-development thesis take local culture positively. But what do the people in the Third World think about development and their own culture? The starting point of this book is to try to understand views concerning culture, tradition and modernisation from the perspective of people in a non-Western society. It will show that the themes of modernisation, culture and tradition cannot be captured by the simple dichotomy of “advanced” and “backward”. As we will see, in Bhutan local discourses embody a chaotic situation in which both positive and negative views on modernisation, culture and tradition are interwound with social norms and a desire for the survival of their culture and the nation’s independence.

One might ask what is meant by “culture” and “tradition”. In fact these questions are central to what follows. Examining meanings of “culture”, “tradition” and “modernisation” among local people as well as for a government, however, requires some consideration of the issue of representation, which is something that has been frequently debated since the publication of Said’s *Orientalism*. If we are going to talk about a non-Western society, we cannot escape from reflecting on this issue.

Issues of representation and Orientalism

The issue of Western representations of non-Western society has often been the focus of discussion not only in development studies but also in anthropology especially after the emergence of *Orientalism*. Classifications such as the “West”, the “East”, the “Occident”, the “Orient”, the “developed”, the “developing”, the “centre”, the “periphery”, the “Third World”, the “North”, and the “South” are commonly used. But if we are asked what these terms actually refer to, as Coronil rightly points out, the question only reveals the remarkable fluidity of these terms (Coronil, 1996: p. 53). For instance the “Orient” refers to the Middle East in Said’s *Orientalism* but nowadays commonly also means Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Chomsky, in turn, explains that he uses

the phrase “Europe” as a metaphor (Chomsky, 1991: p. 13 in Coronil, 1996: p. 53). In order to use these terms we add footnotes.

Bearing in mind this fluidity inherent in the terms, we can proceed to discuss the issue of representation. The power relations which exist between the West and non-Western societies are articulated in a persuasive manner by Said. Western discourse, in which the West represents the non-West in an essentialising manner, has certainly been instrumental in the domination of non-Western societies. Here we look at two arguments, Moore (1996) and Jewitt (1995), which concern Western representation of the non-West and the power relations between the two categories. Moore (1996: pp. 12-13) finds that all the social science disciplines are very much part of a new form of controlling the population (what Foucault calls “bio-politics”) through providing expert knowledge. According to her, the domain of anthropological enquiry includes everything from the organisation of household space and eating habits to the regulation of production cycles and the ritual enactment of cosmological principles. This information is exactly what Foucault points to as a necessity for ‘bio-politics’: in modern society, Foucault argues, science is the truth setter. According to science, what is correct and what is incorrect are defined, and anomaly is created or discovered. Intervention, under the name of development, according to DuBois (1991) who uses Foucault’s framework, is made on behalf of a problem, namely an anomaly. An “ought” floats around villages and towns and an “ought” governs the people’s way of thinking. An “ought” is power which corrects anomaly. Through providing expert knowledge, many anthropologists are involved in this technique of government. This concerns not only those who engage in development work and consultancy, but also those who provide the ethnographic information on which plans and policies depend (Moore, 1996: p. 13). At the same time, and quite ironically, governmentality is a proper object of anthropological enquiry (Moore, 1996: p. 13). Anthropologists find themselves operating within the very structure which they criticise. Contrary to this self-reflective

view, Jewitt (1995) retains the paternalistic attitude of the West when she insists that the West has brought benefits to the Third World (p. 78). She claims that a useful input into development planning can be made by outside observers who have the power to speak and act on behalf of people in the Third World (p. 87). Moreover she writes that some of the Western knowledge of people in the Third World is better than local people's own understanding of themselves (p. 69).

Extreme conclusions can follow from both these arguments. Even if we find ourselves in the very power relations which we criticise, it does not seem that complete withdrawal from the discourse and practice of development by cutting all connection with the non-West, if this is at all possible, helps us to solve problems that have already been created. On the other hand, it is no longer an option to retain traditional Western attitudes to the non-West, which are paternalistic and arrogant, in the face of persuasive works which outline the processes of Western domination.

In fact people in the Third World themselves realise how they are represented in the West and sometimes object to the essentialised image of themselves. For example, the Bhutanese newspaper, *Kuensel*,³ talking about a new film on Bhutan made by a European director, is cynical about its typical Western representation of Bhutan saying: “[O]ne flaw in the film is a patronising western fascination with eastern ‘mysticism’” (8th August 1998). The article concludes that the film was made not for the Bhutanese but for an international audience.

It is, however, also the case that just as Westerners represent the Third World, people living in the Third World also represent the West.⁴ As we will see later in this chapter, their image of the West is regularly essentialised to the same extent

³ This is the only newspaper in Bhutan. It is published in three languages, Dzongkha, Nepali and English, and is issued weekly.

⁴ There is an important difference between Orientalism and Occidentalism, and this will be discussed in the next section.

that the non-West is by the Orientalists.⁵ For instance, in New Zealand, the Maoris consider human relations among Western people to be lacking in passion and spontaneity, and that Western culture pollutes the environment and lacks close ties with the land (Hanson, 1989: p. 894). It appears that people in both the West and the non-West represent and essentialise each other wherever they are in the world. In this situation it could be argued that it is an overreaction to insist on strongly criticising the Western representation of the non-West. If the Western representation of the Third World is focused on and blamed without recognising the essentialisation of the West by the people in the Third World and their own criticism of the West's essentialisation of them, it only recreates the idea of people in the Third World as victims of powerful Western discourse and reinforces the image of the "weak" Orient.

What we should be aware of as a person who writes between cultures is, I would argue, firstly the need to make a clear distinction between the researcher's point of view and that of the researched in the narrative. One might wonder whether it is at all possible. Considering that the whole narrative is nobody's but the researcher's point of view, it is not easy. In this sense the narrative is essentially biased.

Secondly we should make an effort to illustrate many different views within the society we are trying to understand and thereby avoid essentialism. For instance, a Bhutanese young man who wears Levi 501s and a Calvin Klein shirt would claim that it is simply because it is easier to move in and more comfortable to wear compared to the national dress, *gho*.⁶ Some older people in Bhutanese society, however, would see him as westernised, in a very negative sense. Yet other people would see him as "cool" in his brand name jeans and T-shirt. In other words, providing various viewpoints from

⁵ As Said writes (1978: p. 7), while the West has defined the Orient, the definition of the Orient in turn became the boundary between the West and the non-West - thereby creating "we" and "others". In this way Orientalism has been a construction of Western identity.

⁶ *Gho* is men's national dress. Women's national dress is called *kira*.

within the local society and illustrating the different positions in that society which those views emanate from seems one possible way of escaping from essentialising another culture and of writing in a context where the power balance between cultures is far from equal.

Occidentalism as a counter-discourse

Another weakness of discursive analysis is that it effectively excludes the possibility of a counter-discourse emerging, since it sees discourse as hegemonic. However, people in the Third World do create counter-discourses. Giving a picture in which they are overwhelmed by hegemonic discourse therefore only reinforces the existing power relations between the West and the non-West. If we are aware of the power relations between the West and the non-West, it is an absolute necessity to pay more attention to the production of counter-discourses and the multiplicity of discourses within non-Western society. In this sense, Occidentalism is a good point at which to start to investigate these counter-discourses.

Occidentalism, or “stylized images of the West” (Carrier, 1995: p. 1), is the other side of Orientalism. The encounter between the West and the non-West has provided both positive and negative images of the West to people in non-Western societies, and these images are as essentialised as those of its counter part, Orientalism. The important difference between them is, however, that while Orientalism is “a strategy of Western world domination” (Chen, 1992: p. 688), Occidentalism is not as powerful as Orientalism because the direction of its influence tends to be *within* a non-Western society (Chen, 1992: p. 688). Since Occidentalism is a series of images, it can be easily manipulated by various forces in society. Chen (1992) and Nader (1989) illustrate this well with examples from China and the Muslim world, respectively. We can see from these works that there is both a positive and a negative Occidentalism. Positive Occidentalism, the image of a superior West, is not only the internalisation of the hegemonic discourse. Chen’s work shows that it is also used by the

intelligentsia to justify and to consolidate their anti-official stance in China where the government provides negative images of the West in order to support nationalism. According to Chen, this anti-official Occidentalism was evident in a television series, "He Shang". "He Shang" was noted, Chen continues, "for its almost embarrassingly positive evaluation of all things Western" (p. 692). Negative Occidentalism, on the other hand, seems to form a counter force to the powerful West, because of its critical, derogative description of the West. Nader (1989) illustrates this when she writes that women who are part of nationalist, religious or ethnic movements in the Muslim world sometimes believe that they are better off than exploited women in Western societies. From their standpoint American women are sex objects and under daily threat of rape in their society. Nader sees this as a challenge to a widespread belief that the position of women in the West is better than that in developing countries (p. 323).

Occidentalism is only part of a range of counter-discourses, however. As Escobar suggests (1995a: p. 95), subaltern identity and new social movements seem also to be a mine of counter-discourses. It is however not a very applicable perspective for the case of Bhutan, since new social movements are unknown, and there are no strong subaltern identities. Bhutan however is an example in which negative Occidentalism is an important trait of the Bhutanese discussion of culture, tradition and modernisation. Negative Occidentalism provides a start and end point for both justification and criticism of modernisation and the preservation of culture and tradition. This point will be closely examined later in this book.

Multiple discourse

Amongst the large literature dealing with multiple discourse here we shall examine important works on modernity by Pigg (1996) and on culture by Keesing (1989) and Hanson (1989). Pigg (1996) investigates multiple discourse on modernity in Nepal focusing on villagers' belief in shamans and modern

medicine. Various views on villagers' beliefs and modern medicine are presented. The government officials and aid workers represent the villagers as ignorantly and blindly believing in shamans, and in turn represent themselves as modern beings who have been exposed to Western medicine. The villagers on the other hand do not find modern medicine remarkably efficacious or always desirable. At the same time, however, they also criticise useless shamans and overly-trusting patients, but in the local context these comments mean something different from modern commentary about beliefs of what the shaman does - namely that it is all "superstition". We can find an analogy between how the villagers talk about shamans in Pigg's article, and how we, in the West, talk about doctors. Finding a shaman who "knows" is the first step for villagers, while finding a "good" doctor is important for us. Some shamans "know" more than others, whereas some doctors have a better reputation than others. Shamans have insight into an unseen dimension of the world through their ability to see spirits, hear their voices, and communicate their desires, and through their awareness of how to persuade them to release their hold on bodies they are troubling. Doctors understand the unseen functioning of human organs, viruses, and medications, through experimentation and reading. Both doctors and shamans work on a level which is beyond ordinary people's understanding. "*Dhamis* (shamans) can make mistakes", one villager says. Doctors sometimes also make mistakes. Pigg concludes:

Both believing too much and believing too little are unwise and injudicious. The *biswas*⁷ that people in Chandithan⁸ understand themselves as having, and the kind of *biswas* they value, is a *biswas* based on careful judgement. To be a believer, then, is to be a

⁷ *Biswas* can be translated as "belief", but it generally connotes trust and is used most often to talk about social relationships rather than sets of ideas (Pigg, 1996: p. 190).

⁸ The site of Pigg's fieldwork.

conscious agent, a thoughtful subject. (Pigg, 1996: p. 190)

While knowing that others see them as credulous, ignorant and backward, the villagers choose carefully which healers to rely on in particular circumstances. In Pigg's example villagers are no longer a caricature, a different species, but are conscious agents. Some may point to the danger of seeing people in the Third World as the same as or very similar to us in the West. Certainly conventional development thinking is accused of being insensitive to cultural differences. The anti-development thesis, however, does not get rid of the essentialised image of Others either. In their narrative people in the Third World are described as if they are totally different species, being a victim of arrogant Western development activities. However, Pigg's work shows enough differences between the West and the Third World, and by presenting both developer's and villager's point of view - a multiple discourse on shaman - she shows similarities within the differences. However, a shortcoming of her work is that there is little examination of how their different views are formulated. I would argue that behind each statement there should be always a reason and a socially structured motivation. As will be discussed, the present book regards it as important to extend the examination to these aspects. In this sense the study moves from the usual discursive analysis seen in Said and Escobar to a much wider social analysis.

Keesing (1989) and Hanson (1989) are examples of writers who deal with multiple discourse on culture - both examine the case of the Maoris. They analyse the multiple discourse that arises in the process of inventing culture and tradition. However, the common weakness of their articles is again a lack of analysis of the socio-political background and the motivations behind the various statements which they report. In Hanson's case, for example, if the Maori tradition has been invented by the local people, government officials, anthropologists and other scholars (p. 890), one should ask what has motivated this invention. What "motivation" means here is not an intention to invent culture, but rather a socially

structured subconsciousness which formulates a certain view in a person. Motivation, in this context, therefore, does not indicate a will to participate in the discourse on culture and tradition, but instead a process of conscious and subconscious reference to social norms. If we look at works on the invention of tradition, the significance of understanding the motivation behind various statements will be more apparent. Trevor-Roper (1983) examines how the Scottish kilt became “tradition” in Scotland. He argues that the Scottish kilt is not the “original” or not as old as the word, tradition, sounds. His work shows that the tradition is in fact invented and therefore not “authentic”. However, one may wonder what is the significance of such work, which undermines people’s representation of their own culture and tradition under the claim of “truth”, namely objectivism. If we apply this perspective to the Third World, it leads to the confrontation between truth-value representation by Western intellectuals and “native” representation. Moreover, the claim based on objectivism, that there is an authentic culture somewhere, gives an impression that invented culture is fake and illusory, “distorted”. It could therefore easily justify a single representation of culture.

What I object to here is an outsider’s attempt to justify their own representation under the claim of “truthfulness” and to ignore the people’s representation of their own culture. What we want to understand, being aware of power relations between the West and non-West, is how people represent themselves, and why people want to represent themselves as they do. What we should focus on is, in Friedman’s words, “the practice of social groups...constructing themselves by making history” (1994: p. 118). Friedman says that all cultural creation is motivated (1994: p. 13). Without understanding motivation the study of the discourses of culture and tradition ends up showing a picture of “distorted culture” as opposed to “authentic culture”. Hanson’s work (1989) is an example here. It shows, contrary to the intention of the author, that the dichotomy of objectivism and subjectivism is itself a product of an objectivist’s view. Furthermore, examining the motivation and social

background of cultural invention would reveal both the agent's position in the society and how the society works, and thereby signify the presence of a multiplicity of discourses.

Globalisation

The concept of globalisation is broad and ambiguous. Almost all parts of the social sciences can relate themselves to "globalisation", but the multiplicity of the contribution seems to have resulted in a lack of coherence in the discussion. As Nederveen Pieterse points out, in the social sciences there are as many conceptualisations of globalisation as there are disciplines (1995: p. 45).⁹

In this situation only very limited common ground for debate can be found. In the literature emanating from sociology and cultural studies, the improvement of communication technologies is cited as the main factor behind globalisation. Exchanges of ideas, materials and people are taking place at a much faster speed than at any other time in the history. This gives, according to Featherstone, a sense of integration and interdependence - a feeling that "we are all in each other's backyard" (Featherstone, 1993: p. 169). Globalisation has become so fashionable that UNDP's Human Development Report featured globalisation in its issue of 1999. However, the Report only identifies globalisation with increasing "contacts between people across national boundaries in economy, in technology, in culture and in governance" (UNDP, 1999: p. 25), and maintains that the cultural effects of globalisation are still in open debate (p. 34).

⁹ Nederveen Pieterse continues that in economics, globalisation refers to economic internationalisation and the spread of capitalist market relations. In international relations, the focus is on the increasing density of interstate relations and the development of global politics. In sociology, the concern is with increasing world-wide social densities and the emergence of "world society". In cultural studies, the focus is on global communications and world-wide cultural standardisation, as in Coca Colonisation and McDonaldisation, and on post colonial culture (Nederveen Pieterse, 1995: p. 45).

One of the main points of discussion around the concept of globalisation is whether globalisation promotes cultural homogenisation or heterogenisation across the world. For Smith (1990), globalisation means cultural homogenisation. He argues that today's decline of nation-state is the sign that "a genuinely global culture" will be eventually created. According to him, nation states have been eroded since the end of the World War II by the possibilities of constructing much larger institutional units on the basis of vast telecommunications systems and computerised networks of information. Any attempt to limit such networks to national boundaries is doomed to failure. Meanwhile transnational corporations have become more and more powerful. He insists that consequently, although earlier imperialisms were usually extensions of ethnic or national sentiments and ideologies, whether they be French, British or Russian, today's cultural imperialisms are non-national and include capitalism, socialism and Europeanism. These are, he argues, "supported by technological infrastructure which is truly 'cosmopolitan', in the sense that the same telecommunications base will eventually erode cultural differences and create a genuinely 'global culture'" (Smith, 1990: p. 176). He says that today's emerging global culture is tied to no place or period. It is context-less, a true melange of disparate components drawn from everywhere and nowhere. He goes on to claim that unlike national cultures, a global culture is essentially memoryless.

It is not clear on what grounds he bases his argument that the power of the nation-state has been eroded. He does not provide enough evidence to explain the exact ways in which cultural differences are eroded by the same media machine. Moreover recent anthropological works on indigenous knowledge show that the interaction between local and Western scientific knowledge is not an easy process of harmonisation, but rather one of conflicts. Hobart (1993) observes that the West represents the people in the Third World as ignorant, and thereby the West is able to represent itself as possessing knowledge. Local knowledge is devalued or ignored in favour of Western scientific, technical and

managerial knowledge. These anthropological works recognise that technology and science are not “universal”, but very much a product of Western civilisation (Alvares, 1992). After all, Smith can only envisage the creation of “genuinely global culture”. He argues that the construction of a global identity is difficult because “collective identity ... is always historically specific because it is based on shared memories and a sense of continuity between generations” (p. 180). This, however, appears to be an acceptance of the continuing strength of nation-states, or of nationalism based upon a sense of community. Despite improvements in communication systems, what he calls genuinely global culture could not be created so easily in the near future.

In contrast to Smith, Featherstone (1995: p. 102) expects that increasing contact between various nation-states and civilisations will create a dialogue space, with a good deal of potential for disagreement, clashes of perspective and conflict. His argument emphasises the heterogenising effects of globalisation. According to him, one consequence of globalisation is “to familiarise us with greater diversity”, and globalisation leads to an increasing sensitivity to diversity (1993: pp. 169-170). He argues that an increasing cultural flow lead to a disturbing sense of engulfment and immersion, which produces “a retreat from the threat of cultural disorder into the security of ethnicity, traditionalism or fundamentalism, or the active assertion of the integrity of the national culture” (1993: p. 174). This deglobalising reaction, he continues, could result in a strong assertion of local cultures (1993: p. 177).

A more nuanced picture is painted by Robertson. He argues that homogenisation and heterogenisation are two processes, both of which are ongoing simultaneously:

the debate about global homogenization versus heterogenization should be transcended. It is not a question of *either* homogenization or heterogenization, but rather of the ways in which both of these two

tendencies have become features of life across much of the late-twentieth-century world.¹⁰ (Robertson, 1995: p. 27)

He suggests that in various aspects of contemporary life, there are ongoing attempts to combine homogeneity with heterogeneity and universalism with particularism, and therefore that questions should be directed toward the ways in which homogenising and heterogenising tendencies are mutually implicative (Robertson, 1995: p. 27). From this perspective he introduces the concept of “glocalization”. He points out that the nation-state is an aspect of the glocalization, in the sense that the idea of nation-state is global, while each nation-state introduces ideas and practices from other societies differently, and consequently this leads to diversity and hybridisation (Robertson, 1995: p. 41). Robertson is firmly against the view that the entire world is being swamped by Western culture. He argues that the virtually overwhelming evidence shows that even ‘cultural messages’ from the West are differentially received and interpreted in local contexts, and thereby diversity continues to be maintained.

Hannerz emphasises that globalisation does not create cultural homogeneity on a global scale (1987: p. 555). He argues:

The world system ... is replacing one diversity with another. We must be aware that openness to foreign cultural influences need not involve only an impoverishment of local and national culture. It may give people access to technological and symbolic resources for dealing with their own ideas, managing their own culture, in new ways. (Hannerz, 1987: p. 555)

He writes that although contemporary cultures in the Third World keep growing out of the interplay between imported and

¹⁰ Emphasis is in original.

indigenous cultures, most anthropologists choose not to write about this. Instead, he claims, they retreat deeper into the hinterland, and study “an Other as different as possible from a modern, urban, post industrial, capitalist self” (1987: p. 547). He appears to argue that what is lacking in anthropological study is a mind that is able to perceive the fact that both “they” and “we” live in the same period, and that consequently anthropologists seek after “pure” tradition. He argues that in the present world of movement and mixture every culture has drawn in some way on two or more historical sources, and concludes that “In the end, it seems, we are all being creolised.” He also points out the significance of macro anthropology, which is supposed to provide “an improved overall understanding of how ideas and their public manifestations are organised, in those social structures of considerable scale and complexity which now encompass Third World lives just as certainly as they encompass our own” (1987: p. 547).

Similarly, Nederveen Pieterse (1995) argues that cultural experiences have not been simply moving in the direction of cultural uniformity and standardisation. If we only focus on the homogenising tendency, he writes, this would downplay the ambivalence of the globalising momentum and ignores the role of local reception of Western culture, for example the indigenisation of Western ideas and attitudes. He also points out that there are countercurrents to westernisation, noting the impact non-Western cultures have been making on the West (p. 53). Relations of power and hegemony are inscribed and reproduced within this hybridity, he argues, therefore it is important to study the terms of the mixture, and the condition under which mixing takes place (p. 57).

Appadurai (1990) also suggests that today’s global interaction has to be understood in terms of the two processes of cultural homogenisation and cultural heterogenisation. He criticises arguments which see globalisation as cultural homogenisation, and more specifically Americanisation, for failing to consider the fact that ideas and materials from the centre tend to become “indigenised” once they are introduced

in the local context. He emphasises the need for further study of the dynamics of indigenisation.

These four authors, Robertson, Hannerz, Nederveen Pieterse and Appadurai, appear to agree on the importance of research about the process in which ideas and materials from other cultural areas are digested in local contexts. However, there are problems with their view. Firstly, aspects of power derived from the discourse between the West and the non-West are conspicuously absent or very much down-played in this literature on globalisation. When discussing examples of cultures influencing each other, issues of Western cultural hegemony are omitted from their discussions. Yet Western power over the non-Western world has been a very significant point of discussion, especially since the appearance of Said's *Orientalism*: it should thus be very important for researchers working on cultural globalisation issues to engage in discussion of the power relations which exist between the West and the non-West. By not talking about the power of Western culture, some of this work may well be criticised for concealing power relations, especially by those who argue that we need to understand how the West influences the non-West.

Secondly, this group of works on globalisation give only a bird's-eye view of the situation. For instance, Hannerz introduces an example of a Nigerian women taking dried milk and baby clothes from London to sell in Lagos (Hannerz, 1990: p. 238). Without a detailed examination, however, he concludes that these imported or smuggled items hardly alter structures of meaning in urban Nigerian culture.

There are anthropological works on globalisation containing proper, detailed examinations of the process of homogenisation and heterogenisation in different localities. Examples are Kang (1998), Diouf (1998), Meyer (1998), and Geschiere (1998).¹¹ All four works deal with the indigenisation

¹¹Kang's work (1998) looks at current Chinese debates about different modernities. He examines Chinese interpretation and indigenisation of the

of the West in non-Western societies, or the construction of local identity in a non-Western society in the context of globalisation. These works provide strong and valuable testimonies that the non-Western world is not completely dominated by the West, and they highlight the local capacity to digest and interpret influences from the West and to produce a new discourse out of this interpretation. They therefore testify that each locality can never be same. These works provide valuable materials against the thesis that globalisation is a process of homogenisation.

Friedman's "global anthropology" and his concept of hegemony

Friedman (1994) examines the formation and transformation of local identity in relation to "hegemony". The strength of his works (1990, 1994, 1995) is that he combines a global system perspective and anthropological approach in a meaningful way. Friedman's concept of hegemony is generally expressed in terms of economic and political power. He says that hegemonic power is impossible in the absence of military-political power. And, according to him, accumulation of wealth is the key to understanding the rise and demise of hegemony (Friedman, 1994: p. 21) - a critical difference from concept of hegemony as based upon the influence of discourse.

He suggests the importance of taking a global anthropological perspective, arguing that, in explaining expressions of

Western concept of nationalism. Diouf (1998) explores the construction of local identities in Senegal under French colonial rule in the nineteenth century. Meyer (1998) looks at the indigenisation of the West in Ghana by examining the way in which the consumption of Western commodities is viewed at the local level. Geschiere (1998) mainly studies the "modernising capacity of witchcraft discourses" in Africa. He examines the way in which the discourses around witchcraft incorporate socio-political changes occurring as a result of the impact of global processes. All four articles argue that the domination of Western modernity has never been monolithic, and that the each locality has produced its own discourse under changes caused by globalisation.

identity, the expansion and contraction of global system provides significant insights. According to him:

The global arena is a product of a definite set of dynamic properties including the formation of centre-periphery structures and their expansion, contraction, fragmentation and re-establishment throughout cycles of shifting hegemony. This set of dynamic properties are what we refer to as the global system, or global processes. There are numerous cultural processes that are directly generated in global system. These are the processes of identity formation and fragmentation ... (Friedman, 1994: p. 199)

He argues that cultural process in global systems cannot be understood without considering the phenomena of hegemony, of countervailing identities, of dominant and subaltern discourses, and therefore that research on identity should be directed towards the way in which a culture is diffused in the process of imperial expansion and the way in which local cultures reassert themselves in periods of declining hegemony (1994: pp. 25-27). He explains that the proliferation of modern identity, which is characterised by the possibility of individual and social development, mobility and liberation from the fixed and concrete structures of surviving non-capitalist forms (family, community, religion) depends on the existence of an expanding modern sector in a global system. When such expansion ends or begins to decline, according to Friedman, modern identity becomes increasingly difficult to maintain. There is thus a link between cycles of hegemony, cycles of shifting centres of accumulation of wealth in the world system and cycles of cultural identity (1994: p. 96).

He explains this relationship between shifting hegemonies and the formation of identity using the case of Hawaii (pp. 173-181). Hawaii became increasingly integrated into the US economy throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In these times the Hawaiian language was forbidden, and its dance and much of its culture were considered to be expressions of barbarism. They were seen to be totally at odds

with civilisation. Throughout the twentieth century, he argues, the process of integration has led to a loss of Hawaiian identity. However, in the 1970s this integrating power began to wane, as tourism declined and unemployment rose. It was at this time when the Hawaiian movement began. The movement was increasingly consolidated around the issue of sovereignty, the regaining of lands lost by an unconstitutional coup d'état in 1893, and the re-establishment of Hawaiian culture. It coincided with much of the political activity in other parts of the Western world. Some say, Friedman writes, that it drew many of its ideas from the Black Power movement, but, Friedman argues, there is ample evidence that it had roots in Hawaiian rural areas that had for years opposed the destruction reaped by American-style development. He then shows an interesting statistic,

In the period between the census of 1970 and 1980, the number of Hawaiians who identified as such increased significantly, from 130,000 to more than 190,000. But in the same period the population of North American Indians increased from 700,000 to 1,400,000. This is not a fact of biology. Many Hawaiians and a great many Indians who were formerly 'mixed' enough to be able to identify as something else have now begun to assert their identities as indigenous peoples. (Friedman, 1994: p. 177)

Hawaii is almost completely integrated into the United States - it is after all part of it. Therefore the rise and demise of the hegemony of the US would directly affect it, much more than it would have affected Bhutan. Rising and declining hegemony does not affect every part of the world to an equal degree. In the case of Bhutan, the government has taken a cautious stance in its relations with superpowers such as the USA and Russia. Bhutan has not received significant amounts of development assistance from any of the five countries which hold a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. This has been a conscious decision, taken in order to avoid being pulled into the kind of conflicts in which some developing

countries were involved during the cold war.¹² In these circumstances a hegemony-shift in the world system, namely the apparent decline of the United States, has not had as much influence on the construction of cultural identity in Bhutan as it has in Hawaii.

We can apply Friedman's perspective of connecting international circumstances with local discourses in two ways to help us to examine Bhutan's case. Firstly, instead of US hegemony, other regional influences on Bhutan should be investigated in relation to the formation of local discourses. As a small country between two giant nations, Bhutan has had to navigate a difficult path with its neighbours, and the regional climate has probably affected the formation and transformation of local discourses.

The concept of hegemony needs more examination. With respect to Friedman's view on the issue, one might wonder if the ability to produce a competing ideology depends only on economic and political power. In this respect, Friedman's argument seems too simple, since it neglects the power of discourse. Escobar and Said, among others, who are inspired by Foucault, explain hegemony from the perspective of discursive analysis. Said is rather straightforward in arguing that it is cultural hegemony that gives durability and strength to Orientalism, "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said, 1978: p. 3). What makes Western culture hegemonic is, according to him, the idea of Western identity as superior to those of all non-Western peoples and cultures (p. 7). On this basis the West has regulated the discourse of development, bringing the "right knowledge" to the non-Western world and thereby constructing a justification for intervention (Escobar, 1995a; Ferguson, 1990). This view also seems to be an

¹² The first Bhutanese Ambassador to the United Nations, Lyonpo Sangay Penjor said in a lecture in Japan that "Bhutan's fundamental foreign policy is non-alignment. The government is very careful not to be involved in a power game of the superpowers by establishing diplomatic relations with these countries without a serious thoughts on the implications of it." (Imaeda, 1994: p. 54).

oversimplification, since it makes it sound as though any society can achieve hegemony if many people in that society believe that their own culture is superior to others. For instance, the Bhutanese often say that their own culture is better than Western culture: materialistic Westerners cannot understand their altruistic and hospitable mentality, they argue. As we will see later in this book, their image of the West is also essentialised: however, the Bhutanese have not obtained hegemony over other parts of the world. Furthermore, Escobar himself points out the significance of development institutions in establishing Western hegemony, and he notes that those institutions would not have been deployed so widely and effectively without the financial capacity of the West to sustain them. For Said Western hegemony is a cultural matter whereas for Friedman it is mainly economic. However, I would argue that Western hegemony has been consolidated by forms of both cultural and economic power which have reinforced each other.

The book is primarily concerned with the power of discourse, however the Foucauldians' argument about Western hegemony does not give a comprehensive account of how hegemony can change, and how cultural hegemony can be linked with economic power. Therefore their analysis ultimately fails to give a dynamic nature to our understanding of discourse. Inspired by Friedman's global-anthropology, this book will examine the relation between Western and local development discourses and in particular to what extent Western development discourse has become hegemonic in relation to local development discourses. The book explores the extent of the hegemony of Western development discourse over Bhutanese discourses by looking in particular at the influence of modernisation theories.

2.2 Beyond discursive analysis: the relevance of Bourdieu

To analyse Bhutanese discourses on modernisation, culture and tradition, the theoretical framework offered by Pierre Bourdieu is helpful. This section outlines how Bourdieu's theoretical framework will be used in the following chapters,

and considers its strengths and weaknesses for analysing Bhutanese discourses with regard to the concerns presented in the previous section.

Bourdieu suggests that each agent's position and his or her view of the world has to be defined based not upon the observer's perception but upon the agent's own perception. Making people's subjectivity an object of research does not mean that the study itself is subjective. On the contrary, as argued in the last section, seemingly objective economic indicators fail to reflect people's actual living standards, and so require a more detailed analysis since judgement of whether a living standard is high or low has to be based upon people's perceptions and observers cannot impose a certain standard as a dividing line. Bourdieu argues:

The most resolutely objective theory has to integrate the agents' representation of the social world; more precisely, it must take account of the contribution that agents make towards constructing the view of the social world, and ... by means of the *work of representation* ... that they constantly perform in order to impose their view of the world or the view of their own position in this world - their social identity. (Bourdieu, 1985: p. 727)

The previous section emphasised the need to look at multiple discourses, in which various views contest with each other, and the importance of examining the social context in which the discourse is produced. In this respect, although it does not provide a complete conceptual framework for this study, Bourdieu's theory is useful as a signpost for investigation. In what follows, the usefulness of each of Bourdieu's concepts is examined in the context of the concerns of this analysis.

To assist in the analysis of discourses, Bourdieu offers a framework comprised of the concepts of *doxa*, *orthodoxy* and *heterodoxy*. *Doxa* is a condition in which the established cosmological and political order is perceived not as arbitrary,

but as a self-evident and is taken for granted (the universe of the undiscussed). According to Bourdieu, when the natural order or facts which are taken for granted are questioned, the social world loses its character as a natural phenomenon and the doxa is transformed to the universe of discourse, which contains orthodoxy and heterodoxy (1977: pp. 166-169). The strength of this framework is, firstly, that these three concepts make it possible to look at the transformation of discourse, and thereby the picture of discourse we get is not one in which the hegemonic discourse simply dominates, but one in which various views and questions arise. In other words discourse is conceived in more dynamic terms. Secondly, the concept of doxa clearly shows that Bourdieu's analytical scope is much wider than that of Foucault's often used discourse analysis, since Bourdieu's framework allows us to investigate the undiscussed parts, whereas Foucault's framework focuses only on what is said, i.e. the discourse. It is this conceptualisation of doxa which enables us to examine those areas which are too natural for agents to question.

Although Bourdieu uses the expression that doxa is the part which goes without "saying" (1977: p. 166), this can reasonably be interpreted as "without arguing" or "without being questioned", in other words "as part of a consensus". This interpretation is founded on both practical considerations for anthropological "data collection" methods and on theoretical considerations. During anthropological fieldwork, researchers ask many questions of local people, and there is always a possibility that a researcher will ask about something which is very natural to them; and, even when people talk about something it can be the case that in the end they always come to a consensus on a certain point. In terms of theory, Bourdieu uses the "universe of the undiscussed" as a second definition of doxa: hence doxa is regarded as that which is not questioned. Therefore, even if a researcher actually hears statements, as far as these statements are monolithic, they can be considered as doxa. The analysis presented in this book also takes this to be the case. Through examining how culture, tradition and negative Occidentalism are used as justifications within the context of

a struggle between generations the present study includes an analysis of doxa, i.e. the underlying assumptions present in people's statements about modernisation, culture and tradition.

Heterodoxy, by questioning the formerly unquestioned, functions as a critical break with doxa and brings the dominant agents out of their silence and forces them to produce a defensive discourse of the orthodoxy. The universe of discourse is thus presented as opposed to doxa (Bourdieu, 1993: p. 73). As we have seen the importance of paying more attention to multiple discourse in the previous section, different views about modernisation, culture and tradition in Bhutan shall be examined, and the concepts of heterodoxy and orthodoxy are helpful in this context.

Bourdieu (1977: p. 169) also says that *crisis* is a necessary condition for questioning doxa. Bourdieu describes the transformation of doxa into the universe of discourse in the following way:

The critique which brings the undiscussed into discussion has objective crisis which ... destroys self-evidence practically. It is when the social world loses its character as a natural phenomenon that the question of the natural or conventional character of social facts can be raised. (Bourdieu, 1977: pp. 168-169)

The concept of crisis inevitably shifts our attention towards the economic, political and social background to the emergence of a counter-discourse. We will see later in this book how social changes, state policy and international circumstances (in their perceived forms) have encouraged and discouraged the emergence of different views.

While crisis is understood as wider socio-economic change, the book will also examine matters more closely relevant to individual agents. In Bourdieu's framework social space is

comprised of many *fields*, and each field is defined by specific *stakes*¹³ and *interests* (Bourdieu, 1993: p. 72). *Capital* represents power over that field and the position of each agent in a field is defined by the distribution of certain capitals that are present within a field. These capitals are, Bourdieu suggests, *economic capital*, *social capital* and *cultural capital* (Bourdieu, 1985: p. 724). The struggles taking place within a field are twofold. Firstly, each agent tries to accumulate more capital according to the existing definition of stakes of a field. Secondly, agents raise question about the very definition of the stakes of a field (Bourdieu, 1985: p. 734). Different views are articulated in order to change definitions of active capitals in a field and thereby to increase the amount of capital possessed by an agent. In this context, we shall be informed by an approach which incorporates the agent's background and position in the "Bhutanese ladder of success"¹⁴ to think about the motivation behind statements and assumptions. The motivation of, or rather logic behind, a particular view is socially structured; hence, in examining heterodoxy and orthodoxy, we must look at an agent's position in the society. We will see that the educational background of agents gives, if not a complete, at least a reasonable account for these differences.

It must be clearly stated that "the youth" itself is not the subject of this study and Bourdieu's framework is employed not to understand youth *per se* but primarily to understand the dynamic nature of multiple discourse, and the background and social context of each discourse. In other words Bourdieu's framework could be applied to a similar investigation of any other group – based on age or any other social distinction. Related to this, we must recognise a weakness in his framework. Bourdieu emphasises how each agent tries to maximise their capital, and so his view has led

¹³ According to Bourdieu, these specific stakes and interests of a field are irreducible to the stakes and interests of other fields. Exemplifying the point he said that you cannot make a philosopher compete for the prizes that interest a geographer (Bourdieu, 1993: p. 72).

¹⁴ The "Bhutanese ladder of success" will be explained in the next section.

me, in my research context, to place more emphasis on young people's future prospects. The framework does not therefore incorporate other dimensions of the lives of young people and excludes factors which are derived from, for example, being "young" and "youthful".

In explaining the background to doxa, namely why a particular view has a consensus among the Bhutanese, the concept of *habitus* is helpful. Although Bourdieu does not say explicitly that doxa can be explained by habitus, the following definition of habitus holds insights when investigating the background of "the Bhutanese doxa". According to Bourdieu, habitus is internalised history and produces individual and collective practices (Bourdieu, 1990: pp. 53-56). Habitus is spontaneity without consciousness or will, which nevertheless means that practices within a certain group of people are reasonably homogeneous in the absence of any direct interaction or explicit coordination. The objective homogeneity of group habitus results from the homogeneity of the conditions of existence (Bourdieu, 1977: p. 85). Thus, although in theory habitus is possessed by each agent and each habitus is supposed to be different, in reality, the same habitus is shared by the whole group, and this is explained by homogeneity in practices within the group.

This framework can be applied to explain Bhutanese doxa. Doxa is by definition what everyone agrees with, therefore it can be seen as a homogeneous practice. If the practice is the same, following Bourdieu's framework, the habitus is also supposed to be shared and so are the conditions of existences. Hence, to explain the background of doxa it is relevant to examine the Bhutanese habitus, their conditions of existence in their perceived form. The Bhutanese perception of their country's position in the world can explain both their unique views about culture, tradition and modernisation, as well as Bhutan's difference from many other developing countries, where introducing something

“modern” and “Western”¹⁵ appears to be seen as much more important than preserving indigenous culture and tradition. The investigation is directed towards examining what the West means to Bhutanese people and also how they see themselves; the international circumstances in which Bhutan has to survive will also be incorporated into the scope of this study.

This investigation is at the same time based upon the following criticism of conventional Western development thinking and the discursive analysis of development. For all developing countries face similar conditions of existence: in terms of conventional development thinking their economic indicators reveal similar living standards, and in terms of discursive analysis they are mostly in a similar power relationship with the West. Neither mode of analysis can explain the particularity of different societies in the Third World. One of the reasons for this seems to be that even if people are living under the same objective structure, the structure in its perceived form (the habitus) is different. Both conventional development thinking and the discursive analysis of development have not been successful in incorporating people’s points of view in their scope. By using Bourdieu’s idea of habitus, in a slightly modified form,¹⁶ the study aims to explain the particularity of Bhutan which is prominent in its doxa.

¹⁵ For example, Pigg (1996: p. 162) writes that in the everyday logic of development practice, “modern medicine” is positioned as the eventual replacement for existing modes of healing.

¹⁶ The term habitus in this context is not used on the same level as Bourdieu situates it in relation to heterodoxy, orthodoxy and doxa. Habitus is originally used to explain class/group practices. In my investigation of the background of the doxa, the *Bhutanese people as a whole* are seen as a group among the many societies in the world which have been classified on a scale from least developed to developed. Habitus in this context is the habitus of the Bhutanese people who are supposed to have experienced more or less the same conditions of existence. Therefore, the difference in the usage of habitus between Bourdieu and this study is that while Bourdieu uses habitus to explain practices of different groups *within* a society, this study analysis the whole of the Bhutanese people as a group.

With respect to the role of the state in the transformation of discourses, Bourdieu indentifies the state with the dominant class.

The state is the culmination of a process of a concentration of different species of capital: capital of physical force or instruments of coercion (army, police), economic capital, cultural or (better) informational capital, and symbolic capital. It is this concentration as such which constitutes the state as the holder of a sort of metacapital granting power over other species of capital and over their holders. (Bourdieu, 1998: p. 41)

In Bourdieu's framework, an agent's power is defined by the overall volume of capital each agent possesses, and by the composition of this capital (Bourdieu, 1985: p. 724). Therefore the state, which is described as the culmination of a process of concentration of different capitals, is regarded as the dominant class in society. The dominant class, in turn, is orthodoxy. Bourdieu says:

The dominated class have an interest in pushing back the limits of doxa and exposing the arbitrariness of the taken for granted, the dominant classes have an interest in defending the integrity of doxa or, short of this, of establishing in its place the necessarily imperfect substitute, orthodoxy. (Bourdieu, 1977: p. 169)

According to Bourdieu, therefore, the state is considered to be the guardian of orthodoxy, and it defends its view after a crisis. Crisis is caused by the emergence of heterodoxy which questions what was hitherto doxa. The book will consider the applicability of this model that heterodoxy triggers a transformation of discourse by questioning doxa, while the state defends orthodox view.

In order to explain the mechanisms through which the pre-crisis dominant class is weakened and in which the post-

crisis dominant class rises, I would like to use Bourdieu's concept of "mode of domination". Bourdieu presents two very different forms of domination, which are located at each end of a scale, and argues that any particular mode of domination must fall somewhere between these two forms. The first kind of domination is the domination which is maintained by constant personal interactions. The dominant agents, according to Bourdieu:

have to work directly, daily, personally, to produce and reproduce conditions of domination.... ...they are obliged to resort to the elementary forms of domination, in other words the direct domination of one person over another.... They cannot appropriate the labour services, goods, homage and respect of others without 'winning' them personally, 'tying' them, in short, creating a bond between persons. (Bourdieu, 1990: p. 129)

It is when "a system of mechanisms automatically ensuring the reproduction of the established order is constituted" that the dominant agents can be content with letting the system they dominate follow its own course (Bourdieu, 1990: p. 129). Bourdieu's second form of domination refers to a system of mechanisms which ensures the reproduction of the relationship between the dominant and the dominated and which entails objective mechanisms "such as those producing and guaranteeing the distribution of 'titles' (titles of nobility, deeds of possession, academic degrees etc.)." (Bourdieu, 1977: p. 184). This objectification, Bourdieu argues, guarantees the permanence and cumulativeness of material and symbolic acquisitions. It also tends to reproduce the structure of present relations of domination and dependence (Bourdieu, 1990: p. 130). This mode of domination, through its objectification of institutions, does not need the personal touch any more, as the system reproduces the relationship between the dominant and the dominated almost automatically.

Bourdieu argues that the effects of objectification are greater in magnitude for those coming out of the educational system. He says:

By giving the same value to all holders of the same certificate, so that any one of them can take the place of any other, the educational system, minimizes the obstacles to the free circulation of cultural capital... it makes it possible to relate all qualification-holders (and also, negatively, all unqualified individuals) to a single standard, thereby setting up a *single market*¹⁷ for all cultural capacities and guaranteeing the convertibility of cultural capital into money (Bourdieu, 1977: p. 187)

This objectifying mechanism is useful in explaining the change in the composition of those representing orthodoxy in Bhutan from people who have grown up in Dzongkha medium education to those educated in English medium education.

The order of the investigation into the multiple discourses around modernisation, culture and tradition will be as follows. Firstly, the development policy of Bhutan will be examined as the official discourse. The state has played an increasingly important role in formulating people's views about modernisation, culture and tradition, largely because development has almost always been initiated by the government. Since the book focuses on the views of young people in Bhutan, education policy is given special attention. Secondly, this book will illustrate the formation and transformation of views about modernisation, culture and tradition among young people in Bhutan. It will also investigate the background of agents with differing views. The book will discuss the role of the state in the transformation of discourses. Thirdly, this book will explore doxa - the underlying assumptions and formation of consensus and try to analyse how the doxa has been formulated and maintained.

¹⁷ Emphasis in original.

2.3 Bhutan: an overview

This section has two aims. One is to provide a background to Bhutanese discourses on modernisation, culture and tradition which the following chapters will examine more closely. The other aim is to discuss how Bourdieu's framework is relevant in the Bhutanese context. The first part includes a brief introduction to Bhutan and its development policy and short descriptions of the socio-economic changes which have taken place over the last four decades from the perspective of different people. The second part will focus on the situation of young people, offering a brief illustration of their social context and also Bhutan's education system. Thirdly it discusses Bhutan's geo-political environment and the external threats the country has faced over several centuries. Later on this book will argue that the regional environment has played a significant role in the formation of development discourses and doxa in Bhutan. Finally the relevance of the theoretical perspective of this study to the Bhutanese context will be considered. The focus on young people in this study is, as will be shown in the next chapter, largely because of the fieldwork environment. Young people, the group most influenced by the modernisation process, were questioned in order to provide an interesting perspective on issues surrounding modernisation, culture and tradition.

Bhutan, nestled in the Himalayas, is bordered by the Tibetan region of China and the Indian states of Sikkim, Assam, West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh. This extremely rugged and mountainous territory of approximately 46,500 square kilometres, about the same size as Switzerland, is the home of about six hundred thousand people.¹⁸ The country is often

¹⁸ This is an official estimated population (Planning Commission, 1991; Ministry of Planning, 1996). UNDP however shows different population figures. According to the *Human Development Report 2000*, the population of Bhutan was two million in 1998 (UNDP, 2000). However, a UNDP report on Bhutan published in 1998 estimates the population to be 600,000 (UNDP, 1998). It is sometimes difficult to obtain precise statistical data on Bhutan. Even the official development plan document points to the lack of reliable data not only on population but also on other areas. I have tried to obtain

divided into three geographical regions: the south, the southern foothills, is between 150m and 1,500m above sea level, and has a subtropical climate. The north region, the higher Himalayas, lies above 3,000m and contains several peaks above 7,000m, such as Gangkhar Puensum (7,497m) and Jumolhari (7,316m). The central area between the two regions, the inner Himalayas, is between 1,500m and 3,000m and has a temperate climate. This is the area where the main valleys are situated (Navara, 1997). Both Thimphu, the capital, and Paro where the country's only airport is located are in this region. The climate in Bhutan is largely dependant on altitude, and even varies within regions. Vegetation may vary considerably within one hour of driving, and so do the agricultural activities. As one Bhutanese puts it, "In Bhutan while people are harvesting in one valley, people in the next are sowing seeds." Seventy-two percent of the country is covered by forest (Ministry of Planning, 1996: p. 1). Winding roads connects most of the twenty district headquarters which are located throughout the county. The total road network is about 3,200 km. Main routes consists of an east-west "high-way" and two north-south "high-ways". The biggest town, Thimphu, has a population of between 30,000 and 40,000 (Ministry of Planning, 1996: p. 6). Other major towns are Phuntsholing and Trashigang.¹⁹ Small towns are developing around district headquarters.

The currency of the country is Ngultrum, which has been held at par with the Indian rupee since its introduction in 1974. Per capita income was US\$470 in 1995,²⁰ and agriculture

information which is as new and reliable as possible, however readers have to keep in mind of limitations of the data.

¹⁹ During the period of the Seventh Five Year Plan (1992-1997), the Bhutanese government published a document outlining the official spelling of Dzongkha terms in the Roman alphabet. It contained several changes from the conventional spellings which had been widely used before. One example is "Trashigang", which used to be spelt "Tashigang".

²⁰ The fact that most rural settlements are far from market and hence less incorporated in the cash economy suggests that per capita income is not very adequate as an indicator of material conditions.

accounts for thirty-eight percent of GDP. Eighty-five percent of the population derive a living from agriculture.

The cash economy is a relatively new phenomenon in Bhutan. Until 1970, most taxes were collected in kind and in several forms of labour tax. Even today in rural areas there are various forms of labour contribution, such as participating in the construction of a local school or hospital and renovation of *dzong*.²¹ As modernisation progresses, more roads have been constructed, and people have become increasingly mobile.²² The civil service has expanded and more people live on cash incomes.²³ More towns have weekend markets where farmers can sell vegetables, cheese and grains. More materials come in from India, Thailand and other foreign countries.²⁴ More and more farmers cultivate cash crops, such as oranges, apples, asparagus, cardamom and potatoes, and export them to neighbouring countries.²⁵ Needless to say the degree of monetisation is greater in urban areas than in rural ones.²⁶

²¹ According to the Eighth Five Year Plan, a labour tax based on the household (*gungda woola*) was abolished during the period of the Seventh Five Year Plan, and emphasis has now been placed on a voluntary and free labour contribution by people during the implementation of development programmes which benefit them directly (Ministry of Planning, 1996: p. 53). Concerning the various kinds of labour tax, see Imaeda (1994: p. 90).

²² There was no motorable road in Bhutan before 1961. The number of vehicles, including two wheelers, increased from 700 in 1980 to 7002 in 1988 (Planning Commission, 1991).

²³ Between 1977 and 1987 the size of the civil service doubled (Ministry of Planning, 1996: p. 45).

²⁴ Druk Air started cargo flights between Paro and Bangkok four times a month from 2000 (*Kuensel*, 29th January 2000).

²⁵ For example, potato growers in Bumthang district earned about Nu.4,154 million from selling 850 tons of potatoes to India in 1995. That increased in 1996 to an income of Nu.4,614 million from 873 tons of potatoes. An agriculture expert from the district says that potato cultivation “spread like wild fire” as farmers found it a rewarding crop. These figures exclude direct sales to Indian buyers (and sales in the domestic market) and only refer to transactions through the FCB (Food Corporation of Bhutan) auction yard (*Kuensel*, 29th November 1997).

²⁶ A student in Sherubtse College told me that in his natal village in Lhuntse, which is three days walk from the nearest motorable road, the average

Within the South Asian context, Bhutan has a much better record on most basic welfare indicators. Life expectancy in 1995 was 66.1 years. The infant mortality rate was 7.07 per cent, and the literacy rate 54 per cent.²⁷ The gross enrolment rate at the primary level was estimated to be 72% in 1995. The population growth rate is said to be 3.1 per cent per year (Ministry of Planning, 1996).

According to official accounts, Bhutan became a unified country in the seventeenth century under Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (1594-1652²⁸), a religious leader of the Drukpa school of Tibetan Buddhism. He established a theocracy in 1652 and gave Bhutan an administrative system and a code of law. This theocracy came to an end in 1907 when Ugyen Wangchuck (1862-1926; regn. 1907-1926) was elected to be the First King of Bhutan (Ministry of Planning, 1996).²⁹ The present king, Jigme Singye Wangchuck (1955-; regn. 1972-), is the fourth King in this hereditary monarchy. Karma Ura writes that Bhutan emerged from its self-imposed isolation and started development activities in 1961 under the leadership of the third king, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck (1928-1972; regn. 1952-1972) (Ura,³⁰ 1994: p. 35). Karma Ura

farmer's cash income is about Nu.3,000 per year. Considering that the monthly salary of a newly qualified high school teacher is a little less than Nu.6,000, this amount is very low. It may be imagined that in his village, households are largely self-subsistence, and a large part of trade is barter and with minimal cash transactions.

²⁷ In 1997, for example, the adult literacy rates in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan were 53.5%, 38.9%, 38.1% and 40.9%, respectively (UNDP, 1999: p. 136).

²⁸ There are different views on the exact year Shabdrung died in. Pommaret (1997a: p. 200) writes that he died in 1651, and Aris (1994a: p. 15) says it was *around* 1651. These different views are probably because of the fact that Shabdrung entered strict seclusion for meditation in 1651, and never reappeared. This is not unusual for high monks of Tibetan Buddhism. His death was kept secret until 1705 (Pommaret, 1997a: p. 200).

²⁹ For a detailed account of Bhutan's past, Aris (1979) and Aris (1994a) are comprehensive works. For concise but useful works, see Pommaret (1997a) and Pommaret (1997b).

³⁰ Originally Bhutanese names do not make a distinction between the first name and family name as we know them in the West. In this book however

designates the period from 1652 to 1961 “medieval Bhutan”, and gives an extensive illustration of the differences between medieval Bhutan and “modern Bhutan”, the period after 1961.³¹ For Karma Ura the transformation of Bhutan from a society imbued with medieval characteristics to one with more modern features can also be expressed as a change “from a customary self-subsistence economy to a planned trading economy” and “from a state whose ideology was the support of religious orders to one with a commitment to the socio-economic development of the country” (p. 25). In “medieval Bhutan”, governance took the form of a dual system of a state clergy headed by *Je Khenpo*³² and a theocracy administered by monks and headed by temporal rulers or *Desi*. The “medieval economy” was very successful within a context of poor internal communications and isolation from the outside world. It afforded a degree of affluence at the subsistence level. Trans-Himalayan and Indo-Bhutanese trade did take place by caravan to a limited extent. Among the valley communities, however there was a vigorous exchange of goods and merchandise (Ura, 1994: pp. 27-28). The socio-economic changes since the launch of development activities, however, as well as the political reforms since the end of the 1950s could be seen to have been significant and dynamic enough to create two different eras in Bhutan.³³

Development activities were started in 1961, and almost entirely financed by India for the first two five-year plans. Since then the source of development assistance has been diversified, and at present Bhutan receives external

the second name of Bhutanese authors is treated as the same as the family name of other (non-Bhutanese) writers. In addition, titles such as *Dasho* (high officials who are awarded a red scarf and a sword by the king) and *Lyonpo* (minister) are used almost as if they are part of people’s names in Bhutan. In this book these titles are used in the text but not included in the reference section at the end of the book.

³¹ This type of view, which divides Bhutan’s history at 1961, is not uncommon. Lyonpo Yeshey Zimba (1996) also shares this perspective.

³² The Chief Abbot of Bhutan.

³³ A fully-fledged parliament was convened in 1953. The third king declared the freedom of the serfs in 1956 (Ura, 1994: p. 31).

assistance from nineteen multilateral donors, nineteen bilateral donors and some non-governmental organisations. One of the features of the government documents concerning development activities is the coexistence of modernist voices which assess development as an achievement, and of constant reminders of the importance of preserving the “unique Bhutanese culture and tradition”. This is because the government maintains as a publicly-stated aim the harmonisation of economic development and the preservation of its cultural heritage. Among the objectives of the Eighth Five Year Plan (Ministry of Planning, 1996), “sustainability” (which includes the conservation of cultural values) and the “preservation and promotion of cultural and traditional values” are given as much importance as other objectives such as “self-reliance”, “national security”, “decentralisation and community participation”, and “privatisation and private sector development”. This feature can also be observed to be part of sectoral development strategies. For example, in the renewable natural resources sector, while the government says that the export of oranges, apples, potatoes, cardamom, and mushrooms to India, Bangladesh and Japan results in rising cash incomes for farmers, it acknowledges that traditional soil conservation techniques can keep soil erosion to a minimum (Planning Commission, 1991). Similarly, in the health sector it is noted that “Since the introduction of modern health care services in Bhutan in the 1960s, careful attention has been given to traditional practice and the people’s perception of illness” (Ministry of Planning, 1996: p. 165). At the same time it states that the health status of the population has improved remarkably, pointing out the dramatic fall in the infant mortality rate and improvement in other indicators. In the section on education, an official document notes that:

The modern, western form of education in Bhutan started in the 1950s. Until then, monastic education was almost the only form of formal education available in the country. While monastic education continues to be an important part of the national culture, western education has been promoted and expanded.... The

gross primary enrolment rate is estimated to be 72% (Ministry of Planning, 1996: p. 178).

A close examination of each development plan will be undertaken later in this book. Here I would like to introduce various accounts of development and the socio-economic changes which accompanied it that I heard from Bhutanese people. These accounts aim not only to illustrate the multiplicity of discourses on social change, but also to cover some background information which will be of assistance in the following chapters. I will take a couple of aspects of social change as examples: firstly, accounts from urban and rural areas, and secondly responses to both Bhutanese and Western knowledge.

Four decades of development activities appear to have brought many economic and social changes to Bhutan. Although the majority of people in Bhutan live at least half a day's walking distance from a road (Planning Commission, 1991: p. 114), the impact of development activities, as Karma Ura writes, are felt even in the remote mountains (1997: p. 239). People know through various means about life in towns³⁴ and this inflow of information makes some people aspire to a certain degree to a "colourful" town life.

As Kunzang Chöden remarks, the emergence of urban areas in Bhutan is a new experience, which has only taken place over the last thirty years (Chöden, 1997: p. 253). Villages are still considered as a place where "the real Bhutanese life" takes place and as the source of the Bhutanese community spirit of reciprocity, hospitality and helpfulness. I was often told in Thimphu that I must experience the real Bhutanese life in a village. The people who suggested this said to me, "Thimphu is not the real Bhutan. This is only 'semi-Bhutan'". The first generation of town inhabitants still has a strong connection with their natal village. It is not uncommon for

³⁴ People in villages get to know about the "colourful" town life, when, for example, someone from the village working in town comes back to the village for an annual ritual or festival.

both older and younger generations to go back to their villages for the annual religious ritual and other occasions. For example, a hairdresser in her mid-twenties³⁵ described herself as from the village where her parents come from,³⁶ although she has been brought up in Thimphu. She told me that she still feels a strong attachment to the village and often goes back to her parents' house there.

The introduction of Western medicine and Western education appears to have made a great impact on society. I would like to introduce a few examples of people's interactions with it. A lady in her late twenties working in a tour agency described how when one becomes sick in the village people first go to see an astrologer to find out the cause and do the relevant *puja*³⁷ (depending on the cause), and then, if they are not cured, they go to a Basic Health Unit (BHU)³⁸ or a hospital. In

³⁵ She had finished Class 10. This is, in Bhutan's context, reasonably well-educated. According to the statistics (Education Division, 1997: p. 6) between one third and a quarter of students in Class 10 go on to Class 11. Also passing Class 10 is these days a usual requirement in order to get a town job, like a teaching or nursing post. Her brothers and sisters are also well-educated. Most of them work in the civil service and BBS (Bhutan Broadcasting Service). The interview took place in August 1997.

³⁶ The identification of oneself with one's parents' place of origin can often be observed in Bhutan. This is for one of the following reasons or a combination of them. Firstly, registration often takes place in their parents' village, whether or not a person is a resident of that village. Secondly, in Bhutan the household rather than the individual is often the social and legal unit. Thirdly, while their registration is in the father's village people present themselves from the place their mother originates from, or they refer to both the mother's and the father's place of origin. In this case their mother tongue seems to give a psychological attachment.

³⁷ *Puja* is a word for religious ritual, borrowed from Nepali or Hindi. In Dzongkha it is *choku*, but people frequently use *puja*, especially when they talk in English.

³⁸ According to an official document, the Basic Health Unit is a primary level institution in the health care system and caters for about 1,500-5,000 people. It is staffed by a Health Assistant, Auxiliary Nurse Midwife and Basic Health worker. There are ninety-seven BHUs and twenty-six hospitals in Bhutan. For indigenous medicine there is one indigenous hospital in Thimphu and ten indigenous units attached to district hospitals. The relatively small number of units and hospitals for indigenous medicine is, according to a health official, partly because of the limited availability of the

town, meanwhile, people go to a hospital and at the same time do *puja*. People are not always dependant on religious practitioners³⁹ and doctors of indigenous medicine, because they now have an alternative - modern medicine. An education officer confessed that in the modern education sector it is becoming difficult to teach indigenous beliefs, such as belief in spirits, since they cannot be probed scientifically. One old gentleman told me, “With the introduction of Western medicine and Western education, many aspects of Bhutanese life started to be questioned”. In other words, as Karma Ura points out (1997: p. 247), Bhutanese culture and values have been relativised.

What I wish to highlight here is the existence of a multiplicity of viewpoints about social change. Urban life are recognised to have positive and negative connotations, and both modern scientific medicine and traditional healers are perceived differently according to a person’s position in the society. This multiplicity of discourses is a central concern of this book.

The education system and young people

There are three modes of education in Bhutan, namely monastic education, modern education,⁴⁰ described as secular English medium education, and one focusing on Bhutanese culture, religion and language.⁴¹ The latter is taught mainly in Dzongkha, Bhutan’s national language,⁴² whereas in the modern education sector English is the medium of instruction and this is the dominant sector of Bhutanese education at the

medication, which cannot be mass-produced (Ministry of Planning, 1996: pp. 166-168).

³⁹ Religious practitioners include shamans, astrologers, lay monks (*gomchen*) and ordained monks (*gelong*).

⁴⁰ According to Driem, the medium of instruction in secular Western-inspired education in Bhutan was Hindi until 1964 (Driem, 1994: p. 95).

⁴¹ The third group of schools includes the Institute of Language and Cultural Studies, Simtokha, the School of Arts and Crafts, Royal Academy of Performing Arts, National Institute of Traditional Medicine, Thimphu, and the Trashiyangtse Rigney Institute.

⁴² In one of these schools mathematics and science are taught in English.

present time. In monastic education Dzongkha is the medium of instruction.

Education is an expanding sector in Bhutan. With regard to modern education, before the advent of planned development, there were fifty-nine primary schools and no junior or higher secondary schools, let alone a college. The number of pupils was only three thousand (Ministry of Development, 1971: p. 4). In 1997, there were one hundred and seven community schools,⁴³ one hundred and fifty-seven primary schools,⁴⁴ twenty five junior high schools, thirteen high schools and two institutions which provide undergraduate level education. There were about ninety thousand students both in primary education and in secondary education (Education Division, 1997). Beyond secondary education, besides degree courses, there are several training institutes, most of which are for students who have finished Class 10.⁴⁵ However, not all of them are under the Education Division. For instance, the Natural Resources Training Institute is under the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Royal Institute of Health Sciences is administered by the Health Division. Dzongkha medium education is not in the mainstream in terms of the number of students and schools. There are two Dzongkha medium schools which are administered by the Education Division, with about four hundreds students (Education Division, 1997).⁴⁶ The same sort of data is not available for monastic

⁴³ Community schools provide primary education. They are built and maintained by the community where at least thirty students are found to be within one hour's walking distance. According to a planning document, the establishment of community schools within easier reach of children's homes has contributed to an increase in the numbers of children attending school (Planning Commission, 1991: p. 74).

⁴⁴ This figure includes seven private schools.

⁴⁵ Enrolment rate at primary level is estimated to be 72% which corresponds to about 75,000 students. Enrolment rate for secondary level and above is not available, however, the number of students in secondary education is about 16,000, and in tertiary education (Class 11 and above including training institutes) about 2,700. (Education Division, 1997).

⁴⁶ Other institutions providing Dzongkha medium training are the School of Arts and Crafts and Royal Academy of Performing Arts, both of which are

education, primarily because not all young monks are in *shaydras*⁴⁷ (monastic schools), - many of them are instead in monasteries and *dzong*.⁴⁸ It is also because figures broken down by age are not available for the monk body. There are about four thousand monks supported by the state (Planning Commission, 1991: p. 66), and the number of monks who are not supported by the state, but who live from private patronage, is estimated to be about three thousand (Pommaret, 1994: p. 54). This study will examine young people from all three education sectors, and also those who have left school early.

When Bhutan introduced a modern education programme⁴⁹ the entire curriculum mirrored Indian educational practices, and a large proportion of the teaching staff actually came from India. Since then a tremendous effort has been made by the government to “Bhutanise” the education system, as well

under the Special Commission for Cultural Affairs, and the National Institute of Traditional Medicine which is administered by the Health Division.

⁴⁷ There is no distinction between singular and plural nouns in Dzongkha as is found in the English language. However I have added “s” to the nouns which are supposed to be plural in order to help readers.

⁴⁸ A *dzong* is described as a fortress-monastery, which houses a monastic body and the state/district administration.

⁴⁹ This does not mean that there was absolutely nobody in the country at that time who had been educated in modern secular education. The first king and his chamberlain, Ugyen Dorji, were said to be keen on modern education. In 1914 forty-six boys from Bhutan were put into the Scottish mission school in Kalimpong, India, known as Dr. Graham’s Homes. Out of these students, twelve were trained in the 1920s as teachers, forest rangers, mining engineers, and so on (Aris, 1994a: p. 104; Collister, 1987: p. 175). Kalimpong, which belonged to Bhutan until 1865, and Darjeeling have continued to be the places which provide education for the Bhutanese. According to Solverson (1995: p. 80), around 1960 Bhutanese students made up almost 80% of the boarders in one school in Darjeeling. Crosette writes that she kept running into public officials who had been pupils at Dr. Graham’s Homes (Crosette, 1998). She is not the only one. I also met many officials of various ranks and also people working in the private sector who studied in missionary schools in Kalimpong and Darjeeling. Even now some children of relatively well-to-do families are sent to these schools. Enrolment figures of this book however do not include those who are in schools abroad, including schools in these areas.

as expanding schools and improving the quality of education. As early as the Third Five Year Plan (1971-76), the government called for the translation of textbooks into the Bhutanese language, and the Sixth Five Year Plan (1987-92) states, "Having been structured on the Indian System, the education system in Bhutan needs to be reformed to relate it to the values, environment and the history of Bhutanese people" (Planning Commission, 1987: p. 33).

The position of modern education in society has changed during the last forty years, according to several government officials. When the government started modern education the parents generally did not want to send their children to school, because they believed that monastic education, rather than modern education, would give their children a better next life,⁵⁰ and also because children represented a valuable source of work in the fields. They said that parents used to beg government officials not to take their children to the modern school, which was often ten days, and sometimes twenty days, walk from home. More recently, officials continue, parents are willing to send their children to school, and the scene of parents rushing to school to gain admission for their children is regularly featured in the newspaper at the beginning of the academic year. Although there are various views on modern education in Bhutan, here I would point out that this general change in attitude towards modern education seems to reflect well the changes over the last forty years in people's perception of what a desirable career is.

I will argue that it is generally accepted in society that a high official in the government is well respected and has one of the most desirable jobs in Bhutan. Formerly young people in Bhutan did not have much choice of occupation. Farming was the way of life for the majority. These days, a successful

⁵⁰ Many Bhutanese believe in the next life. Tibetan Buddhism teaches that all creatures repeat death and life until they achieve Enlightenment. People believe that they are a reincarnation of something, maybe a human being, maybe an animal, and that the quality of their next life will be determined by the religious merits they accumulate during this life.

career in Bhutan seems to encompass completing a bachelor's degree in Sherubtse College - the only college in Bhutan - or other universities abroad, being selected to join the civil service,⁵¹ and eventually becoming a *dasho*,⁵² a high official in the government. To ascend this "Bhutanese ladder of success" one has to be educated in the modern education sector, and this seems to be one of the biggest factors behind the inflation of the value of modern education in Bhutan.

Bhutan's geo-political environment

The regional environment is important for this small country. Bhutan is sandwiched between two giant nations, India and China, a situation which has meant that Bhutan has had to deal carefully in its external relations. Bhutan has been the subject of external threats for many centuries, and a feeling of insecurity about the nation's independence appears to be constantly in the Bhutanese mind. Firstly, from the sixteenth century onwards, Bhutan has been attacked by the Tibetans several times. Historically Bhutan has had many contacts with Tibet, and people in western Bhutan are considered to be descendants of those who emigrated from Tibet;⁵³ in the ninth and tenth centuries many people, particularly aristocrats, fled from Tibet⁵⁴ and settled in the valleys of central and eastern Bhutan, where they assumed power (Pommaret, 1994: p. 53). Many religious men came to Bhutan from Tibet between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries (Pommaret, 1994: p. 56).⁵⁵

⁵¹ Those who get the scholarship for so-called "professionals", such as doctors, engineers, and architects, do not have to sit this examination. They can automatically join the civil service after completing their studies.

⁵² *Dasho* is a title awarded by the king of Bhutan to certain officials. A *dasho* wears a red scarf and carries a sword (Pommaret, 1994: p. 263).

⁵³ According to Pommaret (1997c: p. 47), the migrations from Tibet are thought to have occurred in different waves starting from the sixth or seventh century onwards.

⁵⁴ Pommaret (1997a: pp. 181-183) writes that this happened because the situation in Tibet became chaotic after the assassination of the anti-Buddhist king Langdarma in 842.

⁵⁵ Among these people, prominent figures are Phajo Drukgom Shigpo (1184 - 1251), who introduced the Drukpa Kagyupa school of Tibetan Buddhism to

Moreover the country was a major trading partner with Bhutan for many centuries until the border was closed in 1959. Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (the founding father of Bhutan) was also from Tibet. He was born into the Gya family, which was the head of the Drukpa Kagyupa school of Tibetan Buddhism (Pommaret, 1997a: p. 192). He became the eighteenth abbot of Ralung, the great Drukpa monastery in Tibet near the northern border of Bhutan, and was recognised as the incarnation of a famous Drukpa scholar, Pema Karpo (1527 - 92). But this recognition was challenged by the Tsang Desi, who was the ruler of the Tibetan province of Tsang and virtually king of Tibet (Imaeda, 1994: p. 37), and who had his own candidate. In 1616, fearing for his life, Ngawang Namgyal fled from Ralung and sought refuge in western Bhutan, where he was invited by followers of the Drukpa school which had been firmly established in the region since the thirteenth century (Pommaret, 1994: p. 60). Shortly after the arrival of Ngawang Namgyal in Bhutan, Tsang Desi attacked Bhutan. Forced back, the Tibetans attacked again in 1634 and 1639 but without great success. In 1645 and 1648, they made equally vain attempts at conquest. For the Bhutanese, Shabdrung is the man who unified Bhutan and laid the foundation of Bhutanese system of administration and law and, at the same time, he is seen as the figure who guarded Bhutan's independence from Tibetan aggression.

More recently, Chinese aggression against Tibet in 1950 has posed a serious threat to Bhutan's security. Mathou points out that because Bhutan had very strong cultural and historic ties with Tibet, it worried a lot about the conquest of its neighbour (Mathou, 1994: p. 53). The Chinese occupation of Tibet meant the elimination of Tibet as a buffer between China and India. Bhutan came to face China directly. More ominously in 1939 China included Bhutan in a list of its "lost territories", and thereafter Chinese cartographers included

Bhutan, Thangtong Gyelpo (1385 - 1464) and Drukpa Kunle (1455 - 1529) (Pommaret, 1997a: pp. 184-187).

part of Bhutan in China (Mathou, 1994: p. 53).⁵⁶ Aris reports a tense atmosphere inside Bhutan, "I remember my own surprise in the 1960s when I witnessed fully ordained monks of the state monastic body receiving formal military training at Punakha at a time when invasion from the north was reckoned a real possibility"⁵⁷ (Aris, 1994c: p. 23). Up to the summer of 1959, according to Rahul (1997: p. 42), there was flourishing border trade between Bhutan and Tibet. Several trade agents looked after Bhutanese trade interests in Tibet, and Bhutan used to appoint its representative in Lhasa from among the Bhutanese traders engaged in this trade. Bhutan had also been administering eight enclaves in West Tibet since the seventeenth century, which China seized in 1959. In 1960, Bhutan closed its border with Tibet, cut all communication with China, and banned trade (Kohli, 1993: p. 71). The Chinese aggression against Tibet and the resulting insecurity felt by the Bhutanese was, as we will see later, one of the main reasons that the Bhutanese government started constructing motorable roads connecting the country with India, and launched development activities in general. Since then Bhutan has strengthened its ties with India. The country's first and second five year plans were almost entirely financed by India and the education system was modelled on that of India. This was probably not only because of the possibility that Bhutan might be the next target of Chinese aggression, but also because Bhutan could be involved in a confrontation between China and India. This possibility came close to being a reality in 1962 when the Sino-Indian dispute resulted in a military clash. According to Rose, Kameng district in India's North-East Frontier, bordering on eastern Bhutan, was the scene of the largest and most decisive battles in this border war (Rose, 1977: pp. 80-81).⁵⁸ If Bhutan had

⁵⁶ Since 1984 the Chinese and Bhutanese governments have met every year to negotiate border issues (Mathou, 1994: p. 83).

⁵⁷ Historically, according to Aris, cases in which monks have acted as soldiers are not uncommon. Numerous examples can be found of Bhutanese monks acting as commanders of troops (Aris, 1994b: p. 24).

⁵⁸ The Himalayan pass most critical to the support of Chinese operations in the Kameng district of the North-East Frontier is situated on the Bhutan-Tibet border. This pass is the only pass in the eastern Himalayas that is

been involved in the confrontation between these two countries, its survival as a small state would have been difficult.

Another country which was swallowed by a big neighbouring nation was Sikkim, and this event showed that even India may not be a good friend to Bhutan. Sikkim was also a kingdom which had Tibetan Buddhism as its religious background. However in 1975 Sikkim was annexed by India. The country had been a protectorate of British India, and after India gained independence in 1947 it continued to be India's protectorate (Mathou, 1994: p. 78). The immigration of the Nepali-speaking population from Darjeeling and eastern Nepal was encouraged by the British, and by 1891, according to Hutt, the Nepali speaking population far outnumbered the Lepchas, the original population of Sikkim, and the Bhutias, who are of Tibetan origin (Hutt, 1994: p. 9). The Nepali-speaking population took a stance against the government which was dominated by the Lepchas and Bhutias. After the independence of India, this anti-government stance was intensified. In 1949, India took Sikkim under direct administrative control when the anti-government movement seemed to be on the verge of getting out of control. India intervened at the request of Sikkim's ruler, but, according to Rose, there was a suspicion among the Bhutanese that the intervention was engineered by the Indian government and that it represented the first stage in a contrived accession of Sikkim to the Indian Union (Rose, 1977: p. 72). In the 1974 general election a political party which advocated Sikkim's participation in the political and economic institutions of India dominated, gaining thirty-one out of thirty-two seats in the Assembly. The result was the complete dissolution of the monarchy and the merger of Sikkim with India (Bhattacharya, 1997: pp. 4-5).

usually snow-free during the winter season. If the Chinese had intended to continue military operations in that area, according to Rose, they would have had to use this pass for logistical support. Rose argues that this would have brought Bhutan into the war (Rose, 1977: pp. 80-81).

Sikkim's case shows two kinds of possible threats to Bhutan. One is Indian expansion, and the other is a threat of growing migration into the country, especially of the Nepali-speaking population. From the Bhutanese point of view, Sikkim is an example of a Buddhist kingdom which was brought down by a newly migrated Nepali population - something which the Bhutanese do not want repeated in their own land.

Another threat to Bhutan has become apparent more recently. Militant organisations, such as ULFA (the United Liberation Front of Assam) and the Bodos,⁵⁹ which are active in the state of Assam in India, have started to create serious problems for country. Their activities in south-eastern Bhutan demand careful handling from the government, since the issue holds the possibility that relations with India may become delicate. Bhutan has an open border with India from Sikkim to West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, and the militants are intruding into the south-eastern area of Bhutan as a result. The ULFA and Bodo militants have established their camps in the forest areas of south-east Bhutan⁶⁰ which are close to their villages in Assam, and from there continue their militant activities against the state government of Assam. It is difficult to control movements of people between the two countries, according to the former Home Minister, because of this open border which the people of these countries can cross freely. It is difficult to distinguish a Bodo or ULFA militant from other Indians. He also points out that because the border area is covered by dense forests, which

⁵⁹ According to *Kuensel* (25th July 1998), the ULFA is a militant organisation fighting for the independence of Assam from India, and the Bodos are a tribal group fighting for the creation of a separate state of Bodoland. The militants might eventually affect the relationship between India and Bhutan because they are committing terrorist and criminal acts in India and escaping to camps which they have established in Bhutan. There have been several incidents, in one of which four Bhutanese policemen were killed by Bodo militants (*Kuensel*, 4th October 1997).

⁶⁰ Priesner reports that according to an Indian weekly, *Sunday* (5th-11th October 1997), the ULFA has four hundred and fifty militants in Bhutan; the *Telegraph* (20th October 1997) on the other hand claims there are twenty camps sheltering two thousand five hundred militants in Bhutan (Priesner, 1998: p. 158).

make good hiding places for the militants, it is almost impossible for Bhutanese security troops to cordon off the entire area and to take measures against the militants (*Kuensel*, 12th July 1997).

Among Bhutanese these activities are perceived as a serious threat to Bhutan's sovereignty, and since 1997 the National Assembly has had lengthy discussions about this issue. Members of the Assembly have described the infiltration of the ULFA-Bodo militants into Bhutan as the greatest problem that Bhutan has ever faced (*Kuensel*, 25th July 1998). During the Eighth Five Year Plan Meeting in the district of Samdrup Jongkhar which was chaired by the King, people expressed their great concern over the issue. From the discussions, the main problems arising from the presence of these militants in Bhutan's territory seem to be threefold. Firstly, it is a serious security issue. The militants planted bombs in Samdrup Jongkhar, kidnapped Bhutanese, and even killed four Bhutanese policemen (*Kuensel*, 4th October 1997). A former *chimi* of Nganglam⁶¹ said that the militants shot at vehicles on the road, harassed and robbed people, and stole cattle and other livestock (*Kuensel*, 25th April 1998). Forest rangers of the area are also becoming targets for their attacks.⁶² People are also concerned by reports that the Indian army is entering Bhutanese territory in pursuit of the militants (*Kuensel*, 12th July 1997). Secondly, as pointed out in the National Assembly in 1997, the situation could affect the relationship between Bhutan and India, thereby eventually threatening national security. Members of the Assembly are aware of allegations made on foreign radio stations and in newspapers that Bhutan is feeding and sustaining the militants. If the Indian government took these allegations seriously, it would affect relations between the two countries, though so far there is no sign of this happening. Thirdly, people fear that the anti-government movement of ethnic Nepalese people may join

⁶¹ Nganlam area in Samdrup Jongkhar is seen as a high risk area, according to the *dzongda* of the district (*Kuensel*, 25th July 1998).

⁶² Incidents are reported in 4th October 1997, 13th February 1999 and 5th June 1999 editions of *Kuensel*.

these militants and create an even more serious threat to Bhutan's sovereignty and independence. These delicate external relations and the perceived threats to Bhutan – felt by both government and people alike - have played an important role in production of Bhutanese discourses and, as we will see later, this is one of powerful explanatory factors of Bhutanese doxa.

Multiple discourse in Bhutan

The present study shares some of the same concerns as discursive analyses of development in the sense that it also understands that development theories and practices have been Eurocentric, and that the West has achieved power over the non-West through the discourse of development itself. This book however argues that we must search for an approach beyond discourse analysis in order to incorporate the perspective of people in non-Western societies into the discussion of the idea of development. Considering that one of the sources of the power of Orientalism is the essentialisation of the non-Western world, an approach which goes beyond discourse analyses must firstly try to avoid essentialised representation by focusing on the multiplicity of discourses that exist in any given context.

In one of the very few studies of Bhutan's culture and tradition in the transitional period of modernisation, Dujardin argues in his study of Bhutanese architecture that the Bhutanese no longer seem to be aware of the unique potential and dynamic character of their tradition (1994: p. 137), and that tradition appears to have been narrowed down to the level of wall-paper decorations, by providing each "westernised" urban building with a "Bhutanese" character (1997: p. 65). This book will argue that his view is only partly relevant, since it represents one of many views on modernisation, culture and tradition among young people in Bhutan.

There are many sources of multiple discourse. For example, different meanings are often attached to the same term. In

Bhutan undesirable situations, such as juvenile delinquency and robbery of *chorten*,⁶³ tend to be attributed to modernisation, and thereby the down side of modernisation is emphasised socially, even though at the same time many positive effects of modernisation are acknowledged. Also being “westernised” has many connotations which vary depending on who is talking: the terms “westernised” and “traditional” are used flexibly to criticise someone, to praise another’s behaviour, and to justify one’s own view.

The second example of multiple discourse would be the different kinds of education. The fact that different types of education are taught in different languages would appear to contribute to the formation of different views in Bhutan. English seems to be the main mediator with the outside world: although radio programmes⁶⁴ and newspapers are in both English and Dzongkha⁶⁵ and there is not much difference between the different language versions of programmes and newspapers, other media such as magazines and videos are in English or to a lesser extent in Hindi. At the time of my fieldwork, radio broadcasting only took place for about four hours a day, and the newspaper, *Kuensel*, was issued once a week. On the other hand, Indian daily newspapers, journals such as *Time* and *Newsweek*, and fashion magazines are available in Thimphu, and they are written in English. Besides the medium of education, the curriculum is also different from one education sector to another. Students in each education sector are exposed to different kinds of knowledge.

Bourdieu’s theoretical framework is useful when examining multiple discourses. His concepts of orthodoxy and

⁶³ Buddhist monuments. In Bhutan all *chorten* contain religious relics.

⁶⁴ TV broadcasting did not exist at the time of my fieldwork - it started from June 1999.

⁶⁵ Besides English and Dzongkha, radio programmes are also broadcast in *Sharchopikha* (or *Tshangla*) and in Nepali and the newspaper is available in Nepali as well. *Sharchopikha* is the language which is dominant in eastern Bhutan.

heterodoxy enable us to include the different views held by society into the scope of the investigation. Moreover, the concept of doxa brings what is “undiscussed” into the focus of the study. This means that when compared to the discourse analysis of Foucault, an advantage of Bourdieu’s framework is that it can give a much wider scope to the research.

Related to this point, Bourdieu’s framework also brings a dynamic nature into the analysis of discourse. Since Foucault argues that discourse is hegemonic, there is little room left in his theory for counter-discourses to emerge. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, there are in fact competing views on subject such as modernisation in Bhutan, and different meanings are often attached to the same phenomenon or object. Discourses in Bhutan must be thus examined bearing this dynamic nature in mind. Bourdieu’s concepts of heterodoxy, orthodoxy, doxa and crisis enable us to examine the ways in which counter-discourses emerge: as Bourdieu says, crisis is the point at which heterodoxy (counter discourse) emerges through a questioning of doxa and the transformation of the “universe of the undiscussed” into orthodoxy.

I would argue rather hypothetically for a moment that the launch of the development programmes was the point of crisis, which opened up a new universe of discourse. This was the time when Western inspired “modern” education – described as secular English medium education – was introduced, and since then modern English medium education has been one of the most important channels for introducing Western scientific knowledge. Modern education has injected a totally different kind of knowledge, a different way of thinking and different perspectives into the society. Dasho Karma Gayleg, a former Councillor of the Royal Advisory Council, remarks,

In the past the red robe of monks itself was the object of respect in the society. There was no question about it. But these days young people are not very convinced by monks. Monks have to explain and convince them.

It is because of modern education and Western knowledge. Young people always ask, 'why, why'.

His comments show that those people who had had a modern education started to question areas in which previously not a single question had been raised. I will argue that they started to put the Bhutanese way of life and manner of thinking under the spotlight: as Bourdieu says, social orders which were taken for granted started to be questioned. For instance, before the advent of modern education there were no questions raised in society about how sick people were healed. People went to see the astrologer, shaman, *gomchen*⁶⁶ or monks and had *puja*. Western knowledge however insists that sick people have to see a doctor of Western medicine. On agricultural matters, people previously consulted with astrologers or other religious practitioners about their work in the fields. But agriculture extension workers armed with Western knowledge would argue that there were better ways of planting and harvesting which were scientifically proven. Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup, the Minister of Health and Education points out another area in which the old social order started to be questioned:

If parents are uneducated and children are educated, the children start to look down upon their parents, and they do not respect their parents any more. It is same for the people who have been respected in society and regarded as having authority, such as *gup*.⁶⁷ In this way, traditional hierarchy is collapsing. The value of respect toward elders and authority,

⁶⁶ *Gomchen* is often described as a lay priest - seemingly a contradiction in terms. *Gomchen* are in fact half-layman and half-clergy, as they live at home, have a family, and earn their living in secular occupations, such as agriculture or the civil service. At the same time, they receive religious teachings that permit them to perform ceremonies. According to Pommaret (1994: p. 55), the number of *gomchen* is estimated at about 15,000. They play a very significant role in isolated villages where they stand in for monks in all the rituals that villagers need to have performed.

⁶⁷ Head man of a *gewog*, or block (Ura, 1995: p. 366). A *gewog* consists of several villages (Ura, 1994: p. 39).

which is a very important part of Bhutanese values, is declining.

Thus I would hypothesise that the introduction of modern education as part of development activities led to a crisis in which questions were raised about what hitherto had been the normal social order. As the existing doxa was questioned, a new universe of discourse opened up. However this hypothesis does have a problem, because in Bourdieu's theory the crisis is lead by heterodoxy while in Bhutan's case the state itself seems to have initiated the change. I shall come back to this point later in this book and examine the relevance of Bourdieu's framework to Bhutanese discourses by looking more closely at the discourses circulating among young people and also by providing a more comprehensive picture of the transformation of these discourses. Crisis will be discussed in the context of the regional situation and the book will argue that Bhutan's changing geopolitical environment was one of the most important factors in understanding why the Bhutanese government initiated the crisis (i.e. development programmes).

The book also argues for the importance of understanding why people represent themselves as they do. This is, I argue, a very useful window through which to view the society, because each representation reflects a person's position in that society and how they reflect social norms. In other words, we try to understand the socially structured subconsciousness which allows certain views to be formulated by a person, and the social context of these different views. The scope of investigation of this book is not only discourses and doxa, but it is also extended to encompass a much wider field of social analysis: the "Bhutanese ladder of success" is seen as one of the reference points for how most young people can tell what their position is in the society. Different future projections associated with each of three kinds of education also signify a young person's position. The prevalent social norms and the history of the society can also be expected to at least partly explain how each view has been formulated. Bourdieu's concepts of capital and field are used in this

context in order to understand the stakes of the field and each agent's position in that field. This in turn allows us to understand the "motivations" behind discourses.

Furthermore, the book tries to consider local discourses and their interaction with the state discourse in the much wider context of globalisation. Inspired by Friedman's "global anthropology", the book will examine the influence of the regional geo-political situation, and also the influence of Western development discourse, on the formation and transformation of Bhutanese discourses. Throughout the book Bhutanese development discourses - both those of officials and those of young people - are constantly compared and contrasted with Western development discourse, especially modernisation theories. The book thereby considers the extent to which the hegemony of the Western development discourse influences Bhutanese development discourses.

Having established the departure point for the discussion, the book will next clarify the context of the fieldwork and its methodology.