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Chapter 6  Discourse formation and institutional capacity: a study on fringe transformation and environmental conflicts in Indonesia

6.1  Introduction

Before entering the reform era of 1998, Indonesian planning practices have been framed by top-down norms and standards, which were often detached from the local contextual milieu. This situation drastically changed following the commencement of the reform era, engendering democratisation and decentralisation in urban policy and governance processes. As a result of this fundamental change, the reproduction of planning ideas seems to be more pluralistic, dynamic and discursive. For an industrialising country such as Indonesia, this political progress can be an innovative as well as challenging context for planning, particularly in remotely governed places with a lack of governance capacity such as the urban fringe around big cities situated within fast-growing metropolitan regions (Hudalah, et al., 2007).

In such places, the reproduction of planning ideas tends to be contested, reflecting the contrasting tension of urban growth vs. environmental protection; local economic development vs. regional sustainability; and private partnerships vs. public control. It can be seen, for example, in the case of Puncut, an urban fringe in the northern part of Bandung City, where the planning debate has centred on whether to transform it into residential and recreational areas or to revitalise its ecological function as part of the region’s main water catchment area.

Past studies suggest that discourse formation, as situated, argumentative and persuasive process of reproduction of planning ideas, can be a powerful strategy in the contest of challenging existing governance styles and attitudes (Healey, 1999; Rydin, 1999; Throgmorton, 1992; Vigar, et al.,

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5 An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the 23rd Congress of the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP): Why Can't the Future be More Like the Past?, 15-19 July 2009, Liverpool, UK. (Hudalah & Woltjer, 2009).
2000). However, these studies were mainly conducted within the context of established political systems of industrialised countries. Its evidence in developing and transitional countries still appears as a topical aspect of collaborative practices (Ataov & Kahraman, 2008; Usavagovitwong & Posriprasert, 2006). This chapter argues that the Indonesia’s transition to a more democratic political system and neo-liberal economy implies the need for more coherent studies on the theoretical and methodological consequences of discourse formation in planning.

In order to make discourse works better in the planning of fragmented and remotely governed places, such as Puncut fringe area, the current chapter focuses on the institutional capacity that discourses can build. Healey (1998, p. 1541) argues that discourses function as a knowledge resource for ‘building an institutional capacity focused on enhancing the ability of place-focused stakeholders to improve their power to “make a difference” to qualities of their place’. If discourses can be that important in planning, how are they constructed in the daily practice of planning? How does their reproduction contribute to the improvement of governance capacity in peri-urban areas? As an alternative perspective to the discussion on policy network in 0, this chapter attempts to identify the roles and functions of discourse formation as a strategy for managing conflicts and building institutional capacity, referring to the improvement of governance ability to promote social legitimacy of planning action on the fringe.

For this purpose, the chapter first outlines the notions of discourses and their approaches and applications in urban and planning studies. It contends that new institutionalism can strengthen the normative foundations as well as contextual intelligence of discourses from which capacity building potential can be better explored. Following the overview of land development, planning and governance contexts in Indonesia in general and NBA in particular (0, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4), this chapter provides the narrative of the planning debate on urban development and environmental protection in Puncut, to illustrate how the concept of discourse approach to capacity building may work in practice. Preceded by a note on analytical methods, the analytical section deconstructs two main competing discourses in the case study as reproduced by different networks of planning communities from different social settings: the ‘garden house’ discourse and the ‘water catchment’ discourse. The section further situates the discourses in broader socio-cultural contexts. Particularly, the analyses examine the extent to which discourse formation might enhance the institutional capacity for innovative planning action on the urban fringe. The conclusion of this chapter suggests that discourse formation may contribute to the
building of more conducive governance consciousness by facilitating the interlinking of planning ideas with their socio-cultural contexts, promoting marginalised issues into formal planning agendas, and cementing fragmented social networks.

6.2 Discourse, new institutionalism and planning

In the last decades, discourse analysis and theory has influenced the development of post-positivist urban planning theory. First, discourses can be seen as a descriptive analytical approach to explain the influences of power and social structures on planning (Richardson, 2002). Besides, discourses have been utilised as a normative strategy for communicative planning (Healey, 1997). Enhancing the latter idea, this chapter develops on the institutional dimensions of discourses; on how discourses connect planning ideas to their social contexts (Vigar, et al., 2000). As such, discourses may influence a planning process by framing the ways in which agendas are set, issues are defined, problems are understood and possible solutions are delimited (Rydin, 1999).

Discourse can be defined as sets of ideas and concepts that are reproduced in daily processes of a policy practice (Hajer, 1995). It is constituted by sets of arguments, myths, metaphors or phrases, which are transformed into more acceptable forms of policy language. Discourses play a role in giving meaning to the complex interactions of material and social realities. Nevertheless, the accurate relation between discourses and realities is still contested. From postmodern approaches, discourses or language structures in general, are perceived to represent, and thus to be inseparable from, the realities themselves (Richardson, 2002). The approaches are influenced by Foucault (1971, 1978) who views power as the pervasive aspect of societal reality whose exercise is represented through discourse. Alternatively, discourses can be perceived normatively as a communicative strategy of using and manipulating realities to promote particular agendas. Extending the latter idea, discourses are regarded rather as a medium for making sense of the invisible structures of the realities (Vigar, et al., 2000).

Bridging the divide between material and social realities, discourse theory corresponds with new institutionalism, a social theory dealing with the cognitive and cultural analysis on the interactive relations between institutions and action (W. W. Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). As emphasised in Chapter 1, institutions are defined as more than just ‘visible’ structural properties constraining behaviour such as formal bodies, rules, procedures or norms such as the state, constitutional writings and the policy systems.
Away from this modern definition, institutions may also include abstract templates such as routines, social symbols and cultural values that function not just to constrain but to enable, frame and legitimise action (Hall & Taylor, 1996). According to new institutionalism, such institutions are not predetermined but socially constructed in daily practices. In fact, there is a mutually constitutive process between institutions (structure) and action (agency) in which the reproduction of institutions influences and is influenced by action (Giddens, 1986).

Discourse is an alternative approach through which we can comprehend how new institutionalism works in practice. Discourses essentially have institutional dimensions, implying not just substantial knowledge but institutional structure containing internal rules that frame action (Hajer, 1995). The meanings that discourses carry are also more than just linguistic structures, which are often static and uncontextualised. Discourses also contain social framework creating conditions for our thought, communication and even action (Richardson, 2002; Vigar, et al., 2000).

The most essential concept of discourse approach for policy practices is probably discourse formation or ‘doing discourse’, referring to the borrowing, adaptation, transformation and/or reproduction of discourse by particular policy communities for particular policy audiences situated in particular institutional contexts. It can be a reflective, and not linear, process and, according to Hajer (1995), it takes place at several levels of institutionalisation. In the first level, sets of ideas, which are grounded in particular social relations, are structured into coherent story-lines. Following this structuring process, the story-lines are communicated, merged, and consolidated by networks of policy communities so they become embedded within daily policy practices.

The adoption of discourse formation in planning and urban studies has followed two major approaches (Lees, 2004). The first approach is based on Foucault’s works, which explains that discourse production is a process of selection through the mechanisms of societal exclusion, prohibition and constraint (Foucault, 1971). Following this, in planning practice, discourses are seen as an unintended phenomenon, mainly reproduced as consequences of constant political struggle for urban spaces (Richardson & Jensen, 2003). Such discourses function to provide constraining conditions for planning practice.

Using the Foucauldian approach, Richardson (2002) shows that discourses can explain the political context for planning process. It is based on the assumptions that planning is situated within a complex discursive environment in which the relation between discourse, power, and knowledge
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is highly apparent (Flyvbjerg, 1998). It is argued that ‘language, and how it is reproduced in different places, is of critical importance in shaping events in the world, and certain languages can reinforce power structures’ (Richardson, 2002, p. 353). By using this perception, planning is seen as ‘an arena of constant struggle over meanings and values in society, played out in day-to-day micro level practices of planning’ in which discourse is ‘an element of both critical analysis and reflexive practice in planning’ (Richardson, 2002, p. 353).

The adoption of Foucauldian approach into planning entails several weaknesses. As Richardson (2002) stresses, only the wider institutional environment can reproduce and control discourses through systematic exclusion of creating prohibitions, taboos and rationality attributes. The approach leaves almost no room for a planning agency to play a pro-active role in the process of discourse formation. Besides, since discourse is seen as an explanatory mechanism, this approach, as Richardson (2002) observes, cannot provide any prescriptive dimension for planning action. Further critiques are the results of the inherent limitations of Foucauldian approaches, including their oppressiveness, relational power neglect and demystification of the meaning of rationality (Rydin, 2003).

As an alternative, communicative approach argue that discourses can be proactively reproduced by policy communities as a purposive strategy for promoting planning agendas (Healey, 1997). Further development of this approach tends to perceive planning discourses as a result of complex interactions between groups of policy communities, as discourses reproducers, and their institutional contexts (Healey, 1999; Rydin, 2003).

Drawing on communicative approaches, Throgmorton (1992) introduced discourses in the form of narratives about the future that can be used by planners to persuade actors’ attention on the proposed ideas. Healey (1997, 1998) and Innes & Booher (1999) also frequently point out that argumentative practices in general and discourse formation in particular are an essential aspect of collaborative planning. Here discourses are considered purposive, argumentative and persuasive systems of meaning embedded in strategies for action. Discourses are produced proactively by groups of planning communities around planning issues through communicative actions.

Giving more emphasis on the potential of action, the communicative approaches, and thus their purposive discursive approach, are considered to provide a limited account on the roles of institutional settings as reflected in the state, the economy and relational power (Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000; McGuirk, 2001; Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 1999). To overcome this
limitation, Rydin (1999) proposes that discourses need to be better linked contingently into the wider institutional structure in which they are situated. As such, discourses, constituted by linguistic as well as broader social resources, can bridge the structure-agency duality. Incorporating new institutionalism, here Rydin (2003) tries to create a balanced position where discourses are seen as structurally constrained as well as purposively constructed institutional software. Discourses tend to be perceived as an emergent social phenomenon, whose reproduction is contingent, incomplete and engaged with complex governance contexts (Healey, 2007a).

In the light of new institutionalism, discourses have the ability to translate ideas and concepts that are acceptable in the policy realm into linguistic and, furthermore, broader socio-cultural structures. Doing discourse formation, we actually use, engage with as well as reshape those structures in order to reconstruct the frame of reference for socially legitimate planning action. As Vigar et al (2000, p. 223) argues:

‘Policy discourses provide a language of representation – of space and place, of local environments, of sociospatial arrangements and policy processes – which can provide powerful images with a capacity to convince, to disseminate widely and become key "referents" in subsequent policy debate ... Where power was distributed among diverse agencies and loci of legitimacy, the capacity to persuade became a key quality of effective urban and regional policies’.

The ultimate goal of discourse formation, as an important aspect of institutional capacity building, is thus not merely imposing a planning proposal but contributing to the transformation of governance attitudes that hinder socially innovative ideas and action, which tend to come from outside formal processes (Healey, 2007a; Rydin, 1999).

In order to open up innovative, hidden and marginalised issues, Rydin (1999) suggests that institutional discourses need to be inclusively managed and positively ‘manipulated’. Discourse management helps to identify potential common sense as the basis for action. It also can transform unnecessary conflicts into consensual images as a precondition for socially legitimate action. In addition to bringing formally invisible issues to the table, well-managed discourses also can fold fragmented practices into stronger coalitions (Rydin, 2003). Such institutional potential of discourse formation are assessed empirically in this chapter by reflecting on an Indonesian case study of planning on the edge.
6.3 The integrated development planning of Punclut

Planning’s institutional capacity may be tested and evaluated when episodes of debate between urban growth coalition and environmental advocates emerge. An episode of debate consists of a series of interconnected discussion, conflict and strategy and decision making that embody capacity-building potential and are situated in particular socio-political contexts. As introduced in 0, a rich history of such episodes can be found in the peri-urban area of NBA. The episode of debate on the integrated development planning of Punclut, as part of the lengthy debate on preserving the ecological functions of NBA, was chosen as the case for this particular analysis in which discourse formation play a significant role in reshaping the formal decision making process. The episode peaked around 2004-2005, marked by the municipality’s proposal of a controversial development planning project on the fringe, followed by a revision of the municipal land use plan.

Punclut is an urban fringe divided by two different local administrations: West Bandung District (582 hectares) and Bandung Municipality (268 hectares) (see Figure 6.1). Since the 1980s, the fringe has transformed into one of Bandung City’s important recreation parks and tourist attractions. Punclut, which in Sundanese literally means ‘peak’, has been associated with a hill and its lower surroundings located around 10 kilometres to the north of the city centre of Bandung. During the late colonial era of 1940s, the area mainly functioned as a tea plantation owned by a Dutch company.

Following the nationalisation of Dutch assets in the early independence era, the land tenure and the future orientation of Punclut became uncertain. The tea plantation was gradually replaced by scattered kampongs (informal/irregular settlements) and agricultural fields on which shifting cultivation was carried out. Most of the local people have lived for generations in these kampongs and their population was almost 12,000 in 2000 (Laporan Hasil Kerja Tim Koordinasi Penyelamatan dan Revitalisasi Kawasan Punclut (Kep. Walikota Bandung No. 593/Kep.522-Huk/2004), 2004). Many are poor and mostly work on an irregular basis as construction workers and farmers.
In addition to the uncontrolled squatting and kampongs, as a result of the 1990s property boom in Indonesia, more than 40 percent of the land under Bandung Municipality has long been reserved by at least three private residential developers and only fractions of this land has been developed. The municipal executive (Laporan Hasil Kerja Tim Koordinasi Penyelamatan dan Revitalisasi Kawasan Punclut (Kep. Walikota Bandung No. 593/Kep.522-Huk/2004), 2004) argued that the unexecuted land development permits had largely contributed to the increase in erosion, sedimentation and air temperature, the deepening of the groundwater level, and the decrease in vegetation. Therefore, in 2004, the executive proposed a land development planning project aiming at increasing the economic potential of Punclut as a residential and agri-tourism area while, at the same time, revitalising its ecological function as a buffer zone for the city. This integrated project...
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consisted of physical planning, land consolidation and certification, and greening, complete with monitoring and control measures.

According to the planning report (Laporan Hasil Kerja Tim Koordinasi Penyelamatan dan Revitalisasi Kawasan Puncelut (Kep. Walikota Bandung No. 593/Kep.522-Huk/2004), 2004), two main urban development concepts motivated the project. The first was land consolidation and certification of the scattered kampongs, which provided the existing indigenous people a legal basis to cultivate the land. The concept was expected to increase the people’s sense of belonging to the land thus assuring the sustainability of the greening programme. The most important concept was integrated tourism development, which tried to combine the agri-tourism and ecological functions with residential development. The latter was a strategy to accommodate the execution of the private residential development proposals. The concept adopted the developers’ idea of ‘garden houses’ (rumah kebun), implying low-density houses (with at maximum of 20 percent building coverage ratio) surrounded by vegetation (Studi AMDAL Rencana Pembangunan Kawasan Wisata dan Hunian Terpadu Puncelut Kota Bandung: Analisis Dampak Lingkungan (ANDAL), 2005).

Figure 6.2 A scattered kampong (left) and ‘garden house’ under construction (right) in Puncelut

From the beginning, the project was considered controversial by major environmental NGOs, experts and planners in the region. It was argued that the project’s concept of promoting active partnership with private housing developers had undermined the earlier government commitments to promote community participation. It was also inconsistent with the local land use plan (Municipal law no. 2 concerning the land use plan of Bandung Municipality, 2004), which designated the area as a green area. Most importantly, the project ignored the governor’s decrees and the provincial
land use plan that banned any new residential land development in NBA, as the region’s main water catchment area.

The resistance increased when the developers started to build the main road connecting Punclut and existing road networks. In fact, in the face of growing public awareness of the project’s controversy, the municipal executive proposed to revise a one-year-old local land use plan, allowing the lengthy debate to reach its peak. The revision process was deemed to be dominated by political bargaining and the result provided a more durable legitimacy for the ongoing development process on the fringe.

Since Law No. 25 of 1999 on Regional Fiscal Balancing, municipalities/districts have been conditioned to increase their reliance on local revenue in executing their governmental functions (Law No. 25 on Regional Fiscal Balancing, 1999). In practice, the political pressure to increase local revenue often undermined peri-urban environmental and sustainability issues, since their impacts were less apparent at the local level or could not be easily ‘localised’. Therefore, regardless of the strong resistance from both inside and outside the local parliamentary arena, the urban development project in Punclut was finally approved, although with some limitations and preconditions.

6.4 Discourse and institutional analyses

The methods for analysing discourses used in the current study tend to depart from formal discourse analysis, which mainly relies on policy documents in reconstructing discourses. It is argued that, as most of the ideas that constitute planning discourses are hidden from policy documents, such textual discourse analysis cannot adequately represent the practice of planning (Richardson & Jensen, 2003; Searle, 2004). Therefore, the current chapter combines discourse and institutional analyses, whose task is, as Vigar et al (2000, p. 224) suggest, ‘to locate policies in the social relations of their production and consumption, and to “deconstruct” them to identify their meanings, power and potential consequences in these contexts’. The latter approach shifts from merely formal textual analysis towards the analysis of the dynamics of governance practice around the formulation of those formal texts. The analysis concerns ‘the ways meanings are made, used, conveyed, disseminated and translated in the context of the institutional relations which generate the interactive work expressed in the discourses’ (Healey, 1999, p. 28).

The analysis first attempts to recognise the discursive debate around the development planning project in Punclut and the revision of local land use
plan that followed. For this purpose, discourses are deconstructed into three analytical levels: (1) linguistic representation; (2) story-lines; and (3) discourse-coalitions. The linguistic level identifies the ideas, concepts and arguments of different respondents (and/or their organisations) and how they were interconnected with each other. On the basis of this ‘linguistic’ interconnection, the story-lines are identified. These story-lines evolved and were reconstructed by different policy communities, constituted by those respondents. According to Hajer (1995, p. 62), story-lines are defined as ‘narratives on social reality through which elements from many different domains are combined and that provide actors with a set of symbolic references that suggest a common understanding’. Through story-lines, knowledge is clustered, actors are positioned, and, furthermore, coalitions among the actors in given settings are created and maintained. Finally, the analysis identifies how those story-lines reinforced, supported each other and were coordinated and consolidated thus becoming coherent discourse-coalitions that carried referential power for action. Discourse-coalitions refer to the ensembles of sets of these story-lines and the actors who reproduce them and the settings in which this discourse reproduction are based (Hajer, 1995).

The main operational method for deconstructing discourses is by interpreting the transcripts of interviews and group discussions with key informants who were directly affiliated or concerned with the project, including government officials, politicians, planners, researchers, NGOs and local leaders. As input for the analysis, the respondents were asked about the planning ideas they advocated, their development and mobilisation, and the ways those ideas were adopted or rejected during formal planning discussions and hearings. Furthermore, the analysis explains the extent to which the practice of discourse formation in the case study has been used as a strategy for building of institutional capacity, referring to the improvement of social legitimacy for innovative planning action on the urban fringe. In line with Gidden’s structuration theory, this institutional analysis identifies the extent to which metaphors or phrases, as discourses’ surface that forms argumentative styles and practices, have engaged with broader socio-cultural references, as deeper and more stable institutional structure framing action (Healey, 1999). The latter may include path dependence, local and national culture, modes of governance, and social capital (Healey, 2007a). For this purpose, the respondents were encouraged to elaborate further on the fundamental, ideological, and contextual origins of their ideas and the extent to which this situatedness had reinforced their capacity to influence the formal decision-
making processes. Further elaboration of the analytical methods for this chapter is provided in 0.

6.5 Discourse formation around the urban development project on the fringe

6.5.1 The ‘garden house’ discourse

Puncut entered the wider public debate from the early 1990s onward because land development permits were issued for the locations that were earlier designated by the regional and local land use plans as protected water catchment area. However, the local planning discussions in response to these legal violations were not started until 2003, when large sections of the land had been reserved by the residential developers. More surprisingly, it was not the issuance of the permits themselves that was formally discussed but rather how to arrive at a compromise in the local land use plan. According to the municipal executive, which was later reinforced by major factions within the municipal legislative assembly, the former land use plan was considered too idealistic and detached from reality as it was ‘less rational and less dynamic compared to the city’s inherent development potential and the acceleration of economic and physical growth of the city’ (Interview 15).

The executive promoted a ‘planning is development’ story-line in which it was not the development that should conform to the plan but the plan itself that should be adaptable to urban land market demands. Given the limited local public budget impacted by the 1999 fiscal decentralisation policy, both the executive and the political factions argued that the plan inevitably had to facilitate private investments around the city. Consequently, minimised, flexible and adaptive rules in the plan were required in order to accommodate the increasing roles of private parties in urban development. These neo-liberal arguments provided the basis for the revision of the one-year-old land use plan, which later became an important legal justification for boosting the ‘garden houses’ project in Puncut.

In response to the claim that the project might violate major land use plans and regulations, the municipal executive invited geologists to carry out a study. The latter’s conclusion was that Puncut was unsuitable as a water conservation area. Since the rocks beneath its soils are volcanic breccias, the water only infiltrates to a certain depth and then flows downhill instead of staying in the rocks. Nevertheless, as a hill, Puncut still functions as a buffer zone for the lowlands. If there is a landslide on the hill, it will impact on the lowlands. Therefore, the executive suggested keeping Puncut as a protected
area but with some possibilities for urban development, such as garden houses.

In line with the geologists’ analysis, the local people observed that ‘Puncut did not retain the flow of water but passed its course downhill’ (Interview 22). While many experts blamed the hill for causing floods and drought in the lowlands, the local people countered by saying that, actually, those who really run out of clean water were not the lowlanders but they themselves who had to obtain their supply from the districts far away. From the local people’s perspective, the poverty issue on the urban fringe had long been neglected by municipal planning policies. As the result, there were no legal land tenure, asphalt roads, basic schools and healthcare facilities, and running clean water, all the amenities that were enjoyed by the people in the city proper. Therefore, they developed a story-line that ‘the fringe was marginalised’.

The local people supported their argument with the land tenure history. According to the history, from the beginning, Puncut was designated by the Dutch not as a protected forest but as a residential area for the former tea plantation workers, most of whom have become the local residents:

‘For us, green means beautiful. We also want Puncut to become a green area but, please remember that, becoming green doesn’t mean forest, because we are not orang-utans, ... because for almost 60 years I live in Puncut, never has Puncut been a forest’ (Interview 22).

Supporting the ‘garden houses’ project, the locals expected their story-line to be adopted by the government for the first time:

‘They (the NGOs) said the people of Puncut would only become the spectators. I said yes we could only see because there are housing estates ... beyond what these people can earn. But as long as we are allowed to see, we cannot leave the land, meaning we are not thrown out of the land’ (Interview 22).

This statement implied that the local people also recognised that they would finally be alienated because they were pawns used by the developers and the municipal elites merely as a ‘political tool’ to show that there was indeed public support for the realisation of the ‘garden houses’ project.
6.5.2 The ‘water catchment’ discourse

From the viewpoint of environmental experts and activists, improving the green character of Punclut was crucial for the function of the Bandung Great Basin as a water catchment area. The decrease in density of plants and trees, as a consequence of the residential development project, might increase floods in the city and the lowlands. That became evident when the project started. Massive run-off down the hill caused floods on the city’s main riverbanks, which had never overflowed before.

![Figure 6.3 Punclut, NBA and the Great Bandung Basin](image)

This three dimensional map was prepared by the environmental advocates to illustrate the critical ecological position of Punclut and NBA for Bandung Metropolitan Area (Source: Suranto, 2008)

To the urban environmental advocates, due to its scale and geographical proximity to the city, Punclut had become the emblem of planning performance on the fringes around the northern part the city. As such, what happened in Punclut would determine the fate of the rest of the fringes. They predicted that if the developer was allowed to continue the development in Punclut, others elsewhere and farther from the city would follow. Therefore, regardless of the fact that the land tenure was still uncertain, the fringe should be saved ecologically. According to this storyline, whatever the consequence, the fringe should become ‘green first’. Later, its socio-economic function as a tourism area could follow. Finally, the fringe could be improved socio-culturally by encouraging participation and providing the local people a better legal status upon the occupied land.
This environmental story-line was strengthened by the minority faction within the legislative assembly. The political faction proposed Punclut as an integral part of NBA, in order to promote the sustainability of the region. Since the upland is shared by three other municipalities and districts, Bandung Municipality alone could not make the decision about the fringe’s transformation but it had to cooperate with the neighbouring municipality and districts. As a specific reply to the executive’s proposal, the minority faction commented that urban development planning should be integrated and comprehensive, and not just to promote the economy. Urban development is justified but it should be based on the vision of improving the quality of the environment. Their story-line suggested that if the environment is improved first, unnecessary costs such as pollution, floods and drought will be avoided. As the result, prosperity, which is the main goal of urban development, will indirectly increase in a longer-term perspective.

These arguments were reinforced by the urban planners and academicians’ story-line that considered it essential to ‘keep Punclut green’ in the local land use plan in order to avoid uncontrolled urban development, which might harm the function of water catchment. In opposing the land use plan’s revision, they advocated that the plan by law could not be misused merely to justify the issued land development permits. Instead, it should be able to anticipate the trends of urban development in the future and provide the interested and participating stakeholders legal certainty. The anticipatory function of the plan becomes more crucial on the urban fringe because it is more remote from public monitoring and control compared to other parts of the city.

6.5.3 Exploring the capacity building potential of the water catchment discourse

Since the scientific arguments had been undermined by the project’s proponents, the environmental NGOs also developed their arguments based on local templates. For instance, DPKLTS were aware that forests hold deep meaning in Sundanese culture. They argued:

‘The Great Bandung Region, the Sundanese Lands, and thus the provincial territory would progress if their forests were kept in a good condition. Forest is not to be perceived literally, but as leuweung, which contains not only economic resources but also socio-cultural, spiritual and other entities. Many scientists defined forest as simply as “timber plantation”, whose value was in fact only 5 percent of leuweung’ (Interview 4).
Furthermore, they reconstructed the meaning of green space based on this Sundanese cultural conception of *leuweung*. According to this conception: 

‘... the height of a mountain or hill is divided into three parts. The highest one-third belongs to nature. It is called *leuweung tutupan* (forbidden forest). It is the place where clouds are tied to and where it rains. In the middle one-third, which is called *leuweung titipan* (entrusted forest), there is the living environment. Here the plants and animals should not be disturbed. Its basis is biodiversity. In the lowest one-third, which is called *leuweung baladan* (mutual forest), the humans have the right to cultivate and develop the land. Here is the land for the dry agricultural fields and settlements. So, in this Sundanese concept, never has the top of a mountain or hill been transformed into urban settlements’ (Interview 4).

Although the ‘water catchment’ discourse-coalition was unable to force the status quo at the local level to reconsider their ‘garden house’ discourse-coalition, the extended planning debate had pushed the province to show their proactive commitment to preserve NBA, considered as the region’s main water catchment area suffering from declining environmental quality. As a result, land use control legislation for the upland was drafted by involving those who were concerned with the environmental quality around Punclut. At the local level, urban environmental sustainability was also increasingly becoming an important item on the political agenda. Learning from the failure of preventing the project’s realisation, the environment was used by a powerful candidate for the new mayor’s post as his major theme during the election campaign.

In addition, the tough and lengthy debate around the project has fuelled the evolution of a network of non-governmental organisations concerned with the city’s environmental quality. Established by leading local environmental NGOs, in the beginning, the network was named GALIB (*Gerakan Aktivis Lingkungan Bandung* or Bandung Environmental Activists’ Movement). Its formation in 2001 was triggered by an earlier ‘garden houses’ project proposal in Punclut. The network actively disseminated and mobilised the ‘water catchment’ discourse through research publication, mass media opinion, lobbying, and demonstration against the ongoing land development on the fringe. As the planning debate escalated, which was marked by the municipal executive’s development project proposal and the local land use plan’s revision in 2004-2005, the network enlarged and was
latter named KMBB (Komite Masyarakat Bandung ‘Bermartabat’ or the Committee for ‘Bermartabat’ Bandung Society).

The planning debate on the project’s controversy had substantially transformed GALIB as a network of environmental scientists, observers and activists into KMBB as a network of wider urban communities that was concerned with broader and longer-term impacts of the city’s environmental quality. The interesting point was that many of the communities which actively advocated the urban environment actually came from outside the environmental NGOs, including the disabled, traditional merchants, labourers, the urban poor, cultural observers and artists:

‘They (the non-environmentalists) started to be interested in the project since they looked at the fringe in a holistic, comprehensive way. What was the relation between the project and the disable? It was related to their health’ (Interview 13).

As another example, the cultural observers worried about the loss of local cultural values and an increase in socio-economic and spatial segregation following the development of exclusive middle-class housing estates in the fringe.

6.6 Discussion and conclusion

The tension between environmental improvement and urban development issues has become a major challenge for planning on the edge of Bandung City. This chapter shows that the interaction between the two important issues can be explained by using discourse and institutional approaches. In the case of the local planning project in Punclut, the ‘garden house’ discourse-coalition, glued by ‘planning is development’ and ‘the fringe is marginalised’ story-lines, was effectively used by the municipal executive and their allies to justify their predefined planning and development proposals. Nevertheless, this interests-driven discourse tended to be coercive, manipulative and its reproduction seemed to be linear, not reflexive thus hardly contributing to the improvement of institutional capacity on the edge. It could merely result in pseudo-connection with a broader socio-cultural reference and produce a fragile, unsustainable coalition, as

6 ‘Bermartabat’ is an acronym for Bersih, Makmur, Taat dan Bersahabat (clean, prosper, obedient and friendly). It was used by a Bandung mayor as a popular slogan for the city’s vision in the 2004-2008 administration term.
illustrated by the pragmatic-opportunistic relationship between the municipal government/the developers and the local people.

Meanwhile, in challenging this status quo’s discourse, the ‘water catchment’ discourse-coalition, fastened by ‘the environment (and green) first’ and ‘keep it green’ story-lines – although it was unable to resolve immediately the main conflict at the local level, might better contribute to the improvement of the institutional capacity for innovative planning on the edge. This capacity developed in at least three aspects. First, it was initiated by linking emerging argumentative ideas into structuring socio-cultural reference, such as the Sundanese forest conception of *leuweung*, in an interactive way. Compared to formal scientific arguments, such culturally-embedded arguments were considered socially more acceptable as they connected to the basic morals that framed the daily practices of the grass-root audiences. As the environmentalists commented, when it comes to acute urban environmental conflicts, ‘societies are not saved by science but by its (socio-cultural) wisdom’ (Interview 4).

**Figure 6.4** Dominant discourses in the integrated planning of Punclut
Besides, the ‘water catchment’ discourse-coalition attempted to bring environmental issues into perspective in formal planning processes. While these issues tended to be neglected in formal municipal policy formulations, the discourse contributed to the building of local political awareness, which could be seen during the mayoral election campaign, and stimulated the need for more comprehensive action at the regional scale, as shown in the drafting of provincial legislation for controlling spatial transformation in NBA. This attractive capacity of discourse might weaken the perception that discourses are an exclusive reproduction of knowledge (Richardson, 2002).

Finally, the ‘water catchment’ discourse-coalition also provided an innovative reasoning for wider marginalised actors to join in and reinforce the complex network of environment-concerned communities. This relational building can be seen obviously in the evolution of GALIB/KMBB. This mobilising capacity of discourse might undermine the claim that discursive attack on the status quo tends to be reactive and, thus, fragmented and powerless (Ockwell & Rydin, 2006). In short, these three functional aspects of discourse to a large extent confirm Healey’s ‘institutional work’ of discourse: justificatory, persuasive and coordinative functions respectively (Healey, 1999).