

4 Doing discourse analysis: coalitions, practices, meaning

Maarten A. Hajer

On September 11th 2001, the world witnessed a terrorist attack that destroyed the WTC towers. As the initial shock slowly faded, a new question rose: what to do with the site, now simply referred to as 'Ground Zero'? The WTC had been attacked as a symbol and so the site where the towers formerly stood had acquired an iconic status. As a consequence, the process of rebuilding Ground Zero became an example of profound 'cultural politics'. Deliberations about models and designs for the new buildings also proved to be a stage for a reflection on the fundamental values of society and indeed on the very form of conducting politics.

An analysis of the rebuilding process of Ground Zero could be done in an instrumentalist or 'realist' way. The analysis would then focus on the questions why and what sort of action was taken, explaining this dynamics in terms of the interests and the power of the parties involved. This might seem an obvious choice, as indeed different interests were played out during the policy process and it could be argued that the more powerful actors got what they wanted at the expense of the needs of others. Although an account in terms of strategic behaviour and conflicting interest has an obvious sense of truth in it, in this case it would miss an important part of the puzzle. Rebuilding Ground Zero was clearly about more than who gets what, when and why – but then, what was it about exactly?

Another example. In the late 1980s, I studied developments in environmental politics. Reflecting on the content of environmental discourse I was struck by the dominant role of acid rain at the time. Could it be that we used this topic as a vehicle to discuss the environmental crisis? It occurred to me that this issue seemed *emblematic* for the bigger 'problematique' (as it was referred to those days), or, to be more precise, for the *understanding* of that problematique at the time. Britain's unwillingness to act against this problem was interpreted as 'governmental delaying tactics', while the government's reference to scientific uncertainty was described as using science as a 'fig leaf' for policy (Boehmer-Christiansen 1988; Boehmer-Christiansen and Skea 1991). Academics at the time framed the problem as one of (governmental) 'rhetoric' versus (environmental) 'reality' (Park 1987) and explained inaction in terms of the conscious exercise of power by key actors. This, however, caused them to lose the dimension of the *meaning of politics* and political actions. But how could that meaning be tracked and traced?

4.1 Discourse-coalitions in politics

Discourse analysis – that is, the examination of argumentative structure in documents and other written or spoken statements as well as the practices through which these utterances are made – provides an important tool for answering questions like the ones mentioned above. The basic assumption of discourse analysis is that language profoundly shapes our view of the world and reality, instead of being merely a neutral medium mirroring it. The analyst should therefore examine how the definition of a political problem relates to the particular narrative in which it is discussed.

From a discourse-analytical perspective the argument is not that there is no strategic behaviour as such (which would have been an odd position to take for a political scientist anyway) but that political conflicts often *transcend* a simple conflict of interest. For instance, the planning process for Ground Zero was not only about money and interests, but also about the different meanings that people attached to the building site and the ways in which these related to their reflections on the state of society in general and that of politics in particular (for the full story, cf. Hajer 2005a). In the planning process, four underlying discourses could be made out – each with a remarkably different perspective on what planning should aim to achieve. One discourse denied any symbolic dimension to the issue and instead approached it solely in terms of financial, judicial and commercial feasibility; a 50-storey building would be best for investments to return. A contrasting discourse emphasised that victims had died on Ground Zero and that the site should therefore be treated as a burial place, or at least as a memorial site. This discourse was later taken up by local residents, arguing against a cemetery or Necropolis and for rejuvenation of Manhattan – according to them; a liveable new centre of the city would be the best way to honour the victims. The fourth discourse called for a symbolic statement that would reflect the capacity to grow stronger, to ‘soar’; rebuilding the towers exactly as they had been would be a good option.

The opportunity for different narratives about Ground Zero is relatively clear – after all, the buildings had been destroyed, New York faced an empty site and literally had to make up its mind about ‘what should be done’. Matters might seem more complicated in the case of the acid rain controversy, where dying trees were real enough (as exemplified by the cynical comment on constructivism ‘first run head into that tree and then see whether it is a discourse’). The point, however, is not that dead trees as such are a social construct – it is how one *makes sense* of dead trees. In this respect there are many possible (political) realities; one may see dead trees as the product of ‘natural stress’ caused by drought, cold, or wind, or one may see them as victims of ‘pollution’. Pollution can then be seen as an ordering concept, a ‘way of seeing’, a way of interpreting a given phenomenon. ‘Acid rain’ might be constructed as an element of a narrative on industrial society and pollution, labelling the dead trees as victims of pollution. Consequently, the sight or report of ‘dead trees’ might get a different meaning. The dead trees have become ‘victims’, and where there are ‘victims’ there are ‘perpetrators’ that should be corrected.

What we see in both the WTC and the acid rain case is how a narrative *constructs* a particular problem. When the dead trees are no longer a ‘natural’ phenomenon they potentially become a political problem. Framed according to the pollution narrative, dead trees are no longer ‘an incident’ but signify a ‘structural problem’. What is more, this new understanding is facilitated by the *metaphor* of ‘acid rain’ (scientifically one would speak of ‘acid precipitation’), implying that ‘rain’ is no longer natural, that rain kills life instead of nourishing it. The pollution narrative and

the metaphor of ‘acid rain’ facilitate seeing dead trees as an indicator, a sign, a piece of evidence of a broader crisis of industrial society. If all political actors start to talk about dead trees in these terms a different set of questions opens up. For example, are there no policies that are meant to avoid this sort of degradation? What kind of society tolerates dying forests? In the same vein, it makes a difference whether Ground Zero is approached as a building lot as usual, a cemetery, a neighbourhood waiting for revitalisation, or a place where America’s phoenix should rise from the ashes. For instance, it proved to be difficult for family members of the victims to participate in the planning process, as common planning terms like ‘property values’ or ‘grid’ had suddenly become value laden. What kind of society would want to build offices on the ‘hallowed ground’ where heroes and beloved ones had died? Or, in the reversed statement, “we don’t want to acknowledge Bin Laden as our urban planner!”

Language has the capacity to make politics, to create signs and symbols that can shift power-balances and that can impact on institutions and policy-making. It can render events harmless, but it can also create political conflicts. It can suggest we should discuss the problem in terms of operational solutions, but it might also suggest that this is meaningless, as solutions would require substantial institutional or cultural change.

The analysis of discursive constructions such as narratives, story lines or metaphors is especially powerful when done in the context of the study of the social-historical conditions in which the statements were produced and received. Discourse analysis then opens up methodologically sound ways to combine the analysis of the discursive production of meaning with the analysis of the socio-political practices from which social constructs emerge and in which the actors that make these statements engage. Metaphors, narrative and story lines are three concepts that help illuminate distinct features of discourse. Before we proceed, I will first clarify these key concepts.

Discourse

Discourse is here defined as an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices. So for instance in the case of acid rain, discourse can refer to a particular tradition in dealing with environmental problems, with its particular ideas about the role of a pollution inspectorate and its particular notions on what industries should do in response to pollution. It is important to point out that discourse, thus understood, is *not* synonymous to discussion: a discourse refers to a set of concepts that structure the contributions of participants to a discussion. A discourse analysis would illuminate a particular *discursive structure* in a discussion.

As an example I will pick the media debate in the months after the cineaste Theo van Gogh had been murdered in Amsterdam by an Islamic extremist of Moroccan descent. Here a discourse analysis would bring out a certain regularity in the particular ideas, concepts and categories *in terms of which* the murder is discussed. In addition, it would identify the practices in which this discourse gets reproduced – I will clarify this below. In this case, an analysis of the discursive shifts in the debate produces two conclusions. The first of these seems obvious; after the assassination, the presence of Muslim migrants has become a cause of anxiety, as there are growing concerns about emerging or deepening divisions in Dutch society. However, the second conclusion is more surprising; explanations for the radicalisation of Muslim youth are given primarily in terms of their economic deprivation, and discrimination against Muslims is

discussed much more after the assassination than before. Thus, the discourse analysis reveals that *underneath* the undeniable trends towards escalation was a deeper, more reflexive debate (Hajer and Uitermark 2005).

Illuminating discourse(s) allows for a better understanding of controversies, not in terms of rational-analytical argumentation but in terms of the argumentative rationality that people bring to a discussion. Hence discourse should be distinguished analytically from discussion so as to allow for the differentiation of plural discourses. Discourses consist of structures embedded in language. Discourses are therefore 'found' or traced by the analyst. Discourses might not be immediately obvious to the people that utter them, although respondents should recognise a discourse when pointed out to them by the analyst.

Metaphor

We can refer to acid rain as *metaphor*. In that case acid rain stands for something else. Metaphors bring out the 'thisness' of a that or the 'thatness' of a this (Burke 1969, p. 247), or as Lakoff and Johnson wrote in their classic *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980): "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another". In the most immediate way this is the case as the biological phenomenon of 'acid precipitation' gets reduced to 'acid rain'. That this is not at all unimportant showed the case of the Dutch controversy where for a long time policy makers and activist conceived of the problem in terms of 'acid rain'. Only years later the Dutch found out that in their case the problem of dying trees had not been caused by rain at all but by the ammonia (gas) emissions from nearby pig farms. There was a second reason why the acid rain metaphor was of importance; the 'environmental crisis' was constantly experienced through the acid rain problem. People would argue that the emergence of acid rain was indicative of how industrial society produced welfare at the cost of an environmental crisis. This was an important linkage as it explained the central role that the acid rain controversy fulfilled in environmental politics.

It might be worthwhile to pause here for a small detour, as the role of metaphors touches an important question for interpretive social science in general, and discourse analysis in particular. What detail of analysis does one need? Discourse analysts present a wide range of answers to this question. While Foucault still is the unrivalled master of the sweeping statements over periods of hundred years or more, others argue for an extremely detailed analysis, suggesting that the data set can only be very limited and the researchable questions should be confined likewise. How you do operationalise discourse analysis, of course depends very much on the type of questions you have. In many cases however the opposition between detail and relevance is a false one. It is, after all, a matter of research design.

I tend to apply discourse analysis to the study of policy making and politics to see how discourse, cognition, strategic behaviour, institutional patterns interrelate and political change occurs. If I am interested in European environmental politics, I keep an eye on the change occurring in that domain. That still leaves a wide range of choices, so somewhere one needs to focus.

To overcome the false dichotomy of detail versus relevance I focus on *emblematic issues*. Above I argued that the acid rain controversy was not merely about dying trees, but also very much a matter of institutional politics. Acid rain functioned as an *emblematic issue*: it was an emblem in terms of which a general understanding of what environmental problems were about was constructed. As an emblem it had a central role in facilitating much more than a 'mere' change in

policy: it brought about a larger conceptual shift. This was evident, for instance, in the constant reference of White Papers and reports of advisory councils, such as the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, to acid rain when they were really addressing the way in which to combat the ecological crisis (Southwood 1984). Theoretically, this underlines the importance of spotting such emblematic issues for understanding political discourse, as they seem to play a key role in shifts in policy discourse.

This is not to say that the actors involved are themselves always aware of that key role in institutional politics. Quite the contrary, the poststructuralist background of a discourse-analytical approach comes out in the fact that it does not assume coherent and concerted political action. Politics is better understood in terms of the various practices of 'micro-power': many, often seemingly trivial, mechanisms that influenced the way in which a certain phenomenon is interpreted so as to make it manageable for the structures of society. A discourse analysis would try and find these mechanisms, and would attempt to show how they together can produce certain effects.

Story line

During the analysis one examines statements. These often have the form of a narrative: people tell facts in a story. One quickly becomes aware that in any field there are a couple of such stories that fulfil a particularly important role. For instance, the process of rebuilding Ground Zero was often described as a way to show the world that America would not accept the terrorist attack on democracy: *we must rebuild as a democracy. It would be a travesty, if in the aftermath of an attack on our democracy, we circumvent our basic democratic procedures.*¹

I employ the concept of *story line* to refer to a condensed statement summarising complex narratives, used by people as 'short hand' in discussions. Identifying story lines brings out that people not merely refer to a problem with a fixed identity, but are continually *changing the problem definition*.

The essence of a story is that it has a beginning, middle, and an end. Yet one will find that people often have their own variations of a particular story. The rebuilding process, for instance, is rather complex to understand so mostly people do not tell the whole story but use short cues. The same applied to the acid rain controversy. Mostly people use the words 'acid rain' *assuming the hearer will know what he/she means or refers to*, i.e. we are used to assuming the more complex narrative of acid rain is available in the minds of the receiver that can be activated by giving a cue ('you know what I mean'). Yet this is where interesting social effects start to occur. Very often it is assumed that the meaning that the receiver 'reads' in a message is the same as the sender intended to put into the message. This assumption of *mutual understanding* is false. Discourse analysis brings out, time and again, that people talk at cross-purposes, that people do not really or do not fully understand each other. This is a fact of life but, interestingly, this can be very functional for creating a political coalition.

Referring to the role of metaphors and story lines should not be mistaken for a totally cynical approach. It can be shown that people, that *can be proven not to fully understand one another*, nevertheless together produce meaningful political interventions.

My argumentative discourse analysis does not start from the assumption of coherence or full understanding. I suggest that much communication is in fact based on interpretive readings, on thinking along, measuring statements in terms of whether they 'sound right'. That is why the concept of story line is key.

Discourse-coalition

A discourse-coalition refers to a group of actors that, *in the context of an identifiable set of practices*, shares the usage of a particular set of story lines over a particular period of time. It is important to take into account the particular situations in which story lines are uttered and discourses are drawn upon. For this purpose we use the concept of *practice*: embedded routines and mutually understood rules and norms that provide coherence to social life. Hence we can think of going to church as a practice, or writing articles for academic journals as a practice characteristic for the life world of university professors. A key point coming out of Wittgensteinian philosophy of language is that linguistic utterances cannot usefully be understood outside the practices in which they are uttered. Similarly, discourse should always be conceived of in interrelation with the practices in which it is produced, reproduced and transformed. Consequently, we can refine the definition of discourse as given above to include practice. *Discourse* is then defined as an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices (cf. Hajer 1995, p. 44).

So a discourse-coalition is not so much connected to a particular person (as if such a person would have a coherent set of ideas of beliefs that is not specific to context), it is related to practices in the context of which actors employ story lines, and (re)produce and transform particular discourses. It thus becomes possible, to come to terms with the fact that some actors might utter contradictory statements, or indeed help reproduce different discourse-coalitions (for a more detailed account see Hajer 1995, chapter 2, and for empirical examples, chapter 4).

To apply this whole vocabulary to politics one should also be able to link discourse to power and dominance. It should be possible not only to identify discourses but to assess their influence as well. Two terms facilitate this: *discourse structuration* occurs when a discourse starts to dominate the way a given social unit (a policy domain, a firm, a society – all depending on the research question) conceptualises the world. If a discourse solidifies in particular institutional arrangements, say a measuring system for air pollution, then we speak of *discourse institutionalisation*. We thus have a simple two-step procedure for measuring the influence of a discourse: if many people use it to conceptualise the world (discourse structuration) and if it solidifies into institutions and organisational practices (discourse institutionalisation). If both criteria are fulfilled we argue that a particular discourse is dominant.

In politics we characteristically deal with mixes of elements drawn from various discourses. In most cases we do not find one simple discourse that structures the utterances of all contributors to a given political discussion. Yet there often is a discourse with a particular claim to power. In debates about environmental politics, the natural sciences constitute a particularly powerful and legitimate form of discourse and in the case of Ground Zero, it was of course the memorial discourse that had a special, emotional claim. As a consequence, many arguments were framed in terms of a tribute to the victims – a telling example of this is the fact that *all* the proposals for new buildings started with the word 'Memorial'.

Even though one discourse can be dominant, ultimately the political debate draws on many different discourses. The fact that people from widely varying backgrounds still find ways to communicate is remarkable, but receives surprisingly little attention in policy analysis. The concept of story line helps to explain this 'communicative miracle'. After all, a story line combines elements of the various discourses into a more or less coherent whole, thus concealing the discursive complexity.

This even applies to arguments that might at first sight seem purely factual and scientific as in the case of the acid rain controversy. In most cases many of the actors involved are *experts of some sort*, yet they still depend on other experts for a full understanding. The science of environmental problems is notoriously complex, hence even experts draw on story lines to convey meaning. Story lines thus have a tremendous importance for organizing social interaction.

A second way of explaining coherence or understanding is via the concept of *discursive affinity*: arguments may vary in origin but still have a similar way of conceptualizing the world. An important example from pollution politics is the discursive affinity among the moral argument that nature should be respected, the scientific argument that nature is to be seen as a complex ecosystem (which we will *never* fully understand), and the economic idea that pollution prevention is actually the most efficient mode of production (this is the core of the discourse of sustainable development). The arguments are different but similar: from each of the positions the other arguments 'sound right'. The task of the analyst is to expose such discursive affinities.

A discourse-coalition can then be defined as the ensemble of a set of story lines, the actors that utter these story lines, and the practices through which these story lines get expressed. The discourse-coalition approach suggests that politics is a process in which different actors from various backgrounds form specific coalitions around specific story lines. Story lines are the medium through which actors try to impose their view of reality on others, suggest certain social positions and practices, and criticise alternative social arrangements. For instance, the storyline emphasizing the importance of a democratic planning process for Ground Zero had a bearing on more than just the WTC. It was also a call for consolidation of the democratic identity of America, as opposed to the mentality of extremists like Bin Laden and a quest for a new direction for New York as a city. Moreover, the storyline criticised the prevailing business-oriented, often not-so-democratic planning practices in New York.

New story lines can become a popular way of conceptualizing the world, but for a discourse coalition to become dominant in a given political realm two conditions should be fulfilled: (1) central actors should be forced to accept the rhetorical power of a new discourse (condition of discourse structuration); and (2) the new discourse should be reflected in the institutional practices of that political domain; that is, the actual policy process is conducted according to the ideas of a given discourse (condition of discourse institutionalisation).

To summarise, the politics of discourse is best seen as a continuous process of giving meaning to the vague and ambiguous socio-physical world by means of story lines and the subsequent structuration of experience through the various social practices that can be found in a given field. The discourse-coalition approach thus has three advantages: (1) it analyses strategic action in the context of specific socio-historical discourses and institutional practices and provides the conceptual tools to analyse controversies over individual issues in their wider political context; (2) it takes the explanation beyond mere reference to interests, analysing how interests are played out in the context of specific discourses and organisational practices; and (3) it illuminates how different actors and organisational practices help to reproduce or fight a given bias without necessarily orchestrating or coordinating their actions or without necessarily sharing deep values.

4.2 Argumentative discourse analysis

Key in an argumentative discourse analysis (or ADA) is the examination of what is being said to whom, and in what context. The axiom is that in uttering statements people react to one another and thus produce meaning interactively. This emphasis on *argumentation* as interplay in the context of practices puts methodological constraints on the way in which data can be interpreted, indeed, can be accessed. Ideally, an argumentative discourse analysis is based on the detailed analysis of accounts of these interactions.

This is why we work with video-registration of policy processes and newly emerging forms of governance to create the high quality data required. In such cases one can, first of all, transcribe interactions in a very detailed manner, taking into account not only what is said, but also *how* it is said, to whom, and to what *effect*. Secondly, one might be able to consider the effect of the setting in which some things are said. While language philosophy and the discourse-analytical literature manifest a strong awareness that people do things with words (Austin 1955), we sometimes forget that settings do things with people too. A discussion is not merely talk, it is an act as well. And every act takes place in a particular 'contexture' (Lynch 1991) that influences the quality of that act. Elsewhere I have introduced the concepts of 'setting' and 'staging' to discourse analysis to examine precisely that (Hajer 2005b).

In order to illustrate the use of video-registration in some more detail, I return to my example of the Netherlands after the assassination of Theo van Gogh. As Van Gogh had been murdered in Amsterdam, the Amsterdam mayor Job Cohen received a lot of media-attention in the weeks following the assassination, as well as one of his aldermen: Ahmed Aboutaleb. Cohen and Aboutaleb are both members of the Labour party and defended essentially the same position. Both proposed the so-called 'soft approach' of minority integration, according to which successful integration is crucially dependent upon the willingness of native Dutch to accommodate diversity. Whereas Cohen received severe criticism for this stance, Aboutaleb was remarkably more successful and even received praise. An analysis of their performances in the very influential TV show *Barend & Van Dorp* produced a tentative explanation for this difference. The setting, *Barend & Van Dorp*, has all the typical features of an infotainment programme; it combines information and entertainment, discussions are typically brief, the hosts try to evoke controversial remarks and address their guests intermittently as public personalities and normal individuals. In this environment, Cohen acted as a pragmatically minded officeholder. He tried to break questions into parts, tended to sum up a number of points and give detailed answers to all of these points. The hosts received this as an attempt to avoid taking a stance. Aboutaleb in contrast did not accept the vocabulary of his interlocutors but shifted the terms of debate. He combined a governmental discourse with emotional appeals to condensing symbols and with the identification of groups threatening the cherished universals (constitution, state, society). Video showed how Aboutaleb's expressions, both bodily and verbally, indicated that something out of ordinary was happening. All in all, this made him highly successful in promoting his discourse in this particular setting (Hajer and Uitermark 2005).

Obviously, one is not always in the position to do video monitoring of political processes. In most cases one has limited access to material with this richness. A very useful source is a public inquiry in which a variety of actors can present written evidence, be examined, and can respond to various other contributions. A hearing for a committee can be equally useful. Yet here one has to take into account that in some cases the *way in which arguments have to be presented* exerts an

influence on what can be said meaningfully. This is clearly shown in the example of Cohen and Aboutaleb. Whereas the emotional character of Aboutaleb's performance was highly successful in the specific setting of *Barend & Van Dorp*, in a setting like, say the Second Chamber, Cohen might have had much better possibilities for communicating authority. Thus, discourses are never solely reproduced by the personal qualities of the actors, but always also by the specific features of the settings in which they operate.

In all, there are some 10 steps that will always be part of the analysis:

1. *Desk research*: general survey of the documents and positions in a given field; newspaper analysis, analysis of news sections in relevant journals. This all to make a first chronology and come up with a first reading of events;
2. *Helicopter interviews*: interviews with three or four actors ('helicopters') that are chosen because they have the overview of the field be it from different positions. They might comprise a well informed journalist, a key advisor to the government, an expert-policy maker;
3. *Document analysis*: analysing documents for structuring concepts, ideas and categorisations; employment of story lines, metaphors, etc. This should result in a first attempt at defining structuring discourses in the discussion. At this stage one would get a basic notion of the process of events as well as the sites of discursive production;
4. *Interviews with key players*: on the basis of the proceeding steps interviews can be conducted with central actors in the political process. The interviews can be used to generate more information on causal chains ('which led to what') that will always be the assumed core of the meeting on part of the interviewees, but the interviews might also be used to get a better understanding of the meaning of particular events for the interviewees. It then becomes a 'focused interview' (Flick 1998). How did they interpret a particular event? By so doing one aims to reconstruct the discourse from which an actor approached the situation. We can also analyse how a particular cognitive shift came about. What led to the actual 'reframing'? Was it reading a report (which is not very likely)? Was it a meeting? A confrontation with a question to which the actor did not have an answer? It might also be possible to use an interview to find out what made a person recognise another perspective as valuable. What was the shift about? Was it about learning to know the people that uttered a particular point of view? Did it have to do with the practice in which people engaged (Forester 1999)?
5. *Sites of argumentation*: searching for data not simply to reconstruct the arguments used but to account for the *argumentative exchange*. Examples might be parliamentary debates, minutes of inquiries (a very rich source), presentation and interpretation of evidence presented to a particular research commission, panel discussions at conferences,
6. *Analyse for positioning effects*: actors can get 'caught up' in an interplay. They might force others to take up a particular role, but once others are aware of what is going on, they might also try to refuse it (indicators: 'No, that is not what I meant', 'That is not what it is about at all'). This positioning not only occurs on the level of persons but can of course also be found among institutions or even nation-states;
7. *Identification of key incidents*: this would lead to the identification of key incidents that are essential to understand the discursive dynamics in the chosen case. As much as possible, these key incidents are then transcribed in more detail allowing for more insights in which determined their political effects;

8. *Analysis of practices in particular cases of argumentation*: rather than assuming coherence on part of particular actors, at this stage one goes back to the data to see if the meaning of what is being said can be related to the practices in which it was said.
9. *Interpretation*: on this basis one may find a discursive order that governed a particular domain in a particular time. Ideally, one should come up with an account of the discursive structures within a given discussion, as well as an interpretation of the practices, the sites of production that were of importance in explaining a particular course of events.
10. *Second visit to key actors*: discourses are inferred from reality by the analyst. Yet when respondents are confronted with the findings, they should at least recognise some of the hidden structures in language. Hence to revisit some key actors is a way of controlling if the analysis of the discursive space made sense.

References

- Austin, J.L. (1955), *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Boehmer-Christiansen, S. (1988), Black Mist and the Acid Rain: Science as a figleaf of policy. *Political Quarterly* 59(2), pp. 145-60.
- Boehmer-Christiansen, S. & J. Skea (1991), *Acid politics: Environmental and energy politics in Britain and Germany*. London: Belhaven Press.
- Burke, K. (1969), *A grammar of motives*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Flick, U. (1998), *Qualitative Forschung. Theorie, Methoden, Anwendung in Psychologie und Sozialwissenschaften*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt's Enzyklopadie.
- Forester, J. (1999), *The deliberative practitioner: Encouraging participatory planning processes*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Hajer, M.A. (1995), *The politics of environmental discourse: Ecological modernization and the policy process*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hajer, M.A. (2005a) *Rebuilding Ground Zero. The Politics of Performance*. *Planning Theory & Practice* 6(4), pp. 445-464.
- Hajer, M.A. (2005b), *Setting the stage: A dramaturgy of policy deliberation*. *Administration and Society* 36(6), pp. 624-647.
- Hajer, M.A. & J. Uitermark (2005), *Performing authority in the 'multicultural drama' -building bridges after the assassination of Theo van Gogh*. ECPR, Budapest.
- Lakoff, G. & M. Johnson (1980), *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Lynch, M. (1991), *Laboratory space and the technological complex: An investigation of topical contexts*. *Science in Context* 4(1), pp. 51-78.
- Park, C. (1987), *Acid Rain: Rhetoric and Reality*. London: Methuen.
- Southwood, R. (1984), *Tenth Report - Tackling Pollution - Experience and Prospects*. London: Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution.

Note

- 1 Statement by Alan Gerson, City Council Representative, District 1, during the first Lower Manhattan Development Corporation public hearing.