

Discursive Legitimation Strategies in the Media. Case study of the UK retail planning policy

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Abstract

The broad objective of this research is to gain understanding of the legitimacy construction. The thesis is aimed to enhance the existing organizational studies on legitimacy by investigating legitimation practices used to institutionalise the changes of a particular institutional field. The objective of the study is to define discursive legitimation strategies employed in the mass media to legitimate the novel implications and delegitimize out-dated practices introduced in the field of the UK retail planning policy. Particularly, the legitimation approaches used in the British media to introduce and gain public acceptance of the modifications of the UK retail planning policy happened during 1980-2000s, were explored.

To develop an understanding of the legitimation processes, a critical discourse analytic methodology was applied to the collection of articles in order to connect linguistic analysis with social phenomenon and define the role of discourses in the construction and maintenance of an organizational field. The materials used for the analysis were extracted from three British newspapers and magazines: The Grocer, The Guardian and Retail Week. The research analysis was broken into three parts. First, an overall thematic analysis was conducted on the textual material to see what the most significant topics arise from it and classify them into thematic groups. Second, interdiscursive analysis was implemented to identify discourses developed respectively to the earlier described themes and to define their types. The third stage involved content analysis of the legitimation strategies, established by discursive practices in the media.

Following the approach of critical discourse analysis the research depicted, investigated and described four distinctive categories of discursive legitimation strategies, signifying specific ways of making sense of, and giving sense to the changes of the UK retail planning policy: authorization, rationalization, narrativization and moralization. The study argues that each strategic type has its own distinguishing features, objectives and ways of introduction. Hence, each of the strategy is used to fulfil some specific objectives in addition to the legitimation and delegitimation purposes.

The results of the analysis helped to gain better understanding of legitimation, describing it as a complex, vague and contradictory process requiring proactive and accurate management. Despite their distinguishing nature, the legitimation strategies were found to be complementary to one another, representing a range of ways for establishing legitimacy within the social setting. The findings shed more light on the phenomenon of legitimacy and gave some practical ideas of its utilization in various organizational fields. By concentrating on media texts, the thesis emphasised the significant role of the mass media in the complex processes leading to legitimation, which can be explored further and utilized broadly in various organizational settings. By focusing on a particular institutional field, the study provides more knowledge on the discursive practices involved in the process of institutional restructuring, which deepens the comprehension of this complex phenomenon.

Keywords critical discourse analysis, legitimacy, legitimation strategy, media, UK retail planning

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Legitimacy is social acceptance and recognition through which something becomes taken-for-granted. It plays a significant role in general social life, not to mention a particular organizational field. Being a central concept of organizational institutionalism, legitimacy has been studied largely in previous research, exploring how institutional reconstructions result in cultural pressures exceeding the predetermined control of any organization (Fairclough, 1992; Suchman, 1995; Lawrence, Winn, Jennings, 2001; Phillips, Lawrence, Hardy, 2004; Johnson, Dowd, Ridgeway, 2006; Vaara, Tienari, Laurila, 2006; Deephouse and Suchman, 2008; Maguire and Hardy, 2009). The significance of legitimacy is a key issue in the content of institutional change (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005) and plays a main role in both social and organizational processes (Vaara et al., 2006). According to the organizational literature, legitimacy is the core base of the existence and prosperity of an organization. In order to survive organizations need to be socially accepted, which is guaranteed by legitimation. The process of legitimation occurs in a common social reality, which elements correspond to collective norms, values and beliefs. These elements of social order are assumed to be widely shared by participants, even though they might not share them personally. (Johnson et al., 2006)

Emphasising the aspect of social construction, it should be noted that the legitimation processes represent a foundation explaining group and organizational behaviour. They are aimed to link institutions to a widely recognised “cultural framework of beliefs, norms and values” (Johnson et al.; 2006: 57). The sources of legitimacy spread beyond individual actors (Johnson et al.; 2006) and diffuse within the institutional field through interactions between various groups of participants and the related institutional context (Lawrence and Phillips, 2004). Legitimation is on-going social processes, which is the subject of influence of number of factors, impacting both intentionally and involuntarily. Social acceptance is a primary objective for any institution or organization, as it links

them to a widely accepted system of norms, opinions and beliefs. Therefore, it is essential to persuade the society that the conducted actions are trustworthy and reliable. The knowledge of how organizations gain and lose legitimacy is particularly crucial for understanding of the sense-making processes of industrial restructuring (Vaara et al., 2006).

Despite its importance, the processes underlying legitimacy remain difficult to understand. The society simply accepts organizational practices as something that should be happening, though how was this normative status achieved? The general acknowledgement is a building basis of legitimacy. There are number of various ways used to establish this socially constructed sense of appropriateness. One of the most effective methods of making things accepted and widely known within the society is legitimation through language or, more precisely, discourses. Thus, discursive legitimation strategies are methods of activating specific discourses to create sense of legitimacy or illegitimacy (Fairclough, 2003).

Number of prior research emphasised the discursive aspects of legitimacy. According to Phillips et al. (2004), legitimation of institutional change depends on discourses significantly. In order to establish an institutional field, valid amount of texts must be generated and popularized by a group of organizations. In that way the constituted set of discourses will create the institutions distinguishing the field. Discourses were proven to play an important role in the social construction of reality: “discourse does not merely describe things, it does things” (Hardy, Palmer, Phillips, 2000: 1231). Discursive perspective emphasises the link between social practices and discourses. This connection is established by producing and consuming texts, which, in turn, creates new entities, perceptions and notions converting the institution. (Phillips et al., 2004; Munir and Phillips, 2005)

In accordance to Vaara and Tienari (2008), the use of discourses to study the legitimation process enables researchers to investigate broader social practices and power relations between the involved actors and, hence, to explore how the discourses have shaped the senses of legitimacy related to the newly introduced

practice. Moreover, they suggest that discourses both restrict the sense making and giving of the social actors, but at the same time help those actors to position themselves into particular discourses. Therefore, in order to determine how transformation in the ‘meaning’ of the social world occurs, discourse analysis of a certain field, where institutional participants used their discursive strategies to reconstruct its social acceptance, should be conducted (Munir and Phillips, 2005).

1.2 Research objectives and question

In line with the previous studies, this thesis is aimed to reveal the process of legitimation construction by focusing on the discursive aspects of legitimacy. Referring to legitimacy as “a socially constructed sense of appropriateness” (Vaara and Monin, 2010: 3), this study investigates the discursive strategies used to establish legitimacy and delegitimacy. The broad objective of this research is to gain understanding of the actual process of legitimation, rather than the sense of legitimation. The study is aimed to enhance the existing organizational studies on legitimacy by investigating legitimation practices used to institutionalise changes of a particular institutional field.

By incorporating critical discourse perspective (Vaara et al., 2006; Vaara and Monin, 2010) the research shows how new practices, reforming an institutional field, are introduced, accepted and authorised with the help of the media. The significant role of the mass media in legitimising management theories and practices within various institutional fields has been already emphasised in prior studies (e.g. Fairclough, 1995; van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999; Mazza and Alvarez, 2000; Vaara et al., 2006; Deephouse and Suchman, 2008), although there is still insufficient amount of research dedicated to this topic. In order to contribute to this gap, the thesis is concentrated on the discursive legitimation of newly introduced institutional practices developed in the printed media.

The research explores the discursive legitimacy in the context of institutional change of the retail planning policy happened in 1980-2000s in the United Kingdom. The introduction of new government retail planning policy caused dynamic discussions in the elite British newspaper coverage. The printed media is a proper context for studying discourse strategies employed to legitimate newly introduced practices in the field of retail planning policy, which, to my knowledge, have not been researched and defined yet. By taking into account valuable insights withdrawn from the existing literature on institutionalization and the discursive legitimation processes, the thesis provides deeper insights of the legitimation strategies employed by institutional actors to modify and support the development of the institutional field and enhances existing knowledge of this essential phenomenon.

The objective of the research is to define how modifications of the field were institutionalised. The study explores how discourses were used to legitimate changes in the context of the British printed media outlets. As a result of the analysis, discursive legitimation practises, employed to legitimise novel implications and delegitimate outdated practices introduced by institutional participants in the field of the UK retail planning policy, are presented into classified categories. The main research question can be formulated as following:

- What were the discursive legitimation strategies used to institutionalize the changes of the UK retail planning policy in the printed media during the period of 1980-2000s?

All in all, the study is aimed to support the management and organizational literature and especially research in institutional theory and organizational legitimacy, in several ways. First, from methodological perspective the research encourages the development of critical discourse analysis method. Second, it maintains the application of the institutional approach towards discursive legitimacy in general and the theoretical frameworks developed by van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) and Vaara et al. (2006) in particular, supporting reliability and

usability of their study. Thirdly, the study establishes a link between the institutional theory literature and the concepts of critical discourse analysis in order to provide better understanding of the processes restructuring an institutional field, in this case - the system of retail planning policy development in the UK. Finally, the analysis highlights importance of the mass media in institutional reconstruction.

From managerial perspective the study's findings, revealing legitimation strategies used by different industrial participants shed light on the processes of social acceptance, which can be employed in various business settings. The discursive legitimation strategies discussed in this thesis can be regarded independently and used as a marketing tool for the promotion of new products or services. These strategies are not context dependent and may be employed in various types of media to legitimate new actions introduced by a company. Besides, the analysis stresses illegitimation application of discourses, which provides even more practical implications of the research findings.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The study is made up of six chapters. The thesis is structured as follows. Firstly, it starts with the introduction, outlining the background of the study, its research question, objectives and structure. The second chapter explores the literature related to the research. The literature review is divided into four parts, covering the concepts of legitimacy and legitimation in organizational studies, importance of the mass media and text production, as well as critical discourse perspective on legitimacy. The chapter is concluded by classification of the legitimation strategies types. Afterwards, the research methodology is presented. The section includes the presentation of the study context, as well as research approach and method. Besides, ontological and epistemological foundations of the thesis are explained. Chapter 4 discusses the processes of research analysis and data collection. Following the overall critical discourse analysis methodology, the research

proceeds with presentation of the findings obtained from the analysis. The thesis suggests important ways in which legitimacy is established. To shed a light on this process, in the last chapter the contribution of the findings are examined and conclusions are made. Moreover, the limitations and directions for future research are included. The thesis is ended by explanation of its validity and reliability.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the existing literature on legitimation theory is addressed. Firstly, the definitions of legitimacy and legitimation in organizational (institutional) studies are outlined. Secondly, the importance of the printed media and text production are discussed. Thirdly, critical discourse analytical perspective on legitimation is presented. Finally, before proceeding with the methodology, the categorization of legitimation strategies, which the research is looking at, is defined in more details in the last section of this paper.

2.1 Legitimation in organizational studies

Legitimacy and legitimation plays an important role in organizational theory (e.g. Suchman, 1995; van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999; Mazza and Alvarez, 2000; Vaara et al., 2006; Johnson et al., 2006; Deephouse and Suchman, 2008; Vaara and Tienari, 2008; Vaara and Monin, 2010). According to Mazza and Alvarez (2000), legitimacy refers to the institutional status of social acceptance. The most comprehensive definition of legitimacy (Johnson et al., 2006; Garud, Hardy, Maguire, 2007; Deephouse and Suchman, 2008) is stated as following: “Legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (Suchman, 1995: 574). There are three dimensions of legitimacy set by Suchman (1995), which define appropriateness of activities of an organization within a given social environment. They are labelled as pragmatic, moral and cognitive legitimacy. The first type, pragmatic legitimacy, is based on influence, characteristics and self-interest of an audience involved in direct exchanges with an organization. Moral legitimacy rests on what is perceived as right and ensures that the organization and its activities are evaluated positively as a norm. The third dimension, cognitive legitimacy, is centred on comprehensibility and taken-for-granted cultural accounts and includes likelihood, credibility and stability of the organization. (Suchman, 1995)

Legitimization is correlated to institutionalization. From an institutional point of view in the organizational literature, legitimacy is regarded as “a set of constitutive beliefs” (Suchman, 1995: 576) and synonymous to institutionalization. Institutions can be defined as “social constructions, produced through meaningful interaction” (Phillips et al., 2004: 638) of its actors who accept common definition of reality. Institutions have a great influential power, which shapes the behaviour of its actors. The process, by which institutions are produced and reproduced, is entitled as ‘institutionalization’. (Phillips et al., 2004) The outcome of institutionalization is a structured institutional field, which constitutes of a group of organizations with the same institutionalized norms and assets (Phillips, Lawrence, Hardy, 2000). In its turn, legitimation is a prerequisite to institutionalization. Being a socio-cultural process legitimation leads to the establishment of an institution, as the frame of legitimated course of actions is defined by the system of norms and values accepted by general society (Mazza and Alvarez, 2000). Legitimacy is outlined by agreement with social rules in a form of variety of social responsibilities or as an appropriate model of behaviour. Consequently, legitimation is a socially constructed process, which links institutions to a broadly accepted cultural framework of beliefs, rules and values (Johnson et al., 2006), or, in other words, “by which the legitimacy of a subject changes over time” (Deephouse and Suchman, 2008: 57). In their turn, the social objects, organizations, notions and ideas, which acceptability is measured, are classified as subjects of legitimation. The term is rather vast, which proves that a subject of legitimation can be almost anything. (Deephouse and Suchman, 2008)

Legitimacy is viewed as a problem in the process of social reality construction, defining “what is becomes what is right” (Johnson et al., 2006: 57). The legitimization process of linking new social objects to an existing social reality includes four stages corresponding to those of institutionalization: innovation, local validation, diffusion and general validation (Johnson et al., 2006). Firstly, in order to satisfy a certain objective, need or purpose, a social innovation is established. Secondly, the innovation is approved by relatively few local actors and linked to a broadly accepted system of norms and beliefs. Next, after the local

confirmation, the diffusion of new social object within a field occurs. The final step of the legitimization results in the general acceptance of the innovation. (Lawrence et al., 2001; Deephouse and Suchman, 2008)

Despite its dominant authority, institution is maintained by continuing modifications facilitated by motivated participants, which open up wide range of possibilities for further innovations and new practices (Lawrence and Phillips, 2004). Correctly applied legitimation is essential for promoting organizational activities as necessary, appropriate and suitable in any social culture. The management of legitimacy is dependent to a great extent on communication between the organization and its audience and includes various mechanisms, aimed to maintain institutional development. (Suchman, 1995; Lawrence et al., 2001) Looking at the stages of legitimation process described above, legitimacy management is especially crucial at the point of diffusion. At this stage in order to be accepted, new practices are widely promoted among actors belonging to an organizational field. The successful legitimacy management practices ensure the stability of institutions, which is defined as “the length of time over which an institution remains highly diffused and legitimated” (Lawrence et al., 2001: 628). Institutional actors, who attempt to gain, repair or support legitimacy, employ actions, which result more likely in the production of texts aimed to create, validate or modify the meaning of a certain practise. Therefore, the establishment and reconstruction of an institution is done primarily by the production and dissemination of appropriate texts. The texts set discourses that would establish the institution in accordance to the particular institutional field marked off by special norms, rather than directly through actions (Phillips et al., 2004; Munir and Phillips, 2005). Consequently, institutions are “social constructions constituted through discourse”, or in other words ”products of the discursive activity” (Phillips et al., 2004: 638-639) that constitute widely accepted patterns, forming the behaviour of societal participants (Phillips et al., 2000).

The institutionalization of some actions depends significantly on legitimacy and contributes to it “in the sense that established and widely spread ideas, practices,

or forms are easily considered legitimate and no longer require specific legitimization” (Vaara et al., 2006: 791). Since the construction of identity and relations between participants in the organizational setting result from discursively established legitimacy (Vaara et al., 2006), the way of the legitimation establishment is particularly significant for understanding the emergence and development of institutional field. It should be emphasised that this thesis is focused on the discursively established legitimacy. The objective is to identify the legitimization strategies employed for the institutionalization of retail planning policy in the UK through the related discursive processes in the mass media. Therefore, the study would provide a deeper understanding of how the modifications of an institution, in this case - the retail planning system, were introduced and diffused to obtain general validation within the society.

2.2 Text production and the media

In the contemporary society the institutional establishment is a matter of texts, which intervene between action and discourse (Munir and Phillips, 2005). Texts are explained as the "symbolic forms of representation (e.g. documents, books, media accounts, interviews, speeches, committee reports, etc.) that are inscribed by being spoken, written, or otherwise depicted" (Maguire and Hardy, 2009: 150). Text is defined by any symbolic expression, which entails a physical medium and allows holding it permanently. The term refers to both spoken and written language: newspaper articles, transcriptions of broadcasts, written documents, verbal statements, artwork, pictures, symbols, buildings, and other artefacts are regarded as 'texts'. (Phillips et al., 2004) In order to examine discourse, the formation of texts should be explored. (Phillips et al., 2000) Only the texts that were entered as any symbolic forms of communication (for example, as written and verbal reports), which make them possible to be traced, can be used as a persuasive tool for proving legitimacy of the conducted activities, since others can access, distribute and interpret them (Phillips et al., 2004).

Other important aspect of a text, which influences its probability to be embedded in a larger discourse, is the text's origin, or more particularly, the producer of the text, who can be also regarded as a source of legitimacy. According to Deephouse and Suchman (2008), both internal and external audience, perceiving organizations and evaluating legitimacy can represent sources of legitimacy. There are two basic groups of legitimacy sources identified. The first set consists of those, who possess strong status and power, resulted from their own legitimating significance, usually the (state) government. The second group includes those embrace collective authority over what is considered as standard, for example - lawyers, intellectuals, accountants. However, the sources are not strictly determined and can be applied to various participants within an institutional field. The middleman source of legitimacy, acting between general society and particular legitimation-granting authorities, is represented by the media. (Deephouse and Suchman, 2008) Being both "an indicator of legitimation by society-at-large and a source of legitimacy in their own stead" (Deephouse and Suchman, 2008: 56), the media acts as a legitimacy mediator, creating or transferring implicit or explicit legitimacy assessments. Acting as "a sense making arena" (Vaara et al., 2006: 791), the mass media has shifted its role from simple transferring of pre-assumed thoughts to the joint creation and legitimation of organizational systems and actions (Mazza and Alvarez, 2000).

Providing meaning to related events and making sense out of existing social knowledge by a specific presentation of information, journalists are regarded as agents between social reality and general public perception (Fiss and Hirsch, 2005). They are important players in promotion and moderation of discourses by certifying or suppressing particular concepts (Vaara et al., 2006; Vaara and Monin, 2010). The production of texts by the press is characterized by a high probability that these texts would be approved and embedded by other organizations in widespread discourse due to high discursive legitimacy possessed by the media (Phillips et al., 2004). Despite the fact that journalists have a significant power in legitimation, deciding how to edit and present the flows of information, they are highly dependent on the audience, as well as on the source of information (Vaara

et al., 2006). The mass nature of an audience is a core characteristic of the media events, which emphasises extent of the influential power and the ideological potential of the media, as well as possible desire of the government to control or, at least, take advantage out of it more or less directly. (Fairclough, 1995) Nowadays, the popular media plays a significant role in the legitimation processes due to its “power to influence knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations, social identities” (Fairclough, 1995: 2). In order to become widely accepted, the information about new practices should be distributed within the institutional field. Hence, newspapers and magazines are reliable tool for popularization of innovative activities and making them socially accepted. (Mazza and Alvarez, 2000)

Products of the media are strictly controlled and shaped by a related institution, as principally the best access to the media is granted to the institutional actors, who have already imposed some kind of political, economic or cultural power. However, the media is not necessary a tool of large-scale public political control. (Fairclough, 1995) Producing knowledge on their own the press has been increasing its influence on socio-economic issues and, therefore, its importance in legitimating management practices (Mazza and Alvarez, 2000), impacting “the boundaries between public and private life and institutions, redrawing them in fundamental ways” (Fairclough, 1995: 37). Populist direction employed by the media maintains common ground with audience developing the common-sense opinions and assumptions. Besides, the media often engages a cynical, challenging and even aggressive position towards certain official institutions and personalities, which influences the establishment of discourse of those organizations, persons and events. Pursuing specific interests the truth manipulation, misrepresentation and “false consciousness” are widely involved in the building of an ideology. Therefore, media discourse are built on the set of multifaceted and often conflicting processes, and have a deep ideological nature, widely utilized in the institution of dominant public beliefs. (Fairclough, 1995)

As it was mentioned above, the media has an influential role in the distribution of economic, social and cultural changes. Accordingly, discourses are developed not

only in media, but as a part of social and cultural change. The sociocultural context of the popular press should be taken into consideration in the investigation of discourse practices. (Fairclough, 1995) In this study discourse analysis is applied to a large set of texts (newspaper articles), which discuss the phenomenon of retail planning policy change in order to explore the institutionalization as a textual phenomenon and to identify the important texts produced by various actors to support their own interests within the process of institutional change (Munir and Phillips, 2005).

2.3 CDA perspective on discursive legitimacy

From the perspective of critical discourse analysis (henceforth - CDA), which is explained in a detailed manner in the following section of the study, “legitimacy means a discursively created sense of acceptance in specific discourses or orders of discourse” (Vaara et al., 2006: 793). Therefore, discourse outlines what is legitimate or illegitimate. CDA is concentrated on studying discursive strategies, utilized by particular actors to influence and convince others with the help of certain linguistic practices. This approach reveals not only already existing legitimacy, but also the processes of legitimation. (Vaara et al. 2006) The legitimation process sets social formation of a positive, essential, ethical, valuable, reasonable and, therefore, widely accepted action within a specific social context.

The critical standpoint stresses the connection between the legitimation of specific issue in question and wider social practices and the power position of the involved social actors (Vaara and Tienari, 2008). In its turn, the actor’s position of power is established by the legitimation of certain strategic actions, which he employed (Vaara et al. 2006). This notion sheds light on the strong tie between legitimation practices and current political obstacles, occurred within a social context (Vaara and Tienari, 2008). Being a cultural resource, discourses are highly important from the political perspective (Hardy et al., 2000), which exposes “various and often on-going socio-political struggles for legitimation, delegitimation, and

relegitimation in different social arenas, such as the media” (Vaara et al. 2006: 794). According to Rojo and van Dijk (1997), there are two directions of legitimation activity: self-legitimation conducted by the prevailing institution through approval from the dominated ones, and legitimation of the dominant institution directed by the dominated group employing different forms of more or less active approval, agreement or compliance.

The sense of legitimacy is established in connection to individual discourse, which create sense making boundaries for judgement and assessment of specific actions. Initially, the actors employ discursive activities with certain predetermined objectives and desired results, usually to gain benefits for themselves. Nevertheless, their discursive engagements occur within a larger discursive context, which includes numerous discourses arising from “the struggle between different actors and the accumulation of the activities of many individuals” (Hardy et al., 2000: 1232). The available boundaries influence individual actors to a great extent by providing and making sense of their activities. Despite the fact that the already existing discourses support some particular points of view of a specific context, actors may intentionally occupy inconsistent position with the discourse and use it for their own benefits. (Vaara and Tienari, 2008) However, being influenced by multiple discourses of the particular context, the final outcomes of the utilized discursive actions are beyond control of individuals (Hardy et al., 2000).

2.4 Legitimation strategies

The variety of methods, which individual actors utilize to establish legitimacy, is a crucial part of CDA. Legitimation strategies are defined as “specific, not always intentional or conscious, ways of employing different discourses or discursive resources to establish legitimacy” (Vaara et al. 2006: 794) or illegitimacy. These strategies can be employed in either predetermined or spontaneous way. Thus, in addition to the evident legitimation actions, CDA should also reveal indirect and

more elusive discursive practices, which are used to establish legitimation or illegitimation. (Vaara and Tienari, 2008)

In accordance to van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999), there are four core types of legitimation strategies: authorization, rationalization, moral evaluation and mythopoesis. These legitimation strategies are defined as “way in which language functions and is used for the construction of legitimacy” (Vaara and Tienari, 2008: 988). Moreover, there are number of sub-categories within each type of the legitimation strategies. It should be also noted that the most efficient form of legitimation is the multiple legitimation. Therefore, actors commonly mix up various strategies in texts to obtain the best results. (Vaara and Tienari, 2008)

The first category of ‘authorization’ is legitimation by reference to the relevant authority as subject, which can be both personal and impersonal, e.g. “Because I say so” or “According to the rule”. The second type of ‘rationalization’ is legitimation by reference to the utility of the particular widely accepted social practice or general beliefs within the particular social environment, for example - major religions. ‘Moral evaluation’ is legitimation by reference to certain system of values, setting ethical foundation for legitimation in the social context, such as etiquette and humanity. The last classification is ‘mythopoesis’, which stresses legitimation obtained with the help of narrative, or by connecting the action in question to the past or future through storytelling. (Van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999) In the study of Vaara et al. (2006) the two latter categories were renamed into ‘moralization’ and ‘narrativization’ and the fifth type of ‘normalization’, which based on the reference to exemplarity, was added. Exemplarity contains the references to the similar events, actions, practices happened in the past or expected to occur in the future. The latter category complements the theoretical framework developed by van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) and makes it applicable to the media context, where the use of language and intertextuality possess high influence. (Vaara and Tienari, 2008)

Following the existing theory, this study regards institutionalization from the perspective of the construction of general social beliefs towards novel implications made within a particular institution. The thesis is aimed to investigate how newly introduced changes become embedded into wider system of already accepted beliefs and traditions. Taking into account the notion that an institution consists of various participants, who follow their own interests and act simultaneously as a sources of legitimacy, it is worth to research how various field actors introduce and justify their actions. In order to stress the mediating importance of the media, already proven by previous studies, the spectrum of this study's investigations is narrowed down to analysis of the printed media materials. The discourses produced by the participating members are communicated to the society by means of the media, allowing introducing and diffusing information within a large group of people. Such mass delivery helps to legitimate novel practices rather rapidly and extensively and in numerous linguistic ways. Therefore, the usage of mass media as a tool to promote legitimacy is stressed in this research. The legitimation stages of diffusion and general validation are particularly significant for the analysis. As the research is particularly interested in the ways how novel practices gain the legitimated status, the objective is to identify precise legitimation strategies used by the actors to diffuse and validate new practices. The classification of the legitimation strategies developed from the studies of van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) and Vaara et al. (2006) represents the core theoretical framework used to fulfil the purposes of the analysis. The empirical study is aimed to explore discourses emerged in the articles of the printed media outlets discussing the changes of an institution. As a result, it will allow gaining more understanding of the legitimacy construction in the context of the particular institution.

3 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the research methodology used in this study is discussed. This section of the thesis is structured as follows: at the beginning, the research site is presented. Afterwards, the approach to data collection and the ontological and epistemological foundations, vis-à-vis the study's findings are evaluated. In the end the chapter describes the general research method of this study, particularly, the CDA approach.

3.1 Research site

In order to explore legitimation strategies the research is turned to retail planning and development system in the United Kingdom as a particular form of the contemporary industrial restructuring. The empirical study is concentrated on the reconstruction of the UK retail planning control system initiated by the government and the subsequent response of the major participants of this institutional field. The content of this study is categorised as change, "by which is meant identifying the arena in which the text is deployed to alter, shift, or impose new understanding, actions, or outcomes" (Leitch and Palmer, 2010: 1203). Thus, the analysis is aimed to investigate the texts discussing the change of the retail planning system, which was broadly covered in the UK newspapers. The texts related to the research question of this study are analysed in the context of process, which stresses the discourse practices related to a changing initiative (Leitch and Palmer, 2010).

The UK retail planning is rather different from the systems employed in other European countries. In the UK local planning authorities are responsible for retail planning by indicating their desirable future spatial retail development pattern, as well as by permitting or rejecting retailers' or property developers' retail development applications. Nevertheless, central government has always been the major influencer on the retail planning development, providing guidance for developers and local authorities, which formed certain retail trends. The course of the governmental policy has been changing considerably during the last half

century. Accordingly, the climate for developers varied from carefree days of Margaret Thatcher's first years as prime minister in the early 1980s up to dramatically restrictive governing times of the Conservative Party, followed by U-turn in the planning development approach initiated by New Labour Government in 1990s and more transparent and adequate system in mid 2000s. (Guy, 2007)

The UK retail planning policy development has been varying from free-for-all to exceedingly restrictive retail and planning regulations. Prior to the 1980s, the retail planning policy was highly unregulated and, therefore, possessed lots of freedoms for retail developers. Due to incoherent retail planning policy statements and corresponding freedom of developers' actions, numerous problems were caused to both private and public sectors, such as decline of town centres and related unemployment, social exclusion and increased car usage causing pollution. By the 1980s, the need for clear, fair and compete policy formulated by central government was identified. This led to the introduction of the first version of Planning Policy Guidance Six: Planning for Town Centres (henceforth - PPG6). Firstly, introduced by the government in 1988, this Guidance specifies design concerns for town centres planning and comprises tools for the security of the town centre planning policy and proposals implementation (Planning Portal, 2013). It was designed to replace and structure previous guidance notes, as well as to assist both private developers and local planning authorities. The competition between various methods of retailing was encouraged and widely promoted. Then, in the 1990s, sustainable development, social inclusion and urban regeneration were the key concerns. Over time those ideas and their significance developed further and were emphasised in the retail planning process and in the upcoming reviews of PPG6 (in 1993, 1996 and 2005). At this time the influence of other third party organizations, such as environmental activists' organizations, on general public opinion and, consequently, on the development strategies of major retailers, as well as on the government decisions concerning planning policy changes, has increased. After decade of the policy tightening up, past defects of the guiding notes were realized by mid 2000s. It resulted in a novel, more open and faster

planning system, aimed to for more reasonable and sustainable retail development respecting opinions of all groups of interest. (Guy, 2007)

Generally, retail planning includes constant interactions of the public (central and local government bodies and other related agencies) and private (retail property developers) sector. From one side, retail planning refers to the processes of government regulation of the retail system. However, from other side, retailing planning is a part of the strategic (planning) activities of retail organizations. Any modifications and limitations of retail growth are direct prerequisite of extra expenses for retail developers and, accordingly, limited competition and increased prices for consumers. The government's retail planning policy is supposed to maintain profitability of the retail sector and to let it develop and change simultaneously. Nevertheless, other non-economic concerns, highly valuable for the public sector, such as wellbeing of so-called 'socially excluded' individuals, or the need to protect historic sites and nature, are not neglected. Hence, the wider public interest acts as an essential mediator balancing the state planning system. (Guy, 2007)

The UK government has been always emphasising the improvement of the retailing efficiency, consumer and environment protection as core goals for public policy controls over retailing, although the degree of importance and the application ways of those objectives have fluctuated over time. Practically, central government policy is a detailed guidance issued for the assistance of local authority planners. In general, the content of those guidance notes corresponds to broader government policy, as well as to the concerns of interest groups. These groups include various organizations: retailers and developers, local authorities, professional town planners, environmental pressure groups, ordinary individual customers, town inhabitants and other third parties. The process of the planning policy establishment begins with the presentation of an official draft of guidance notes in order to let interest groups commenting on the content and wording. Commonly, the debates arise around some issues of existing policy covering particular assigned interests, but which are regarded as uncertain, imbalanced,

unfair, discriminating or ineffective. After several wide-ranging revisions, the final version is issued and applied accordingly. During an extensive consultation and revision process main participants remark, criticise and propose their own ideas for the notes. (Guy, 2007)

One thing should be always kept in mind is that all main guidance documents introduced by the government, are not laws, but only recommendations for local authorities and developers. Nevertheless, the UK planning development has been corresponding to the general line of the government policy. In this sense, in order to justify, legitimize and finally make new policy initiatives established in retail planning guidance, interest groups employ various discourse legitimation strategies. All in all, the aim of the strategies to increase influence of the actors promoting their ideas, although each interest group participates in the policy implementation in its own way according to personal aims and desired outcomes.

Despite the existence of retail planning and management literature explaining the processes and consequences of tightened regulations, as well as critique and adaptation of the major players to the changing system, to my knowledge, there exists no research revealing how new practices initiated by the modifications of the retail planning system were legitimated. This thesis attempts to fulfil this gap. This case is particularly suitable for the purpose of this study. First of all, the reconstruction of retail planning regulations demanded to provide explanations and make sense of what was going on and what forced to legitimate the changes happening. Secondly, as it was noted earlier, the transformation of the retail planning sector was widely covered in the press. The media produced large data set, which can be used for investigation of various discursive legitimation strategies applied by the most significant actors, who were interested in and influenced by the changes. Thirdly, the changes were perceived differently by each group of field members. Consequently, each group of participants promoted and adapted to the transformation in a specific way in order to support their own interests on the first place. Hence, the legitimation strategies vary in accordance to the needs and aims of the field actors. Such variety of the actions makes discourse

analysis more comprehensive and versatile, allowing exploring the production of various discourses highly influential in the process of the field transformation.

3.2 Research approach

The research is conducted as a qualitative study, which examines phenomena, people and their thoughts in the natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret them. Qualitative research is defined as a “situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices ... turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recording and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world.” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 3)

Qualitative studies encompass a number of research approaches and traditions, varying in accordance to the main focus and objectives of the studies, as well as to the nature of qualitative enquiries (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). The key principle of qualitative research is a systematic generation of new theory grounded in data. Nevertheless, qualitative methods can be underpinned by all possible epistemological positions, including paradigms, which are traditionally coupled with quantitative methods. Therefore, the definition varies considerable in accordance to various underlying epistemological assumptions and study objectives. (Cassell and Symon, 2004)

There are three dominating research views: positivism, interpretivism and realism. Positivism emphasises the role of objective analysis and highly structured methodology to highlight replication. On the contrary, interpretivism stresses subjectivity. According interpretivism, generalizations of the findings are not considered significant since they diminish the obtained results. The latter viewpoint, realism, claims that reality is independent of human thoughts and beliefs. (Saunders et al., 2009)

This study is based on the paradigm of critical realism. According to the definition, offered by Guba and Lincoln (1994: 107), “a paradigm is a set of basic beliefs that deals with ultimates or first principles”. It defines the nature of the world, as well as all possible relations between the world and its components, considering the impact of the participants’ actions and the structures they are engaged in. Since these beliefs are basic, they ought to be well reasoned and accepted on faith. (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Battilana, Leca, Boxenbaum, 2009) Critical theory, concentrated on “the inherent connection between politics, values and knowledge and thereby provokes a deeper consideration of the politics and values that underpin and legitimize the authority of scientific knowledge” (Syman and Cassell, 2012: 22), is the foundation of this research. The core objective of the approaches belonging to critical theory is to explore the ways in which the management practices and institutions are established, maintained and legitimized within relations of power. The theory realises that institutes and systems are subjects of constant change; therefore, qualitative studies are needed to reveal asymmetrical power relations, legitimation of new practices and other transformational modifications occurred within the field of interest. (Syman and Cassell, 2012)

As a particular version of realism, critical approach is adopted for the purpose of this research. The definition of realism states that it is “minimally the claim that there is a real world, including a real social world, which exists independently of our knowledge about it” (Fairclough, 2005: 922). According this philosophy of social science, the existence of social worlds depends on human action. Thus, its nature is socially constructed, meaning that it does include any of the pieces, which are not or incompletely or erroneously familiar for individuals. The basis of critical approach lies down in the perception that the general social practice and the particular usage of language are connected with circumstances and effects, which may remain unnoticed in usual situations. Social practices are mediating elements, “more or less durable and stable articulations of diverse social elements, including discourse, which constitute social selections and orderings of the allowances of social structures as actualizable allowances in particular areas of social life in a certain time and place” (Fairclough, 2005: 922). Social practices, networked in a

special and fluctuating way, are represented by social fields, institutions and organizations. The objective of critical realism is to explain the underlying powers between the structure of social processes and events and human agency and their consequences. (Fairclough, 2005)

In the case of this research, the aim is to investigate discourse legitimation strategies, which were used in the reconstruction of the retail planning processes, shaped by the introduction of new government policy in the UK. Generally, being perceived as a component of social events, processes and stable social practices, discourse is a certain technique, which indicates particular aspects of the world (Fairclough, 2005). According to the definition of Phillips and Hardy (2002: 4), discourse is outlined as “an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being” or simply “a structured collections of meaningful texts” (Phillips et al., 2004: 636). In other words, discourses construct social reality and give sense to social interactions, which cannot be completely explained not referring to the related discourses (Phillips and Hardy, 2002).

Even though discourses are expressed in texts, they appear beyond the texts, which they originated from (Phillips and Hardy, 2002). The term ‘texts’ refers to “any kind of symbolic expression requiring a physical medium and permitting of permanent storage” (Taylor and Van Every, 1993: 109). The term can be applied to a wide range of forms: written and spoken texts, words, pictures, symbols, etc. (Phillips and Hardy, 2002) In this study the term ‘discourse’ is applied for written language use. The role of language use is fundamental in shaping social identities and relations, as well as system of knowledge and belief by contributing in two distinct ways: by assisting reproduction and maintenance of already established those social elements and cultural aspects, or by supporting their transformation (Fairclough, 1995).

Individually, a text does not possess any meaning; only an interconnected set of texts develop discourse (Phillips and Hardy, 2002). Henceforth, it is not possible

to study discourses directly. They can be only investigated through the texts developing them. In order to determine the connection between discourse and social reality, the methodical study of texts, their construction, diffusion and consumption are incorporated in discourse analysis. (Phillips et al., 2004) Discourse analysis examines how texts became meaningful, and how the construction of social reality is developing through those meanings (Phillips and Hardy, 2002). More precisely, the focus of discourse analysis is on “relations between linguistic or semiotic elements of social events and linguistic or semiotic facets of social structures and social practices, including “discourses” (Fairclough, 2005: 916). Furthermore, discourse cannot be understood separately from the context they belong to, as well as from other earlier produced discourses (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997).

3.2.1 Ontology

The ontological question refers to the form and nature of reality by asking “What is there that can be known about it?” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 108) According to Syman and Cassell (2012), ontology indicates the essence of the phenomena and the nature of their existence. Ontological research assumptions enclose beliefs of the nature of social (and accordingly institutional or organizational) reality, specifically “that social phenomena are socially constructed, i.e. people’s concepts of the world they live and act within contribute to its reproduction and transformation; and that social phenomena are socially constructed in discourse” (Fairclough, 2005: 915-916). In the paradigm of critical theory, ontology refers to “‘virtual’ reality constructed by social, economic, ethnic, political and gender values shaped over time” (Sobh and Perry, 2005: 1195).

The foundation for realist discourse analysis is a dialectical-relational social ontology, which explores objects, persons, discourses, organizations, institutions, etc. as “socially produced ‘permanences’ which arise out of processes and relations and which constitute a pre-structured reality with which we are confronted, and sets of affordances and limitations on processes” (Fairclough, 2005: 923). The research concerns with the connections and tension between pre-constructed

social identities, structures, practices, organizations and orders of discourse and processes, actions, events. The focus of the analysis is on tension between the causal power of social structures or practices and the causal power held by individual actors, regarded as socially produced, dependent and changeable objects. Within discourse analysis, this tension is explored particularly in textual elements of social events. (Fairclough, 2005) The ontology of this research is (critical) historical realism. It refers to a reality, which is “assumed to be apprehendable that was once plastic, but that was, over time, shaped by a congeries of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors, and then crystallized (reified) into a series of structures that are now (inappropriately) taken as "real," that is, natural and immutable” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 110).

3.2.2 Epistemology

The epistemological question refers to the knowledge and asks “what is the nature of relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 108) Epistemology is recognized as “the study of criteria by which we can know what does and does not constitute warranted, or scientific, knowledge” (Syman and Cassell, 2012: 16). In other words, epistemology means being aware of knowledge about knowledge.

In critical theory epistemology is transactional and subjectivist. The findings are mediated by, and therefore dependent on values of the investigator. He acts as “transformative intellectual”, who changes the social world within which participants live” (Sobh and Perry, 2005: 1195). Thus, the investigator and the investigated object are expected to be linked interactively. In the case of this study, series of historical or structural insights, which changed over the time, construct the knowledge of the phenomenon in question. The processes of historical revision develop and change the knowledge. When the mixture of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender positions and values is similar across settings, generalization appears. (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) As the research is dealing with socially constructed reality, the possibility of neutral observation has to be rejected (Syman and Cassell, 2012). Theoretical framework of the discourse analysis

applied in this study embodies the epistemological viewpoint of social constructivism, according to which language is perceived as constitutive and constructive of social reality (Munir and Phillips, 2005). Such approach offers tools to reveal the processes of maintenance and establishment of the socially constructed ideas and objects that constitute the social world, which the thesis is looking at (Phillips and Oswick, 2012).

3.3 Research method

Based on the above reasoning the study approaches the institutional change from the perspective of discourse analysis. In general, discourse analysis “allows one to shift attention from established legitimacy to the discursive sense making processes through which legitimacy is established (Vaara and Monin, 2010: 5) and is an important part of organization studies (Phillips et al., 2004; Fairclough, 2005). The method of discourse analysis provides tools to reveal the processes of establishment and development of socially produced objects, such as organizations, institutions, and the social world in general (Phillips et al., 2004; Munir and Phillips, 2005). While more traditional qualitative techniques explore social reality as it is, discourse analysis is focused on social construction processes and aimed to determine how the reality was created (Munir and Phillips, 2005). Discourses establish things by making sense of and giving particular meanings to the reality for its actors, thus, creating certain experiences and practices. The analysis of texts collections is a part of discourse analysis and includes investigations of how the texts’ meanings were constructed by linking them to other related texts, how the texts appear within discourses, how they are distributed and to whom, as well as the methods of texts production and consumption. The meaning of discourse is socially established and originated from the actor’s actions in producing texts, which in turn give meaning to those actions and, consequently, construct the social reality. (Phillips et al., 2004)

In turn, the method of CDA, “a cross-disciplinary approach to linguistic analysis of social phenomenon” (Vaara and Tienari, 2008: 986), focuses on the role of discourses in the construction and maintenance of (unequal) power relations (Phillips and Hardy, 2002; Vaara et al., 2006). It reveals how discourse appears and connects to other social elements in the processes of social events or change (Fairclough, 2005). In organizational studies the most common approach to CDA is the three-dimensional theoretical framework developed by Fairclough (1995), which underlines the link between texts and discourses by positioning them into historical and social context and referring to particular actors, relationships and practices, which illustrate the event in question. The emphasis on the relation between texts and the context, rather than simply on objects as individual units, differentiates CDA from other analytical methods (Leitch and Palmer, 2010).

There are three levels of CDA: 1) the text dimension, studying the language in use; 2) the discursive practice dimension, defining the textual production and consumption processes and 3) the social practice dimension, exploring institutional factors of the social event and their influence on discourse (Phillips and Oswick, 2012). In addition, discourse analysis includes number of approaches ranging from micro to macro analysis (Phillips et al., 2004). The micro-discourse perspective includes more comprehensive linguistic analysis within the exactly defined context. On the contrary, the macro approach explores universal connections, for example - the social cognitions of a particular phenomenon. The selection of the analytical level depends on the context in question, which also parallels with the set of texts selected for the research. The micro-level analysis allows establishing a link between texts and a context much easier, while the macro approach requires more complex study. Besides, the latter perspective provides broader importance to the conducted analysis. Nevertheless, both directions might be integrated with each other, since the macro approach itself is composed by general social beliefs and perceptions of social individuals, which refer to micro dimension of discourse analysis. (Leitch and Palmer, 2010; Wodak and Meyer, 2009)

The connection between texts in discussions around a certain phenomenon is defined as intertextuality, which is another important issue in CDA (Vaara and Tienari, 2008). Besides, intertextuality indicates the ways in which sense of texts is made with respect to the earlier produced texts (Leitch and Palmer, 2010). There are various ways in which texts are linked together. For instance, it can be done by direct reference to a topic, main actor or event; by casual remark or citation; by using the same argument in different texts, and so forth. The process of transferring elements from one text to another is defined as recontextualization. (Wodak and Meyer, 2009) Particularly, media events are covered by using numerous references to other texts. Hence, interpretation of a single text without any knowledge of other texts might be problematic. (Vaara et al., 2006) Furthermore, discourse develops and expands across discursive fields over the time, increasing the probability of incorporating terms of one discursive field by another discursive field's actors. This phenomenon is defined as 'interdiscursivity'. (Fairclough, 1995) New subtopics of discourse can be easily created, as discourses are presented in an open and, therefore, frequently hybridised form (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). The construction of social reality and interdiscursivity are directly connected: the larger the interdiscursivity, the higher the probability that existing beliefs would be challenged (Fiss and Hirsch, 2005).

This research follows a particular sub form of CDA, the discourse-historical approach (henceforth - DHA). The DHA follows the socio-philosophical orientation of critical theory. This method centres on political issues and explains theoretically why some interpretations of discursive events are considered to be more authorized than others. The aim of this approach is to raise awareness of a certain phenomenon by connecting all possible related genres of discourses and argumentation strategies referring to a specific issue and to the historical period of this issue. (Van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999) According to Wodak and Meyer (2009), the position of the researcher should not affect the results in DHA. For DHA ideology refers to one-sided perspective, which is composed of related mental statements, attitudes, beliefs, opinions and assessments, established by members of a specific social group. Accordingly, this study is concentrated on how linguistic

practices are used to mediate and reproduce ideology in a particular social setting. Nevertheless, the use of language does not possess any power by itself; it is a tool to obtain and develop power for people who are considered to be ‘powerful’, since they have already gained some power earlier. Being defined as “an asymmetric relationship among social actors who assume different social positions or belong to different social groups” (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 88), power is legitimated and delegitimated in discourses.

In discourse-historical methodology there are two ways for approaching the historical dimension of discursive acts: to combine all available information on the historical background and the original sources, which root discursive events, or to investigate how certain genres and types of discourse are exposed to diachronic change (van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999). In this study the latter approach is employed. The chosen research method corresponds to the particular interest in the role of macro-cultural discourses and the micro-level legitimation strategies initiated by local actors within the specific institutional setting. Such multi-level approach is a mixed version of CDA, which defines the connection between macro level social and political practices and micro level textual processes (i.e. detailed use of language/discourse setting). (Leitch and Palmer, 2010; Symon and Cassell, 2012)

In the case of this research, the focus of CDA is to connect local texts with wider social practices. The utilized discourse analysis is limited to identify the existence and combined forms of repeated and rather constant and long-lasting ‘discourses’ mobilized in texts (Fairclough, 2005). The attention is focused on the discursive processes and, in particular, strategies employed by various actors within the field of interest in order to establish a sense of legitimacy around these phenomena. The method is especially suitable for this study, as its general research question and interest is how social order is (unequally) constructed within society, and how the inequalities can be corrected. The aim of critical theory inquiry is the critique and transformation of a particular (e.g. social, political, economic, etc.) structure (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). DHA is focused on language forms utilized in

expressions and manipulation of power in media texts, or “sites of social struggle in that they manifest traces of different ideological fights for dominance and hegemony” (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 89). Specifying the fact that the development of certain discourse always occurs in a particular socio-historical setting, the method stresses the significance of the historical aspect (Vaara et al., 2006). Thus, DHA allows to answer the main research question and defines what kinds of discursive legitimation practices have been used to institutionalize the change of the retail planning policy happened in the UK over a certain period of time.

3.4 Data analysis

In this sub chapter the analysis process, employed in this thesis, is revealed. At the beginning, the data collection is described. Afterwards, the research analysis, which consists of three stages: thematic, interdiscursive and content analyses, is explained in more details.

3.4.1 Data collection

The data consists of a set of extensive media materials from one country (United Kingdom), particularly a full-text dataset of newspaper articles, addressing the topic during an almost thirty year span (1986-2012). In the contemporary world, characterised by constantly and rapidly changing culture and society, the media acts as both a projector and a stimulator of more general modification processes by creating discursive practices (Fairclough, 1995). ‘The Grocer’, ‘The Guardian’ and ‘Retail Week’ were selected as sources for the newspaper articles. These tabloids are well-known for their agenda-setting influence not only on the United Kingdom media scene, but also around the world. The summary of the media coverage during the period 3 February 1986 - 1 October 2010 is provided in Table 1.

All newspaper articles were extracted from the LexisNexis database, available via online search portal of the Aalto University Library. The articles were selected by searching for keywords related to the topic in online databases of three British

newspapers: The Grocer, The Guardian and Retail Week. Those keywords include: retail development/planning, planning policy, PPG 6/15, PPS 6, Classes Order, vitality and viability or any of its derived forms and other topic-related words. The articles, which mentioned these words either in the title or in the text, were included in the dataset of study materials. Some of the articles contained more than one keyword; thus, after the selection was finished, the duplicate pieces had to be removed. The initial dataset contained 213 documents, covering the period from February, 1986 up to December, 2012. Nevertheless, the data was reduced down due to ineligibility or iteration of certain texts. In addition, the data scope was limited up to 2010 in order to present the analysis of the whole decade. For the actual analysis, 180 articles dated from February 1986 up to October 2010 were selected.

Table 1: Empirical Material: Media Coverage 3 February 1986 - 1 October 2010

| Outlet | Description | No. of articles |
|---------------|---|------------------------|
| Retail Week | Leading British retail industry weekly news magazine | 121 |
| The Grocer | Leading British grocery industry weekly news magazine | 21 |
| The Guardian | British national daily newspaper | 45 |

3.4.2 The process of analysis

Qualitative studies may focus on both naturally occurring and generated data. This research follows critical approach and is aimed to observe the phenomenon in its natural setting and, therefore, to analyse naturally occurring data. (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) The nature of CDA is very abductive; it requires continuous re-assessment of both theoretical and empirical data. In addition, there is no uniform application of discourse analysis, which makes the precise definition of all steps of the analysis rather challenging. (Vaara et al., 2006)

Nevertheless, three stages of the preliminary analysis of the obtained data can be outlined. The analysis began with a chronological overview of the most significant

events happened in the field of the UK retail planning development since 1980s, followed by the existing model for CDA developed based on studies of van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) and Vaara et al. (2006). This framework also corresponds to three-dimensional process of the DHA proposed by Wodak and Meyer (2009): 1) identification of topics of specific discourse, 2) investigation of discursive strategies, and 3) examination of linguistic means. According to those methodologies, the first stage of this study involved an overall thematic analysis of the textual media material. In the second stage an interdiscursive analysis was in focus. Its aim was to classify various discourse types used in legitimation processes by close reading of specific texts. The final stage of the analysis included a textual analysis, which emphasised the most significant strategies utilized for establishing legitimacy. The analysis process was closed up by refining the findings and generalizations based on the acknowledged results. The figure 1 below illustrates the process visually.

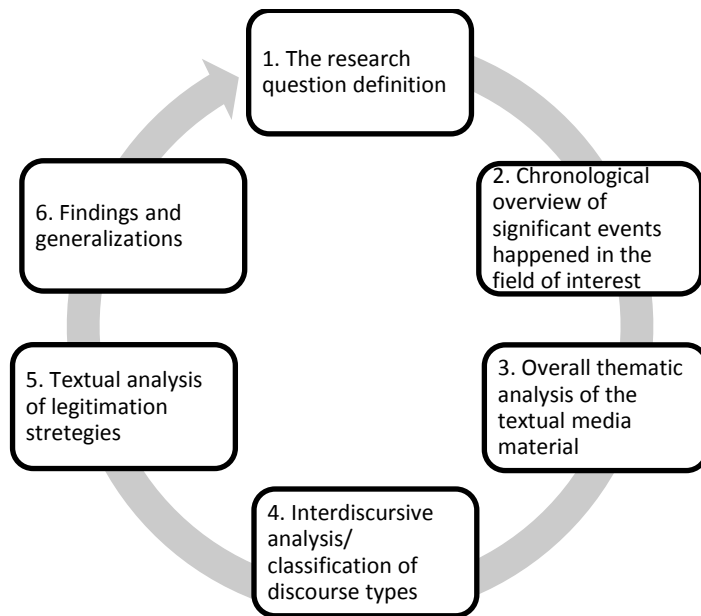


Figure 1: Research process of the study (adapted from the studies of van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) and Vaara et al. (2006))

3.4.2.1 Thematic analysis

It is suggested to begin any critical media analysis with thematic analysis. Thematic analysis organizes a vast set of data into meaningful units, based on a common theme, or 'codes'. Code is defined "as a label attached to a section of text to index it as relating to a theme or issue in the data which the researcher has identified as important to his or her interpretation" (Symon and Cassell, 1998: 119). Such analysis is a key step and core basis of the whole research; it helps to understand what themes, sub themes and issues have been discussed and to reveal the most important topics, which were covered more broadly in the discussion. The method of thematic analysis connects content analysis, where researchers predetermine codes and statistically analyse their distribution, with grounded theory, where codes are not defined priori. (Symon and Cassell, 1998; Ryan and Bernard, 2003)

According to Opler (1945), there are three major principles for thematic analysis. First of all, it is only possible to observe and, therefore, discover themes through the manifestation of expression in data. Hence, expressions, not referring to the themes, do not possess any sense. Secondly, some of thematic expressions might be understated as individual and symbolic, while others are widely recognizable and culturally approved. Thirdly, a set of interrelated themes of different importance are included in cultural systems. (Opler, 1945) Consequently, themes can be really different and vary from extensive constructions including numerous kinds of expressions to very specific ones with very particular expressions involved (Ryan and Bernard, 2003).

Inductive approach, which entails themes from empirical data, is utilized in this study. The process of discovering themes is called 'open coding'. The essential idea, which was extracted from empirical data and analysed, represents a theme (or a code). The analysis was started by focusing on articles from each data source (newspaper) and afterwards worked across all three newspapers searching for similarities and differences by making comparisons across units of data. (Ryan and Bernard, 2003) It helps to discover the most significant topics (thematic units),

which were widely discussed in the media when dealing with the UK retail planning policy. The changes of the retail provision structure in favour of out-of-and off-centre retail development initiated by retailers in 1960s due to the realization of economies of scale and intensive expansion to new territories caused more negative rather than positive consequences to the town centres all over the country (Guy, 2007). In respect to these trends, three major concerns, which have been increasing its importance over time, were categorised: **environmental-urban concerns**, **social planning concerns** and **economic-political concerns** (see Table 2). The major issues, included in the environmental-urban case, are decline of town centres, urban regeneration, environmental protection and transportation. The social planning case covers the problems of social exclusion and employment opportunities. The concerns on economic power of retail developers, political power of authorities, as well as introduction of new planning policy statements belong to the third economic-political category.

After careful and numerous considerations the available media materials were narrowed down: those articles, which were not significant for the research, such as ‘short news’ texts, proving little information, were removed from the data set. The selection was done in accordance to the method, employed by Vaara et al. (2006), which means extracting so-called ‘factual’ news-like pieces from the data set.

3.4.2.2 Interdiscursive analysis

Following the thematic analysis, interdiscursive analysis was implemented. Being one of the most important parts of CDA, such analysis is objected to identify discourses developed respectively to the themes described above. It links the textual and the social processes: “properties of sociocultural practice shape texts, but by way of shaping the nature of the discourse practice, i.e. the ways in which texts are produced and consumed, which is realized in features of texts” (Fairclough, 1995: 60). The objective is to explain to the order-of-discourse, defined as a network of the discursive practices used in the CDA in the selected textual pieces. The order of discourse consists of all discursive types used in a

particular social institution or domain, which relationships are emphasized within the concept. Discourse type is defined as a “relatively stabilized configurations of genres and discourse within the order of discourse” (Fairclough, 1995: 66). Discourse types may include multiple constructions of few genres and discourses, or on the contrary, may be expressed by one particular genre and discourse. However, discourses do not really depend on genres, since certain discourse can be depicted from several genres. (Fairclough, 1995)

One of the ways to define discourse types, proposed by Fairclough (1995), is the characterization according to voice. Voice is one feature of genres or combination of genres, describing the ways of language use related to a certain relationship between the producer of discourse and the audience, to which this discourse is delivered. More precisely, voices are “the identities of particular individual or collective agents associated with discourses” (Fairclough, 1995: 77). In this research, the voice of discourses can be classified in compliance with groups of institutional actors related to the field of the study. These field participants are organizations or group of people, who are able to execute some kind of political, economic or cultural power and influence the development of retail planning policy.

Four voices types were recognized: **official authorities** (government, local authorities, local planning authorities), **retail developers** (including professional town planners, large retailers and developers), **general society** (individual customers, town and cities inhabitants) and **third party organizations** (such as environmental pressure groups ‘Friends of Earth’, local community groups, consulting service firms). It needs to be stressed that each of the group aimed to legitimize their own interests on the first place. Therefore, negative comments and critique of one party towards the other could be observed. Nevertheless, in some cases various voices supported each other to deepen and fasten legitimization of particular mutually beneficial changes.

Table 2: Main concerns of the UK retail planning policy and their components

| Concerns category | Subcategory | Discourses |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Environmental-urban case | Decline of town centres | Vitality and viability of town centres Decay of centre's environment/infrastructure Lack of town centres protection Restriction of off-centre development High street fight back |
| | Urban regeneration (land redevelopment) | Balance of in- and off-centre development Redevelopment / modernization of existing sites and town centres |
| | Environment protection | Sustainable development Preservation of natural resources / historical sites / cultural heritage "Green" purchasing behaviour Pollution |
| | Transportation | Emission of vehicle pollution caused by increased travel activity Car usage restriction Max. public or other than car transport opportunities |
| Social planning case | Social inclusion | Attraction of 'weak consumers' Benefits for community / importance of local communities' needs |
| | Employment opportunities | In-centre unemployment caused by rapid off-centre development Working opportunities thanks to new development |
| Economic-political concerns | Economic power of large retail developers | Monopoly / retail competition Retail innovation |
| | New planning policy statements | Effectiveness / clarity / flexibility / consistency Simplicity vs. complexity Introduction of new policy Market freedom balance / control of activities |
| | Political power of local authorities | Weak control over local planning development |

3.4.2.3 Content analysis

As it was mentioned earlier, the last step of the analysis involved content analysis of the legitimation strategies. The method investigates relations between the words in a text for the purpose of analysis and interpretation of the emerging discourse. Analysis of texts refers to their forms and meanings, which are not really possible to be separated from each other. Besides, it depends a lot on certain presences or absences in texts, which help to draw conclusion. There are three main aspects, which the analysis might be focused on: particular construction of writer's and reader's identities or of the relationship between them, as well as certain representations and re-contextualization of social practice. (Fairclough, 1995) The latter notion represents the purpose of the contextual analysis of this study, since the research is focused on the legitimation strategies utilized to introduce new or reconstruct existing practices within a particular social context.

The analysis and classification of the legitimation strategies employed in the printed media were done in accordance to their strategic importance and frequency of mentioning in the textual data. Extended framework of Vaara et al. (2006) drawn on the work of van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) was applied to this study to classify and interpret the research findings. The research study of Vaara et al. (2006) is concentrated on the textual legitimation strategies linked to journalistic practices. Therefore, their analysing model is especially suitable to the purpose of this study, since it deals with media discourses as well. In accordance to this existing framework, there are four legitimation strategies defined: authorization, rationalization, moralization and narrativization. The detailed explanation of each classification, as well as of multiple legitimation forms can be found in the next chapter.

Prior to this chapter, the literature related to legitimation in organizational studies, as well as the media and text production were introduced. In addition, the research site and methodology, as well as the description of the data set were covered. In the next chapter the discussion continues with an outline of the research materials from the viewpoint of the research questions.

4 RESULTS

In this section the results of the study are presented. As it was mentioned earlier, four types of discursive legitimation strategies were used to institutionalize the UK retail planning policy changes in the media: rationalization, authorization, moralization and narrativization. Each strategy is explained in details, including processes of legitimation employed. The figure 2 inserted below indicates the number of articles associated with each of the legitimation types. Besides, it depicts that some of the text pieces belong to more than one type. These connections are explained in the following chapter as well. Additionally, tables summarising the main distinguishing features of each legitimation type are provided in each of the subsections.

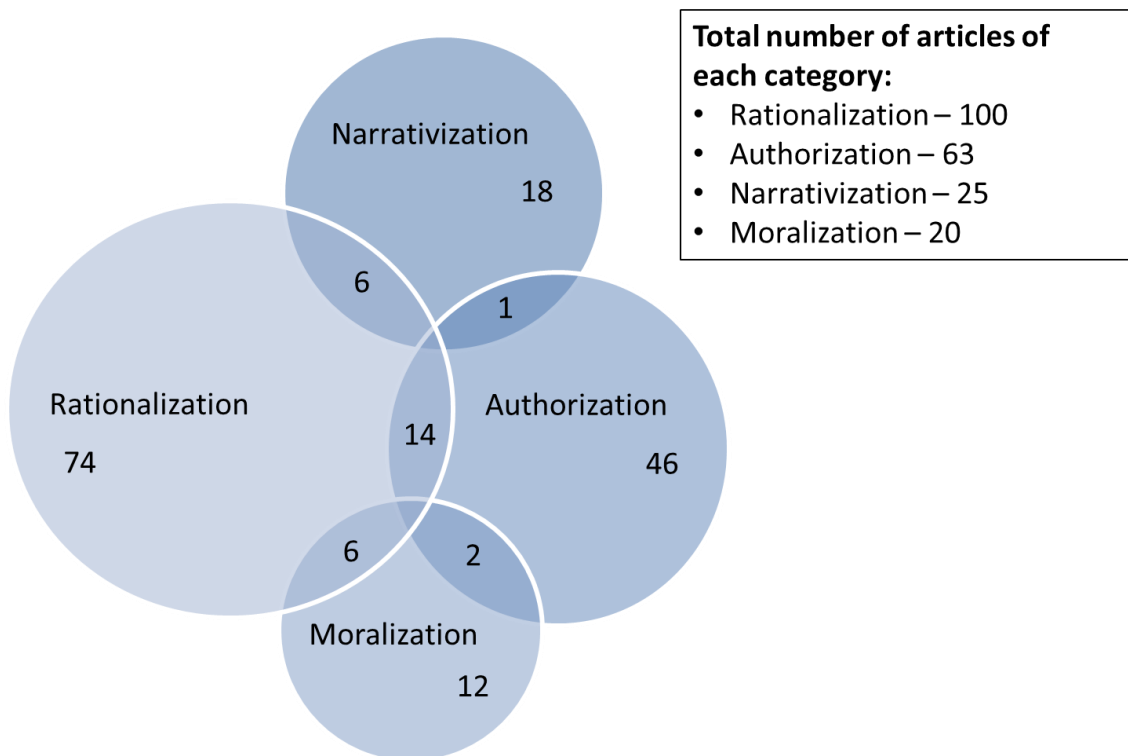


Figure 2: Distribution of articles according to the types of legitimation strategies

4.1 Rationalization

Rationalization is legitimation referring to the utility of specific practices, as well as of actors. Common sense is the foundational basis for this legitimation strategy, along with the specialists who deliver particular aspects of knowledge, which can be utilized in the legitimation process. The establishment of rationalization based on the purposes, reasons, benefits and results of the changes of the retail development system can be entitled as 'instrumental rationalization'. This legitimation strategy justifies practices initiated within the sector by indicating what they mean, what their purpose is, what needs they are aimed to fulfil and what possible beneficial consequences they may achieve. (Van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999; Vaara et al. 2006)

Rationalization is the most prevailing type of all legitimation strategies discussed in this study. More than half of the articles belong to this category (see Figure 2). In the case of this research, the rationalizations mainly address the environmental-urban case (see Table 2). Mainly, short news-like text pieces belong to this type of legitimation strategy. Rationalization typically involved overview of negative consequences of previous practices, foreseen or expected benefits, as well as damage caused by newly introduced implications. The forms, in which this technique is expressed, include statements indicating the rational side of the discussed action ("*Clearly the rationale...*", "*...are clear indications that...*", "*...is a clear reflection of...*") or requiring further information (e.g. "*So what do these statistics mean?*", "*A better justification is needed...*"). The best examples of rationalization articles are constructed as follows: firstly, the problems are presented; secondly, the current situation and its drawbacks are explained; afterwards suggestions for further improvement are discussed and concluded by the final recommendations. An example of an article of the rationalization legitimation strategy and its distinguishing features can be found in Appendix I and table 3, correspondingly.

In some media texts journalists shared a neutral position by confronting advantages and disadvantages of definite practices (e.g. out-of-town against town centre development) in order to justify the actions of all parties involved in this issue (e.g. retail developers and official authorities). In other materials used for the analysis, actions were legitimized by providing examples of already implemented beneficial practices. In this way subsequent changes, which should have been adjusted soon, were welcomed in advance, since past arrangements had some beneficial results. On the contrary, other articles were written in criticising tone and aimed to explore negative consequences and suggest how things should have been done so better results would be obtained, e.g. *“It shows the government is prepared to amend the retail planning guidelines to suit the demands of large multinationals, and that sets a very bad precedent.”* (The Grocer, 15.01.2005) Such texts were aimed to delegitimise priory or currently employed practices and propose new, more efficient ways. In some texts legitimation was also established by presentation of positive and negative effects simultaneously. In all those cases journalists presented or estimated abstract benefits, which were objected to legitimize the changes of the retail development sector.

To rationalize or de-rationalize certain changes or activities journalists tended to refer to open opinion and knowledge of influential person, who explained and assessed new practices and suggested further ways for development, which would provide benefits in the future. In some articles statements from the speeches of influential persons were extracted in order to explain the situation and justify the initiated change. For instance, quotes from the speech of former environment secretary John Gummer at British Council for Out of Town Retail conference were used to rationalize the changes employed in the sector of out-of-town retail development (Retail Week, 06.10.2000). The Guardian newspaper included a separate section, entitled ‘Comment & Debate’, which presented individual views of retail sector specialists, such as Lord Rogers, chairman of Richard Rogers Architects and the Government's Urban Task Force (The Guardian, 02.12.2006). In some texts opinions were presented in a form of personal ‘letters’, alike the Guardian’s article (05.08.2000), which were written as a correspondence between

William Moyes, general director of the British Retail Consortium, and Caroline Cranbrook, a campaigner, debating on the topic of supermarkets development. Other articles were presented in a way of direct commentary statements shared by people belonging to the industry, for example - opinion of Steve Wilson, director and head of the retail planning team at CgMs, an independent town planning, historic buildings and archaeological consultancy, on the Competition Commission inquiry, which was published in a form of personal note (The Grocer, 21.04.2007). Besides, analysts and researchers were mentioned as a reliable source legitimizing the change:

- *“Leading Wall Street analyst Joe Ellis, limited partner at Goldman Sachs, warned that British store groups [...] should realise that global best practice is already influencing the local market.”* (Retail Week, 17.05.2000);
- *“Peter Ward, researcher at CB Hillier Parker, has been tracking the growth of the factory outlet market in the UK.”* (Retail Week, 05.11.1999)

These methods of legitimation are based partly on authorization, which is explained in the next section. Unlike authorization, rationalization does not establish legitimation of the changes by simple reference to an opinion leader, but by reference to his opinion on and justification of the actual processes, its consequences and benefits.

In some materials this type of legitimation strategy was created by presentation of several opposing attitudes of third party organizations (e.g. environmental groups), official authorities (e.g. British Property Federation; British Property Federation; the Greater London Authority) and retail developers (e.g. Claire Healey, property communications officer at Asda; Sue Willcox, head of town planning at Sainsbury; Tesco property communications manager Shaun Edgeley) on a particular issue, extracted from their interviews (The Grocer, 10.03.2004). Overview of different considerations and comments on the same subject helped to create legitimation. Some of these articles were characterized by critical discussion tone, while others argued on mutual benefits of all parties involved in discussion.

Interestingly, in some texts few opinions were presented, though no final recommendation or conclusion was made. This method led to further brainstorming, though, at the same time, showed disapproval of current situation rather explicitly.

Rationalization can be also initiated by the government in order to monitor processes of the institutional changes establishment and application for identification of needed improvements or further modifications. For example, the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions assigned a commercial real estate services firm CB Hillier Parker to evaluate the effectiveness of PPG6 by collecting feedback on how the guidance was implemented in practice (The Grocer, 03.11.2001). Likewise, the changes in the retail policy development were legitimized by publications of the government's guidance, for example - the guide, entitled "Empty Property: Unlocking the Potential". This guide legitimized new procedures, since "*it demonstrates how unlocking this can increase the profitability of our businesses and, at the same time, bring additional life to our towns and cities.*" (Retail Week, 11.07.2003) Furthermore, research, subjected to show current or future benefits of the initiated actions (e.g. research from MORI, commissioned by the British Council for Out of Town Retail (Retail Week, 06.10.2000), were used as a source of rationalization, along with the review launched by the government aimed to, for instance, "*monitor the effectiveness of the policy (PPG6 - author's note) over the past 10 years*" (Retail Week, 26.10.2001)

Journalists typically constructed rationalization of new practices through criticism of earlier applied actions, emphasising their inapplicability and need for further development. However, delegitimation of some undesirable novel changes was done with the help of structural criticism. In some text pieces structural critique was correlated with the official requests for clarification of new actions, for example - retail parks campaigners demanded an exploratory meeting with Treasury officials to get explanations on and influence new draft planning regulations PPS6 (Retail Week, 19.12.2003). In one text rationalization was

developed remarkably through criticism of a legitimation method employed by a retailer, in particularly Tesco's retrospective planning application, which caused negative public relations for the retailer, but definitely attracted attention to its planning strategies and development (The Grocer, 03.11.2007). Curiously, in some articles rational legitimation did not seem to be convincing for adoption of new practices. For example, the City of London's retail development initiated by Land Securities at the western end of Cheapside was rationalized by the fact that in addition to shopping opportunities, it *"will open up new views of St. Paul's"* (Retail Week, 10.06.2005), which does not sound as reliable reasoning.

The importance of moral values in assessment of the eligibility of these legitimation strategies should be emphasised. By shaping the system of interpretation ideology, moral concepts are key influential factors, which enable or disable rationalization. Function and purpose of certain activities evolved in a form of moralized actions, reinforced by the underlying moral concerns, which were highly important at this time period and certified the loyalty of the society, for instance, legitimation of new shopping centre opening from the community well-being point of view: *"...after many years of ever larger, grander, out-of-town shopping centres, I believe we have reached a point where consumers are starting to look for something these mega-malls cannot provide. They are looking beyond the established retail and leisure offer of these malls to something that will fulfil different aspirations, those on a more human scale. I believe we now have our best chance in decades to reverse the decline in town centre retailing and to bring jobs and life back into our neglected high streets and town centres."* (Retail Week, 07.01.2000) In this exact example rationalization is created by description of the problem, as well as by usage of specific words (e.g. *'neglected'*), aimed to stress the importance and depth of the issue. In the case of legitimation through rationalization, the practices were evaluated in accordance to their moral values in addition to positive or negative consequences, they caused.

Such dependence on moral actions might be mistaken with the legitimation strategy of moralization, which explicit description is coming up in the following

section. In rationalization the moral and ideological grounds are only touched upon additionally to other concepts highlighting the purpose or effectiveness of particular practises or arrangements. However, in order to establish legitimation moralization deeps moral side of the issue in question much further. There are some texts, which belong simultaneously to both strategies of rationalization and moralization simultaneously, as well articles connected to both rationalization and narrativization at the same time. The latter type of legitimation is covered in the further section of this chapter.

Table 3: Characteristics of rationalization legitimation

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Characteristic quotes | <p><i>“Clearly the rationale...”</i> <i>“...are clear indications that...”</i> <i>“...is a clear reflection of...”</i></p> |
| Features | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to the utility / function of an action • Common sense as a basis • Rational explanations • Requests for further explanations |
| Methods of application | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of past practices’ consequences • Criticism of earlier applied actions • Examples of already implemented beneficial practices • Projection of possible future benefits • Opposition of various parties’ attitudes • Reference to open opinion / knowledge of influential persons • Research and analyses findings |

4.2 Authorization

Authorization is legitimation by reference to authority. Someone (or somewhat, if authority is impersonal) in whom (or in which) institutionalized authority is vested, is recognized by authority. Whether the source of authority is personal or impersonal, this legitimation strategy is stated by mentioning the authority as a subject, as well as by reference to the particular authority. (Van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999)

The following quotes, extracted from the articles falling into this category, are examples of personal authorization:

- *“he is determined to use his planning powers to limit superstore developments”* (The Guardian, 06.10.1993);
- *“...according to Richard Caborn, minister for the regions, regeneration and planning”* (The Grocer, 15.10.1997);
- *“...the Secretary of State can exercise his call-in powers to frustrate development”* (Retail Week, 21.09.2001).

Impersonal authorization can be spotted by such statements:

- *“We are totally committed to PPG6...”* (Retail Week, 31.05.2000);
- *“Retail policy remains as set out in PPG6...”* (Retail Week, 02.06.2000);
- *“PPGs play an essential role in defining national policy.”* (Retail Week, 12.07.2002);
- *“The government has denied it wants to...”* (The Grocer, 23.06.2007);
- *“Legislation will eventually force the issue...”* (Retail Week, 23.04.2010)

In general, authorization is characterized with negative tone of the messages, presenting one critical position towards the discussed issue. For example, the following statements extracted from some authorization-related articles, show a certain straightforward, not discussable position of the legitimation source:

- *“The Government's aim is to stop large trading formats from dominating small centres.”* (Retail Week, 02.05.2003);
- *“The powerful Environment Transport and Regional Affairs Committee has effectively told the Department of Trade and Industry, the Treasury and even Tony Blair to "get your tanks off our lawn."* (Retail Week, 21.01.2000)

Besides, criticisms, as well as critic advice were expressed regularly in authorization articles:

- “*Government planning policy is illogical and unsustainable, a leading property researcher told the Accessible Retail Conference last week.*” (Retail Week, 10.10.2003);
- “*Local planning authorities and regional planning bodies must be more proactive in planning the development of their towns,*” he (Planning Minister Keith Hill - author's note) *said.*” (Retail Week, 01.04.2005)

The most frequently occurred type of reference was mentioning of a particular well-known public figure, which had strong influential power to legitimize changes and practices in question. There is a list of some of those people, who were regarded as reliable legitimation sources (in ascending order of mentioning):

- the Deputy Prime minister (ex-Environment Secretary) John Prescott,
- Environment Secretary John Gummer,
- Housing, Planning and Regeneration Minister Lord Charles Falconer,
- the Deputy Prime Minister Michael Bach,
- the Secretary of State, Planning Minister Keith Hill,
- Minister for the Regions, Regeneration and Planning Richard Caborn,
- Planning Minister Nick Raynsford,
- Planning Minister John Healey,
- chief executive of Association of Convenience Stores James Lowman,
- the Deputy Prime Minister Parliamentary under-secretary Tony McNulty,
- Trade and Industry minister Malcolm Wicks,
- the Shadow Business Minister Mark Prisk,
- Liberal Democrat planning spokesman Matthew Green,
- DTZ research and development director Joe Valente and many others.

The authority of these figures was communicated by phrases indicating the extent of their power, for example: “*When Sir Stuart Rose (the executive chairman of the British retailer Marks & Spencer - author's note) talks, people tend to listen.*” (Retail Week, 04.07.2008), or by description of their authoritative behaviour: “*Mr Gummer has ordered his department to rewrite planning rules, and has sanctioned research to assess the impact of superstores and out-of-town stores.*”

He was committed to “using my planning powers to support local efforts to safeguard the vitality of towns and the economic viability of their retail centres in particular” (The Guardian, 23.02.1995). Like in the latter example, legitimation was often established by quoting the authorities directly: *“We want town centres to be the locations of choice,” said Falconer...* (Retail Week, 16.11.2001); *“We remain absolutely committed to promoting viable town centres,” he* (Malcolm Wicks-author's note) *said.*” (The Grocer, 23.06.2007)

Certain media materials were published in a form of speech note of the official authority representative. For instance, the article, entitled “The Conservatives' vision for retail” (Retail Week, 23.04.2010), was signed by the Shadow Business Minister Prisk and contained his speech about the attitude of Conservative Government towards the UK retail sector development. From a critical viewpoint, it should be reminded that some of those figures are not unprejudiced observers of the changes happening, but more of participants with personal interests, which should have been legitimized.

Other popular impersonal sources of authority, identified by the analysis, were the actual planning guidance issued by the UK government, including PPS4, PPS6, PPG6, PPG13 and Use Classes Orders. Besides, governmental bodies and departments (the Council for the Protection of Rural England, Environment Department, its Property Advisory Group, Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions) and the state government itself, non-profitable organizations and associations (environmental group Friends of the Earth, Association of Convenience Stores), service firms (CB Hillier Parker, PricewaterhouseCoopers) and large retailers (Tesco, B&Q, Sainsbury's, etc.) represented impersonal authorization sources. In addition to referring to a specific authority, anonymous ‘analysts’, ‘specialists’ and ‘experts’ were mentioned as a reliable source for the change validation.

The legitimation power of the court was demonstrated very clearly: *“Now the High Court has held, quite rightly, that it is a legitimate part of a council's remit to*

decide how much new retail space is needed in a particular town and whereabouts it should be located.” (Retail Week, 26.10.2001) Individual texts, possessing legitimation power, acted as authority in a list of articles. Some of those authorization texts are official documents (e.g. the draft Food Standards Bill, the Carbon Reduction Commitment and Energy Performance Certificates), reports (e.g. PricewaterhouseCoopers' latest report “Sustainability: are consumers buying it?”), reviews (e.g. Bank of England economist Kate Barker's review of land-use planning in England) and research (e.g. research from agent CB Hillier Parker). It should be emphasised, these strategies possess strong legitimizing argumentation, which is perceived and accepted easily by the general society. It is very difficult for an ordinary reader to criticize the findings of research or reviews, since they were conducted by professionals through careful analysis and investigations.

There was also a combined technique of referring to both personal and impersonal sources. In some case, journalists supported impersonal authorization by statements of influential official authority's representatives. Thus, so-called joint form of authorization legitimation strategy occurred. Interestingly, some officials were directly characterized with power of the governmental documents they had presented, for instance - Deputy Minister John Prescott with Policy Statement on Planning for Town Centres PPS6, which revision was launched by Prescott. The initial authoritarian position of certain commentators (e.g. members of the Parliament, chairmen) allowed them to evolve into highly significant influencers due to their regulatory power and correspondingly valuable opinions and considerations. In some texts the government ideas were presented as something not discussable, but initially legitimized: *“Under the new look PPG6, the government wants retailers to demonstrate that the local community needs' the proposed development as well.”* (The Grocer, 19.04.2003)

Regarding adaptation to the changes of retail planning system, the degree of appropriateness and legislation of the actions employed by retailers lied down not only in conformity with the planning guidance (which actually was not a law, but only a set of recommendations), but also in the means of authorization utilized by

the retailers. The example, the following statement, extracted from The Guardian's article: "*Lord Sainsbury is a minister at the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), which sets the terms by which business in Britain is allowed to proceed. Archie Norman, the head of Asda, is deputy chairman of the Conservative Party. Ian McLaurin, Tesco's former chief executive, sits in the House of Lords.*", shows that the largest retail groups had "remarkable immunity from the laws", which allowed them to adjust to the changes in the most beneficial way and to criticize the actions of the official authorities, who possessed rather strong legitimation power (The Guardian, 24.09.1998). It proves that the level of legislative power may vary within the sources of authority.

In some articles used for this study, the government's decisions were largely criticised and opposed by judgments and comments of other authorities. One example of such contracting opinion was comments on the official policy, aimed to ease green belt boundaries around urban areas of British cities and towns: "*Tony Burton, CPRE's senior planner described the policy document as "a missed opportunity to strengthen green belt policy better to protect the countryside and encourage sustainable development of our cities."* (The Guardian, 22.02.1994) Within the data used for this research, articles written in a form of letters can be identified as a commonly employed source of criticism delegitimizing the power of one authority, while strengthening the eligibility of another, for example, a letter of Hugh Raven, coordinator at SAFE Alliance, and Prof. Tim Lang at Centre for Food Policy, Thames Valley University, discussing the changes of planning policy on out-of-town development made by Gummer (The Guardian, 19.07.1994).

The contrast of various voices and opinions is one of the most popular techniques used by journalists for legitimating the changes and novel implications. It was largely observed in the overview articles, presenting changes in the retail planning system and newly initiated related practices. Demonstration of various attitudes allowed specifying the contradictory nature of the changes and emphasising their complex and even conflicting outcomes. Besides, disagreeing opinions and debates proved the importance of the changes going on and raised interest to the events

happening in the sector. On the contrary, in some newspapers articles several sources of authorities legitimized the same thing, supporting each other's arguments. It provided a feeling of deep powerful approval and necessity of the changes, since few significant authorities shared the same opinion.

In the media materials used for this thesis, authorization is utilized mainly as a legitimation, rather than delegitimation strategy. Nevertheless, some materials were aimed for illegitimation of a particular persons' authority, who opposed the change: *"But John Prescott's political stock appears to be falling, and with it the influence of his super-ministry."* (Retail Week, 21.01.2000)

Table 4: Characteristics of authorization legitimation

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Personal authorization: | By references to public figures analysts, experts <i>"He said..."</i> <i>"According to Gummer..."</i> <i>"The Prime minister stated..."</i> |
| Impersonal authorization: | By references to: - the government / governmental bodies and departments - planning guidance - speech notes of official authority representatives - NPOs / the court <i>"According to the law..."</i> <i>"The Government claimed..."</i> <i>"Committee effectively told..."</i> |
| Features | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References to authorities • Negative tone • Direct quotes • Critical tone |
| Methods of application | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of various opinion on the change • Support of impersonal authorization by personal statements of influential official authorities • Contrast of opinions and voices • Comments criticising decisions of the Government |

All in all, one third of all articles fall into the category of authorization, which makes it the second most used legitimation strategy (see Figure 2). As it was

mentioned earlier, some of the authorization articles are connected to the rationalization strategy. In addition, the figure 2 shows that two textual materials are coupled with moralization and narrativization, consequently. Alike a strong linkage to rationalization, this minor peculiarity cannot be generalized due to its exclusive appearing, but can be explained by the writing style used by journalists to grasp attention to a certain issue. An example of the authorization text is attached in Appendix II; the general characteristics of the method are summarized in the table 4.

4.3 Narrativization

Narrativization is based on the story-telling and consists of narratives linking particular activities to the past or future (van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999; Vaara et al., 2006). Van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) stressed the legitimation process evolved through telling a story and named it as ‘mythopoesis’. This study accepts the position of Vaara et al. (2006), who entitled this type of legitimation as ‘narrativization’. The texts falling into this category “involved narrative-type constructions” (Vaara et al., 2006: 802). The analysis revealed number of texts describing preceding and forthcoming events simultaneously or individually (see Appendix III for an example). Some kind of phrases, referring to tense, conform narrativization in the data materials rather specifically: “*In the future*”, “*In past years*”, “*Historically...*”, “*...outlines a brief history of...*”, “*It is now six years since...*”, “*Looking back from the beginning...*”, “*A decade ago*”, “*Until recently*”, “*In the 'Swinging 60s'*”, etc. More features of narrativization are presented in the table 5 in the end of this sub section.

This set of articles is the second smallest: 26 text pieces out of 180 (see Figure 2). Curiously, a quarter of narrativization texts belongs to the rationalization type at the same time. By narrating these editorials explored not only the utilities of certain changes, but also how they have evolved within time. Historical overview supports the rational justification of the change in question: “*The historic nature*

of the consents on many new stores is not something that can be ignored." (Retail Week, 19.08.2005) Time scope is the key feature of narrativization distinguishing it from other legitimation strategies.

Article of this type were usually written in an entertaining tone, which awakes readers' interest towards the issue in a special way. Moreover, the feature of drama, a common technique in the printed media, frequently appeared in the narrativization articles. In the printed media dramatization gained immediate attention and made the legitimation process faster. Certain exaggeration statements added tragic tone to the texts, e.g. *"Assuming the white paper passes into law, Britain will be the only nation in the free world where citizens and their democratic institutions will enjoy no discretion over the pace and pattern of change of their communities."* (The Guardian, 23.05.2007) The length of the texts is another peculiar characteristic of this legitimation type. Narrative pieces are longer than ones belonging to other types of legitimation strategies, as they usually included a historical overview of past events and actions related to the current change, as well as its preconditions.

According to narrativization, stories about past prosperous practices were aimed to give a sense of proper and standard behaviour associated with an action, needed to be legitimized. The texts, which provided future estimations, were considered as narrativization legitimation strategies as well. In many articles journalists made comparison between past and present or future tenses in order to justify the practices in question. By revealing drawbacks, gaps or negative consequences of earlier employed practices and overviewing changing retail environment, which required new approaches, this contrast shows how beneficial and up-to-date the change would actually be: *"The future looks increasingly uncertain and in some sectors planning could actually be about managing decline."* (Retail Week, 15.04.2005) Besides, the newspapers referred to their own statements made in the past to show the reliability of their projections.

Overview of the historical events was described in several articles. It can be particularly noticed in the texts issued by the end of year or decade. Such editorials served as a summary of past practices and changes happened in the retail sector within a certain period of time. To legitimate recent changes it was not necessary to discuss only events happened long time ago. In most cases, narrativization was based on recent happenings, which took place only few years or even months ago. In several narrativization texts past successful practices were presented as a support for new similar or related development. Nevertheless, other texts outlined previous events to stress the need for a change. Commonly, in narrativization the outline of previous events was concluded by future estimations, e.g. *“As in previous generations, where Chelsea goes, the rest follow.”* (Retail Week, 07.06.2002), or suggestions for forthcoming actions: *“Each local authority now has a plan drawn up by its town planners, and developers have to battle to get their proposals accepted as part of the town's planning package.”* (The Guardian, 06.10.1993) Some articles were devoted to only one particular case, for example urban renewal of Birmingham (Retail Week, 02.11.2001) in order to examine the situation behind the change.

Moreover, journalists constructed legitimation through projection of future outcomes or behaviour influenced by new or about to be implemented changes of the retail planning systems (adapting to planning revisions). For example, by telling about positive rearrangements compared with the past practices, narrativization is aimed to legitimate newly introduced policy: *“a revised PPG6 is likely to result in more consistency in line with recent planning decisions”* (Retail Week, 21.09.2001). Furthermore, narrativization texts forecasted consequences of the changes, which could act as either legitimation or delegitimation tool. Negative projections certainly delegitimated applied practices: *“As a result of the change, there will inevitably be a decline in the value of the premises.”* (The Guardian, 21.09.1987) Meanwhile positive conclusion helped to legitimate the change: *“The Irish Government's plans for expenditure on transport, announced in the recent National Development Plan, will be very positive for the retail market in the long term. Overall, the future looks very bright indeed.”* (Retail Week, 10.12.1999) In

addition, by describing the upcoming changes in the retail planning, journalists gave suggestions how to behave in order to adapt to new practices: *“The development of this market is being restricted by the retail planning guidelines, and, undoubtedly, the guidelines will continue to restrict future retail development. Retailers will have to be open to change and to embrace new technology, such as modern scanning systems, in order to survive in an increasingly competitive environment.”* (Retail Week, 10.12.1999)

In some articles narrativization was established by the reference to the field experts’ estimations, such as of Forward Thinking Inc. managing director Chris Woolston, director of retail at Colliers Erdman Lewis Edward Farrow, Professor of the department of city and regional planning at Cardiff University Cliff Guy, Dr David Bennison, of the department of retail and marketing at Manchester Metropolitan University, John Gummer, Kate Barker and others. These competent sources provided the answers to specific question regarding novel practices stated by journalists, e.g. *“What impact will the legislation have? Lovells property group lawyer Ingrid Hadfield points out...”* (Retail Week, 22.04.2005) In addition, research’s findings (such as of Colliers Erdman Lewis Research, research studies conducted by Cardiff and Manchester Metropolitan Universities, the Centre for Future Studies, Forward Thinking Inc. and CACI), report’s observations (e.g. report from TW Research) and the government statistics investigated and compared prior and current situation on the market. Moreover, retail conferences and awards (the Annual British Council of Shopping Centres (BCSC) Awards, British Council for Out of Town Retail Conference (BCOTR) and the Town & Country Planning Association's Conference) lead the publication of series of articles summarising the most significant events of the past year. Such publications helped to outline certain recommendations for the required changes: *“The BCOTR's results will show a strong case in favour of continued development of large stores, mainly in off-centre sites.”* (Retail Week, 21.09.2001) Again, these techniques seem to be of the authorization strategy. However, in the narrativization materials the importance of time is highlighted.

Table 5: Characteristics of narrativization legitimation

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Characteristic quotes | <i>“In the future...”</i> , <i>“In past years”</i> , <i>“It is now six years since...”</i> , <i>“Historically...”</i> , <i>“A decade ago...”</i> , <i>“Until recently”</i> |
| Features | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to stories • Time scope • Entertaining tone • Dramatization • Certain exaggeration • Lengthy texts |
| Methods of application | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolution within the time • Historical summary of past events related to the change • Presentation of past practices as a support for new similar or related development / to stress the need for a change • Projection of future outcomes / behaviour influenced by changes • Forecast of the change’s consequences • Comparison among past and present/future to justify the change |

4.4 Moralization

Moralization legitimation is legitimation by reference to certain values. The last type of legitimation is represented by the smallest number of articles (see Figure 2). It is aimed to make the society think of negative circumstances and how they can be reduced by the introduction of new practices. This type is characterized by strong moral basis and inclusion of emotional elements in the texts (see Table 6 for details). Mainly, this strategy was used for the purpose of delegitimation rather than legitimation. (Van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999; Vaara et al., 2006)

Discourses, most commonly legitimated through moralizations, were urban regeneration, vitality and viability of town centres, environmental (sustainability, pollution) and social concerns, such as social exclusion, unemployment, rebuilding communities. In most texts usually one specific topic was discussed. However, some articles covered few discourses at a time, as in The Guardian’s article the issues of sustainability, urban renaissance and social benefits were merged together in order to deepen moralized legitimacy: *“The UK strategy for*

sustainable development with its Foreword by John Major and Introduction by John Gummer is very clear: we must meet economic and social needs for access to facilities with less need for travel and in ways which do not place unacceptable burdens on the environment.” (The Guardian, 28.03.1994)

In many materials used for this study the method of direct moralization was employed. For instance, in The Guardian’s article (28.09.1997) the practices of social inclusion was supported by explicit overview of the government’s means for cutting unemployment, in particularly attraction of long-term sick and disabled people of working age back to the labour market. On the contrary, some moralization texts were not based on the morality explicitly. Instead, they revealed a definite related value. For example, when the journalists wanted to put into question the legitimacy of out-of-centre development initiated by a large retail developer, they often turned to discourses of ‘sustainability’ or ‘vitality and viability’, which challenged the activities of the retail developers due to its inconsistency with moral social obligations, such as environmental protection and maintenance of town centres development (The Guardian, 31.03.2005). In any way legitimation of the practices was established by highlighting moral values, which were essential for the contemporary society at that time.

Moralization stresses main public concerns of the period (pollution, employment, opportunities to work for disabled people, etc.), and, thus, immediately legitimize solutions or practices, which were already implemented or suggested and discussed in the text. Legitimation of the change in the retail planning was supported by the overview of the moralized activities initiated by various retailers in respect to this issue. Besides, the modifications in retail planning policy were justified by related moral grounds: *“This investment, whether in the form of retail, housing or leisure facilities, is an important part of rebuilding communities and tackling social exclusion.”* (Retail Week, 14.12.2001) Broad argumentation, explaining the current situation, related problems and alternative ways for improvement, was aimed to legitimate or delegitimize the change in question by drawing concrete deduction. For example, moralization text was concluded by the

statement: *“This shows that providing clean, reliable, affordable and accessible public transport is the key to reducing our reliance on the car, not telling retailers where they can and cannot trade.”* (Retail Week, 24.08.2001)

Delegitimation of actions employed by large retailers was established by criticising quotes: *“The arrival of Tesco will close the town down like it has with every other market town,” said local baker Alex Herbert. “It will be a slow death but for some it will be quite quick.”* (The Guardian, 02.11.2007) Due to their negative impacts particular actions were presented from an unfavourable view point, which initiated the simultaneous processes of delegitimation of previous practices and legitimation of new changes: e.g. *“This deviation from the “great car economy” has been further reinforced by the recent planning guidance note (PPG13) from the Department of the Environment which sets out to reduce growth in the length and number of motorised trips, encourage alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact and reduce reliance on the private car.”* (The Guardian, 28.03.1994) Moreover, writers used highly negative statements, which described the problem in an ironic manner: *“But who really gives a damn? What most of us want today, it seems, is as much cheap food as we can stuff into our ever fatter, ever-angrier faces. Where that food comes from is not our business, while “sustainability” is just so much smart talk. Who wants to get their hands dirty growing less than perfectly shaped carrots in some cold allotment?”* (The Guardian, 03.03.2010)

In some of the moralization articles journalists oppose opinions for and against the discussed change, giving readers some food for thought. For instance, in one article discussing the relaxation of planning policy to allow new hypermarkets’ development, two moral concepts were contradicted: *“Savings for shoppers are expected to outweigh environmental concerns which have virtually put a stop to out-of-town stores in the last few years.”* (The Guardian, 16.06.1999) Referring to increased competition and social benefits the first point of view supported new policy, while the second attitude opposed the planning change by stressing

importance of sustainability and environmental concerns. No final conclusion was made, letting readers to decide themselves which position to accept.

References to professionals of a specific area in question were used to both legitimate and delegitimate particular changes in the retail planning. Unlike authorization, moralization is not wholly based on authority. However, expressions of some specialists helped to legitimate individual practices. Some of the specialists mentioned in the materials were:

- head of planning at the Council for the Protection of Rural England Neil Sinden,
- retail development director at Grosvenor Estate John Bullough,
- the Treasury adviser Kate Barker,
- Land Securities environmental director Dave Farebrother and others.

Non-profitable organization Friends of the Earth was a significant source of legitimation used in the moralization texts. Environmentalists challenged large retailers by evaluating their practices and related impacts in front of shareholders and the national press. This campaign had a powerful pressure on legitimation of new changes in the retail planning needed for the sake of environment. Interestingly, the reference to particular actions of well-known figure, which possessed certain authority power and was a part of some organization, legitimized the actions of the whole organization he or she belonged to. For example, the discussion on Wal-Mart's sustainability program was not really supported by personal example of its chief executive Lee Scott: "*Mr Scott himself walks the talk, to an extent. His family car is a hybrid Lexus SUV but he crossed the Atlantic in a private Wal-Mart jet, one of a fleet of more than 20, with just four passengers on board.*" (The Guardian, 02.02.2007) Hence, thanks to Scott's behaviour the sustainable development of the whole company was presented as something highly questionable.

Sustainability was the most discussed discourse in the case of moralization. The importance of environmental protection and necessity of sustainable retail

development were stressed in number of moralization articles. Those issues were highlighted with the help of specific publications and research, for example - by the publication of PricewaterhouseCoopers' report, entitled "Sustainability: are consumers buying it?", which discussed "*consumers' increasing concerns about sustainability and their willingness not only to buy into the notion, but to change their behaviour.*" (Retail Week, 27.06.2008) This powerful legitimation tool approved new 'green' practices already implemented by retailers in favour of sustainable development, as well as upcoming modification in the retail sector. This technique is similar to impersonal authorization, though in moralization such references are subjected to support deeper moral and ideological grounds, but not legitimate changes on their own. Rationalization materials also covered the topic of sustainability as an explanation for particular changes employed. However, moralization was aimed to reveal the significance of sustainable development, ensuring that the present needs of the retail sector would not result in negative consequences in the future, by emphasising its core values in the texts. Thus, unlike rationalization, which also includes inexplicit moral basis, moralization stands for an open explanation of the initiated actions constructed on specific moral and ideological grounds. However, almost third of the selected articles correspond simultaneously to the rationalization type (see Figure 2). An example of an article connected to the moralization type can be found in Appendix IV.

Table 6: Characteristics of moralization legitimation

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Features | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to values • Moral basis • Emotional elements |
| Methods of application | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight of moral values / main public concerns • Overview of beneficial practices • Revealing indirect values related to the change • Criticism of practices • Opposing attitudes for and against the change • Statements of related area specialists • Comments of NPO "Friends of the Earth" |

5 DISCUSSION

By the end of the paper, the discussion returns to the research questions that motivated this thesis. Mainly, the thesis was aimed to investigate the reconstruction of an institutional field, in particular how the legitimacy of novel implication was obtained in the context of the mass media. The main research question, requesting to define particular types of legitimation strategies used to institutionalize the changes in the UK retail planning policy has guided this study.

In order to provide answer to the main question, a critical discourse analytic methodology was applied to the set of articles extracted from three British newsmagazines: *The Guardian*, *Retail Week* and *The Grocer*, which discussed the reconstruction of the UK retail planning policy. The analysis covered the time period of 1980-2000s, as during this time the most significant reforms of the retail planning system have been introduced. The core objectives of the analysis were to explore the institutionalization as a textual phenomenon and to identify the important texts produced by various institutional participants in order to support their own interests within the process of institutional change (Munir and Phillips, 2005). The analysis resulted in identification of the most occurring legitimation strategies used by the field actors, which were classified in accordance to the framework developed based on the previous studies of van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) and Vaara et al. (2006). As a result of the analysis, the answers to the research questions were framed in terms of four distinctive discursive legitimation strategies, which are summarized in the table below.

This final chapter consists of four sections. In the first section, the research findings are summarised in light of the research questions and compared with previous literature. Then the evaluation of validity and reliability of the thesis is presented. Practical implications are considered in the third section. The thesis is concluded by discussion on its limitations and suggestions for future research.

Table 7: Types of legitimation strategies used in the printed media to institutionalize the changes in the UK retail planning policy

| Strategy type | Purpose | General strategies and characteristics | Examples |
|------------------------|---|---|--|
| Rationalization | (De)legitimation by explaining rationally the utility of specific practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of the changes' benefits or drawbacks • Presentation of (un)successful outcomes of past practices • Suggestion and justification of new solutions • Based on common sense | Appendix I: "Best laid plans" Retail Week 24.10.2008 |
| Authorization | (De)legitimation by indisputable (dis)approval of authority, not requiring clarifications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News about the changes • Presentation of different attitudes towards the change • Criticising comments • Direct quotations • Speeches | Appendix II: "PPG6 shake-up will force local councils to list available sites" Retail Week 27.06.2003 |
| Narrativization | (De)legitimation by telling stories about development of the change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the practice's evolution • Historical overview • Estimation of future benefits or losses • Comparative texts • Emphasis on time period • Entertaining tone | Appendix III: "British Council of Out of Town Retailing - The dead hand of government" Retail Week 17.09.1999 |
| Moralization | (De)legitimation by stressing moral values and revealing morality and ethics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on public concerns • Uncovering of moral values related to the change • Emphasis on 'higher purpose' • Emotional elements • Based on morality | Appendix IV: "The people's planopoly" The Grocer 02.12.2006 |

5.1 Research implications

The study was aimed to provide a deeper understanding of how the changes of an institution, in particularly - the retail planning policy of United Kingdom, were introduced and diffused in the printed mass media in order to gain general approval of the society. The research leads to several important implications.

Firstly, the thesis stressed the importance of discursive legitimacy in the formation of an institution. The approach, exploring discourse utilized in this research, is three dimensional, as it connects discourses to texts and positions both of them into a certain social and historical setting (Fairclough, 1995). In order to become recognised and accepted within a society, the information about the changes of the UK retail planning policy happened in 1980-2000s was communicated in the printed media outlets, which allowed reaching large number of people in short period of time. Particular topics have received extensive media coverage, resulted in numerous articles discussing those issues. The analysis revealed the most important concerns regarding the changes of the UK retail planning policy, which received lots of attention in the media: environmental-urban, social planning and economic-political concerns. Each of the concerns includes articles, merged into discourses by a certain issue raised in relation to a general theme of the case (see Table 2). These discourses, represented as an interrelated collection of texts, shape the social reality and make things widely accepted. In the case of the study, novel implications, modifications of existing practices and elimination of unsuccessful or undesirable actions in the field of the UK retail planning policy were explained and promoted by the means of the mass media. The discourses, discussing the changes of the retail planning policy, evoked and gained attention of the general public, as well as other participants of the field. Consequently, the modifications of the institutional field were legitimised within the general society.

This notion suggests the second implication of the study related to the usage of the mass media as a sense making and legitimation arena (Vaara et al., 2006: 791). The thesis has proven that the media is a reliable and functional tool for

establishing legitimacy. The textual materials analysed in this thesis, were not actually created by the institutional players, but by journalists of three British newspapers and magazines: *The Grocer*, *Retail Week*, *The Guardian*. The thesis supports the notion that journalists play a central role in the legitimation processes, which has been emphasised in the study of Vaara and Monin (2010). They deliver the information about the changes of the retail planning policy, as well as challenge the applicability of the existing practices by discussing negative impacts they cause and stressing the need for further modifications. Besides, journalists acted as initiators of discussions and criticism addressing a particular action, which deepened legitimation or, on the contrary, delegitimation. Despite the fact that discourses and the strength of their arguments result from the sense originally formed by different institutional players, who were competing actively to support their respective statuses, journalists produced texts and, therefore, spread the word within the society.

However, in the textual data, used for the research analysis, the information flows were arranged in various ways so it could pursue objectives of different institutional participants. Thus, the texts construct discourses initiated by the particular actor(s) of the field. The study investigated discourses employed by four groups of institutional members related to the context of the study. Those groups were classified as official authorities, retail developers, third party organizations and general society. From a critical viewpoint, it should be mentioned that those actors are not impartial observers of the happening modifications, but more of participants with own interests, which should have been legitimized. Nevertheless, the analysis uncovered that various institutional members joined their forces to legitimate a practise, which is beneficial for all parties, or on the contrary, to delegitimize an existing action, restricting achievement of their aims. For instance, in the case of reference to several authorities, who supported jointly one initiative, the text appeared to be more persuasive and, therefore, a deeper social acceptance was established (e.g. *The Guardian*, 27.07.2005). However, it must be stressed that the thesis was not focused on the specific utilization of legitimation strategies by each institutional participant, but on a mediating role of the texts in the

construction of legitimation. Despite of the recognition of several groups of actors, the study was not aimed to reveal specific strategies employed in the media by each member, but the collective strategic approaches of all field participants. All in all, the analysis demonstrated that variety of methods for creating and maintaining legitimacy can be implemented in the context of the printed media, which proves its versatility.

Consequently, next implication refers to the indicated variety of general strategies that can be employed for both legitimation and delegitimation of novel implications and changes. The research found four general legitimation strategies, classified by previous studies: rationalization, authorization, moralization and narrativization. As these types of legitimation correspond completely to those revealed in the previous study of van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) and partly - to the findings of Vaara et al. (2006), the results of the study maintained the general argument that those represent the key categories of legitimation strategies (van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999). The fifth legitimation type of normalization, developed by Vaara et al. (2006) in order to make the existing framework of van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) applicable to the media context, was not recognized in the textual materials used for this study. However, the categories of legitimation by reference to moral values and the time period were entitled in accordance to the study of Vaara et al. (2006), as their titles fitted better for the analysis.

According to the findings of this research, the most prevailing type of discursive legitimation in the case of the UK retail planning policy was the rationalization approach. Indeed, the changes and novel implications had to be explained explicitly in order to be accepted within the social community. The aim of rationalization is to provide a rational explanation and demonstrate potential of the change. Furthermore, delegitimation was executed by revealing disutility of the past or current practices and stressing the need for reforms. It can be supposed that the method of rationalization suited the best in most of the cases, as it allowed explaining the newly introduced practices in a detailed and accurate way, which ensures general social understanding of the phenomenon.

The second most used discursive strategy was authorization. It is a natural practice to legitimate new policy by referring to a particular authority, especially to the one, who actually initiated the institutional reconstruction. Following the political nature of discursive processes discussed in prior studies (Hardy et al., 2000; Vaara et al., 2006; Vaara and Monin, 2010), the context of the study represent development of the UK government's national retail planning policy. Hence, legitimation should be examined as not only dealing with a particular change, but also with power status of the field actors involved into institutionalization (Vaara et al., 2006). The powerful position of the authorities encouraged and simultaneously was encouraged by the legitimation processes. This dual development makes it complicated to disagree with the proposed changes due to increasing authoritative status. However, since this legitimation strategy is not prevailing in the context of the study, it can be concluded that in some cases support of the authorities is not enough to gain social acceptance. It can partly explained by conflicting opinions of various authoritative sources, which instead of approving challenged acceptance of the changes to further extend. Nevertheless, skilful presentation of the debates may transform them into an effective legitimising tool.

The two less occurring legitimation strategies were narrativization and moralization. The articles, belonging to those types, are lengthier than other texts and require more 'literary' approach. The textual materials, belonging to narrativization, are written in a form of stories, which need to be interesting enough to capture attention of readers and, therefore, legitimate the general idea of the articles. Likewise, in order to establish attachment to and raise importance of the issue in question moralization texts need to evoke strong feelings of the audience by stressing certain values, which is rather effortful process. Less common usage of those methods, comparing to rationalization and authorization, can be explained by more careful and time consuming production required for those articles. Besides, the distribution process of such texts is not as fast as in the case of the most frequently occurring legitimation strategies, since readers need

more time to get acquainted with the main idea of the editorials due to their broad descriptions. However, exhaustive nature of the moralization and narrativization texts, as well as their engaging style provide variety of possibilities to spread the word and gain social recognition and approval alike the other discursive strategies depicted by the analysis.

The next implication of the study applies to intertextuality, which appeared in texts of all legitimation strategies. It can be concluded that legitimation is not an immediate action, but a multistep process constructed within a certain period of time. The articles, which are linked together by reference to the same topic and actors, support legitimation of a particular change (Leitch and Palmer, 2010). The embedded and layered character of media discourse can be noticed by the fact that earlier versions of media discourses are integrated with later versions, layered one over another. In order to satisfy the goals of the current period earlier stories were transformed and shaped. Thus, media texts production results from transformations across “a chain of communication events which links source events in the public domain to the private domain consumption of media texts” (Fairclough, 1995: 49). From one side such chains are internal, as the process of text production happens within a media institution. However, from the other side, the chains are partly external; the communicative events resulted from media materials, as well as the sources of communicative events occur beyond the media. (Fairclough, 1995)

Moreover, it should be noted that in most texts the discourses were combined together and blurred. Despite each of the discourse included specific means for establishing legitimacy and can be used separately, they were often mixed to obtain maximum result from their various genres and structures. The styles, as well as the structure of the articles vary among magazines. On closer inspection, the combination of several legitimation strategies usually applies to longer textual materials. Besides, lengthier articles tend to represent a hybrid genre - combination of various concerns and voices, which is common for contemporary media (Vaara and Tienari, 2008). It makes difficult to categorize those texts into

one category. The revealed intertextuality justifies the notion that there is no unique discursive legitimation strategy, which can be applied beneficially to any context. Being a complex socially constructed phenomenon, legitimacy is not established at once, but through a continuous process, which requires efforts and smart decisions. Thus, creative thinking and commitment to the core objective are essential elements, which can make any of the discursive legitimation strategies advantageous.

At a more general level, the study explores legitimation processes in order to gain a better understanding of the institutional restructuring. Therefore, the final implication of this thesis is that the successful discursive legitimation strategies are targeted to complete one of the following objectives: either to give sense to the novel practices introduced within an institutional context or to hide sense of the already existing implications, which are not welcomed anymore for some reason.

5.2 Practical implications

This study has examined how new practices are legitimised by studying the discourses emerged in the context of mass media. Altogether, the findings can be seen to offer implications for practice, which can be employed in real life situations. Highlighting a wide range of ways for establishing legitimacy, the research findings can be argued to constitute specific approaches for managerial practices. The practical implications can be extracted from the description of legitimation strategies identified in this study. The explicit report of each discursive legitimation strategy type allows seeing which strategy would have best fit for a particular objective of legitimation or delegitimation. The categorization of the findings can be used as guidance for implication of legitimation strategies in various situations according to the desired results.

The topic of the social reality establishment was covered in the thesis. According to the analysis, discourses possess extensive power, which can be utilized not only in

the context of the governmental policy, but in the business world as well. Discourses construct and provide sense to social interactions. Thus, correctly applied discursive strategies, encouraging social acceptance, are strong promotional tool of organizations and their practices. New products or services can be legitimated with the help of language, which, if used creatively, may give numerous benefits and positive effects in various business settings. Discourses entail some specialization, directing more attention to some aspects over others. Therefore, discursive legitimation strategies are aimed to make certain things widely known and accepted, which is crucial for the marketing of new products. Moreover, the research highlighted the usage of these strategies for the purpose of delegitimation, which can be employed for gaining competitive advantage over other players on the market. Hence, discursive strategies can be adjusted in a marketing communication plan as academically proven methods of establishing legitimation and delegitimation.

In addition, the thesis stressed the importance of mass media in contemporary society. The information about novel implications and changes are distributed by means of the media relatively rapidly and to large number of people simultaneously. The overview of various methods used for legitimation purposes justifies the applicability of the media in an institutionalization process. The concepts of the legitimation strategies, described in the research, are general and can be utilized in different media types. The media can play various roles in accordance to the desired outcomes. From the managerial perspective, ideas of the media utilization for the legitimation purposes can be drawn from the analysis.

5.3 Limitations of the study and suggestion for further research

It should be noted that this study has certain limitations. Firstly, the research is limited in its focus on one particular context - the UK retail planning policy development. Therefore, the results are very specific to this exact case. It is not possible to generalize the findings to other sectors without significant caution.

Implication of the research methodology to a different regulatory policy might lead to absolutely different results. However, this notion provides many ideas for further studies, as the theoretical framework might be used for investigation of legitimation strategies in other areas. Another limitation of this study is that it focuses only on the example of one country - United Kingdom. Hence, the legitimation strategies employed in another country may differ a lot. Nevertheless, future research may investigate legitimation strategies employed to institutionalize changes in retail planning sectors of other states.

Secondly, the research materials consist only of the printed media materials. The data used for the analysis is extracted from three popular British editorials: The Guardian, Retail Week and The Grocer. The research data is rather limited if compared with large variety of contemporary printed media presented on the UK news media scene. Further studies may use other editorials as data sources to explore the phenomena. Moreover, the upcoming research may go beyond the printed media and investigate legitimation strategies employed through other mass media channels, for example, television or Internet. The comparison of legitimation strategies used in various media technologies may result in some curious findings and managerial implications as well.

Thirdly, the analytical framework has produced a specific categorisation of the research material. The model for the analysis and classification of the legitimation strategies was developed based on the studies of van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) and Vaara et al. (2006), which also explored those strategies utilized in the printed media. It limits the analysing process to identification of four predefined types of legitimation strategies: authorization, rationalization, moralization and narrativization. However, it cannot be stated that those are the only strategies, which might be employed to legitimate the retail planning policy changes. There might be many more other minor methods of establishing legitimacy, which might be revealed by more detailed analysis.

Another future notion relates to the evolution of discursive legitimation. The institutionalization is ongoing process, which includes adoption of new implications, as well as rejection of past unsuccessful or outdated practices. Future analyses may study how the legitimation strategies, employed by the field actors, would develop within the time, as well as during the process of institutional innovation. A possible research question is how the discursive strategies change over the tense of institutionalization process.

Besides, deeper investigations may reveal how a particular field participant utilized the legitimation strategies, described in this thesis. As each of the institutional actors aimed to pursue own objectives, it is possible to assume that specific authorities established legitimacy in accordance to a particular plan emphasising some of the legitimation strategies more than other. Another interesting question is how the same participants would legitimate their ideas in the future; will they use the same strategies or develop some novel legitimation procedures? These fluctuations may provide more ideas for practical implications and understanding of the legitimation construction processes.

Future analysis can also be based on the comparison of legitimation and delegitimation practices. A suggestion for further research would also be to investigate consequences and outcome of the implications of legitimation and delegitimation strategies. This would give a broader idea of impact possessed by the strategies, as well as of their appropriateness. Finally, this study is limited in its macro-level focus towards textual strategies involved in the legitimacy construction. However, a deeper linguistic analysis of the textual materials deserves future research. Micro-level rhetorical approach should be used to explore the role of language in the context of an institutional change and would provide a better understanding of the legitimation processes.

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Appendix

Appendix I: Example of an article of the rationalization legitimization strategy

Retail Week

October 24, 2008

Best laid plans

BYLINE: By Ben Cooper

LENGTH: 1669 words

HIGHLIGHT: An underfunded and overcomplicated planning process is holding up the development of shopping centres and supermarkets, costing retailers valuable trading time. Ben Cooper asks how it could be made more efficient

In retail, time is money. Once a retailer has settled on a location, the sooner it can start trading the better. And for developers, it does not pay to have a site sitting empty for months or even years while the plans are painstakingly dissected. Thousands of planning applications with implications for retailers are submitted every week. From the smallest project, such as a shop front alteration, to a huge shopping centre scheme, each is subject to rigorous scrutiny before it can be given the nod. And because a new store programme is such a vital part of a retailer's forward planning, it is with a certain reluctance that they place themselves in the hands of the planners.

Furthermore, many lack faith that the proposals will be treated with the same efficiency that has gone into drawing them up. Both retailers and landlords are crying out for changes to be made to the planning system, and according to experts, many of the most effective changes would be simple to introduce. So what are the flaws in the system and what can be done to improve it? "Everyone deserves a better service from the planning process," says Asda head of property, communication and planning Jonathan Refoy. "Whether you're looking to make a small extension to a shop or building a supermarket, if it can be speeded up, it's better for the UK economy."

Even when times aren't as tough as they are proving at the moment, no retailer wants

to lose out on vital trading weeks. Top retailers run a tight ship and to miss out on sales because of delays that are out of their hands can be critical. So a scheme being held up because the resources from the local authority aren't there to see an application through speedily is enough to have many retailers tearing their hair out. It is a particular issue for supermarkets, which tend to own and develop their own stores, so it is crucial that new stores go up as quickly as possible.

Problems in the planning system boil down to two key issues: delays and high costs. Retailers and landlords both find these a huge issue and, according to experts, they are areas that could and should be improved. Property consultancy GL Hearn advises retailers and developers on how to approach the planning process and has worked with many of the biggest grocers. Partner Nick Spall says: "Everyone wants clarity and speed and as low costs as is reasonable. At the moment, the system is slow and increasingly expensive, which is putting people off putting in applications." For the biggest projects, such as a retail-led urban regeneration scheme, a developer can be looking at up to 10 years from conception to completion and half of this might be spent on the planning.

A lengthy process

Last month, Land Securities and Hammerson opened their Cabot Circus scheme in Bristol. But a decade has passed since the scheme was dreamed up and it was more than eight years ago that the developers first sat down with Bristol City Council. After five years of planning and consultation, the first demolition works began on the site in September 2005 and the construction was complete within three years.

The two years that it took the Bristol Alliance - the partnership between Land Securities and Hammerson - to prepare an application and the three years to wait for its approval is typical of the timescales developers work to. Of course there is a huge amount to prepare and go through, but many argue that far too much time is spent unnecessarily on planning. One of the spanners in the works is the huge amount of paperwork a retailer or developer has to prepare just to submit an application. The level of paperwork has burgeoned in the past two decades and many developers feel

that the sheer quantity and detail of the paperwork they have to put together is clogging up the whole system. These days, a complete application needs to cover every conceivable base, including detailed ecology reports from the local area and traffic impact studies to name just two. The amount of time, effort and money a developer has to spend to get this information is no laughing matter. "It's an increasingly extensive package of submission for an application," says Spall. "It's a huge list of planning submission requirements. There's more and more information to come up with and it's slowing things down."

And the longer it takes to prepare a package, the more costly it becomes. With developers already facing the squeeze financially and the future of many developments now looking less certain, increasing costs at the planning stage is the last thing they need. And if these costs are, as Spall says, putting people off making applications, many retailers - especially those that anchor shopping centres - are also affected. An anchor retailer such as Debenhams, which has expansion plans in place, is in the hands of the developers as to when its new stores can open. As reported in Retail Week (August 22), Debenhams has been hit with a catalogue of delays in its stores pipeline, because of circumstances outside its control. While some have been affected by the credit crunch, planning has been a factor at others. At the time, of the 17 schemes it was due to anchor, about half of them had question marks over their opening dates. As the retailer pointed out, these things happen - but retailers like to be in control and any delays to a store roll-out programme are unwelcome.

The cause of the problem is simple: money. At the root of the difficulties that local authorities have in approaching planning is a lack of resources. This leads to insufficient manpower to deal with the thousands of applications that are submitted every year, so the time that should be devoted to the huge and complicated projects isn't. "The biggest (shortfall) is in terms of the resources that local authorities are able to put into major planning applications," explains Refoy. "If that one area could be solved and they could be properly resourced - particularly in rural areas - that could be the biggest fundamental change in quickening up the process." And this is becoming more of a problem because the application process is becoming more demanding and complicated, says British Property Federation (BPF) senior policy

officer Jonathan Seager. He explains: "The sites are often complex and problematic. A local authority with a massive deficit of resources can't devote enough to go into the complexities of the issue. They don't have the capacity to deal with some applications and it's a huge problem."

For the retailers and landlords putting in the applications, there is a lot of frustration at the lengths they have to go to just to get a submission in. Many criticise local authorities for being overly rigorous in the demands they place on a developer before an application is put in and this adds to the delays and high costs they incur.

Spall explains that one reason for this is the grant incentives that councils receive for processing an application quickly. While this might sound like a sensible idea, he says that the result is that planners make sure every "i" is dotted and every "t" crossed before they register an application so that it can be processed as speedily as possible. "Planning officers might recognise that they don't need certain reports, but will ask for them anyway to be on the safe side," he explains. "The classic case is that an application goes in and it just sits there in post-submission but pre-registration. They won't register it until they are satisfied it is all complete and this can take weeks or longer."

THE 12-POINT PLAN

At the forefront of the body that is pushing for changes to be brought in is Sainsbury's head of planning Sue Wilcox, who is chair of the BPF planning committee. In her role as the latter, she has been heavily involved in putting together a manifesto that outlines ways the Government could and should be reforming the system.

Subsequently, the BPF has laid out 12 points identifying exactly where the Government could be doing more for the system (see box). The thrust of the BPF's recommendations is for the Government to increase funding to local authorities, which in turn need to use these resources to promote better recruitment and training at all levels of the planning system. With enough support and judicious spending, the BPF and retailers feel that local authorities will end up with a more comprehensive, efficient system that could save everyone time and money. While the effects of this will

clearly take a while to be felt in practice, Wilcox says there is also plenty to be done immediately. "There are a number of short-term measures that local authorities could use, such as employing external agencies which would speed up the process until more funding is received," she says.

Retail property has changed; the strength of the new generation of schemes that is emerging is that they transcend the traditional idea of a big box filled with stores. The new school of thought is for mixed-use, uncovered schemes that play more of a role in regenerating their host cities. But the upshot is that planning these projects is far more complicated, while the system, and more importantly the way it's funded, hasn't kept up. If retail property is to keep up the pace that has made it so strong, the Government needs to do more to oil the planning machine that drives it.

The BPF's 12-point planning manifesto

1. Improve recruitment and retention
2. Let planners get on with planning
3. Outsource mainstream planning functions
4. Accept property industry funding for planning resources
5. Make councillor training mandatory
6. Pool resources
7. Incentivise local authorities to promote development
8. Use tax increment financing to fund infrastructure
9. Reduce the information required to support planning applications
10. Speed up the contribution from statutory consulters
11. Improve and incentivise pre-application discussions
12. Planning appeals should concentrate on the reasons for refusal

Source: BPF Planning Manifesto - Making Planning Work. September 2008.

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Retail Week

June 27, 2003

PPG6 shake-up will force local councils to list available sites.

BYLINE: Graham Parker.

SECTION: Pg.33

LENGTH: 367 words

Local authorities will be forced to assemble a list of town and edge-of-town sites retailers have struggled to find, under revised Government guidelines taking effect later this year. The controversial PPG6 planning guidance note is to be replaced by a new format Planning Policy Statement.

Last week, principal planner at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Michael Bach told the Retail Week Property Forum that local councils had used retail planning policy to restrict retail development rather than encourage it. "We expect local authorities to plan for development, not just control it," he said. Bach was speaking at the event on behalf of the new planning minister, Keith Hill.

The new PPS6 will also include guidance on the 'sequential test' and assessing 'need' and 'impact', Bach said. Local authorities will need to produce plans accounting for likely retail growth and where it should go. "At a local level, we expect plans to identify sufficient sites - appropriate to the needs of retail and other key town centre users, and, if necessary, help assemble these sites," said Bach.

Local authorities will be encouraged to use compulsory purchase powers, being strengthened by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill that is making its way through Parliament.

PPS6 will also force local authorities to identify more opportunities for mixed-used development. "We expect local authorities to deliver the sites for you to develop," emphasised Bach.

Retailers need to play their part by embracing different formats for in-town and edge-of-centre sites, which are likely to be increasingly mixed-use and multi-storey. "Large single-storey 'sheds' surrounded by a sea of car parking are no longer appropriate. We have been discouraging them for the past 10 years," insisted Bach, though he argued, local authorities still need to identify edge-of-town sites for large format stores to stop them searching the "urban periphery".

PPS6 will not be a revolution in planning policy, but it will clarify the Government's aims. "Our policy remains one of promoting town centres - our challenge is to get local authorities to raise their game and deliver the sites," said Bach.

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LANGUAGE: English

Retail Week

September 17, 1999

British Council of Out of Town Retailing - The dead hand of government.

SECTION: Pg.10

LENGTH: 1635 words

The Environment Secretary wields tremendous power over retail planning. Anthony Bowhill outlines a brief history of the many-headed hydra of government policy and issues a timely warning for retailers and developers.

Central government is the major arbiter on retail planning. General advice on the location of retail units, and the environment secretary's power to call these in for his own decision, gives him a crucial influence in shaping retail patterns. This influence is becoming an ever tighter vice on out-of-centre retailing - even more so now that it is becoming allied to policies on sustainability, car usage and containing urban sprawl.

In the 1950s, the deciding factors in retail location were the ability to walk to shops for everyday needs and the use of public transport to get to larger centres for higher order comparison goods. Planning Bulletin No 4: Town Centres (together with Circular 63/63) gave advice on traditional layouts with some emphasis on pedestrianisation. However the growth in car ownership foreshadowed a changing pace of development. Fuelled by new town centre schemes, retailers came to realise that with access constraints, cars could not be fully used to take away goods.

Driving to the shops The 1960s and 1970s witnessed the start of out-of-centre shopping. This was recognised by Development Control Policy Note 13 (1977), which stressed the importance of the shopping hierarchy and warned against the over-provision of shopping space. It also stressed the importance of the town centre for the community, but recognised that edge-of-town sites might be appropriate for large new stores where size, land requirements or "some other factor" precluded a central

location. Adding a word of caution, the note said that such sites would only be considered where they would not be detrimental to the interests of the inner areas of our towns and cities.

Structure and local plans became the main vehicle for controlling new development and as such became heavily influenced by central government advice. Circular 22/84, Memorandum on Structure and Local Plans, required policies to take full account of current trends in retailing, like the establishment of large stores, retail warehouses and garden centres away from existing centres. Competition and new forms of retail provision continued to be largely unregulated, but consideration should be given to adequate shopping facilities for all sections of the population, the requirements of the retail industry, the effects on existing shopping centres and the relief of traffic congestion.

In July 1986, environment secretary Patrick Jenkin elaborated on DCPN13 - in particular the cumulative effects of recent and proposed large-scale retail development. He said these should be looked at to see if they were on a scale and of a kind that they would seriously affect the vitality and viability of a nearby town centre as a whole. The much repeated phrase "vitality and viability of the town centre" was used again by William Waldegrave in October 1986 when he emphasised that, when considering a particular proposal, there may come a point at which its general effects on the vitality and viability of an existing town centre as a whole might cause it not to go ahead. His speech announced the publication of Circular 21/86, which required planning authorities to contact the DoE before they granted permission for retailing floorspace in excess of 250,000 sq. ft. (gross).

DCPN13 was replaced by PPG6 (Major Retail Development) in January 1988. It repeated the phrase about harm to the vitality and viability of a town centre as a whole. It also threw cold water on economic impact studies, saying that these were only likely to be appropriate where developments, either individually or cumulatively, were very large relative to nearby centres, or where there had been a succession of major developments over a short period. The PPG also welcomed the modernisation and refurbishment of town centres, especially where derelict or underused land was involved. The benefits were environmental improvements; regeneration; job creation;

helping arrest further deterioration; restoring community confidence, and making centres more attractive to shoppers, thereby increasing their competitiveness.

Published as a draft in October 1992, PPG6 was revised in July 1993 under the heading Town Centres and Retail Developments. At the launch, DoE Minister Tony Baldry stressed that proposals should be refused on the grounds of impact only if there was clear evidence that they would undermine the viability and vitality of a centre. He said the challenge was for town centres to continue to be viable, vital and attractive and to forge co-operation between the public and private sectors.

In March 1994 PPG13 (Transport) officially introduced the sequential test. It spoke of shopping being promoted in existing centres which are more likely to offer choice of access, particularly for those without the use of a private car. The House of Commons Environment Committee in October 1994 criticised statements by the Secretary of State suggesting a further "sequential" test, whereby there should be no out-of-town developments unless there was no suitable town centre site. The government's response in February 1995 supported the sequential approach and said that PPG6 would be revised so as to put the emphasis on development plans to identify suitable town centre and edge-of-centre sites for retailing.

John Gummer's revision came in June 1996. He endorsed the sequential approach, starting with sites in the town centre, then edge-of-centres (defined in terms of easy walking distance), followed by district and local centres, and only then other sites which were well served by a choice of means of transport. But from its inception, revised PPG6 has been fraught with confusion: does the walking distance 200m-300m from the edge of the primary shopping area take account of gradients, crossing major roads etc.? What flexibility should there be to shoe-horn large-scale retail warehouses into town centre sites? Would reduced parking be required?

In December 1997, Nick Raynsford clarified that extensions to existing out-of-centre supermarkets and other such developments would be subject to the sequential test. Ministerial stealth has, however, continued. Richard Caborn in November 1998 emphasised the focus of new development in town centres and said that the government was not seeking to strike a balance between such centres and out-of-town shopping, rather the reverse. He criticised McKinsey's praise for large store formats

and the economies of scale they offer. Coburn warned the logical conclusion would be to centralise all food shopping in large foodstores run by the big four companies. This would work against town centres and sustainable development and was contrary to the government's approach. He urged flexibility and format when considering town centre sites.

Reason not the need

In *R v Hambleton DC ex p Somerfield* (1998) the court held that it was not necessary for retailers to prove need for a new store when promoting a planning application/appeal. However, the minister intervened in February this year to say that planning authorities should take into account the need for retail development when deciding planning applications outside town centres. This effectively reverses the court's decision and indicates the powerful influence of policy on shopping provision. Support for the government's approach is to be found in the House of Commons Environment Transport and Regional Affairs Committee Report of March this year. It strongly agreed with the minister's rebuttal of the simplistic nostrums of the McKinsey report and welcomed the DETR's recognition of the role of land use and planning in reducing the need to travel. It considered that the revised PPG13 should be far tougher and more specific than the Transport White Paper. In particular, it felt that it should forbid future out-of-town or edge-of-town shopping centres or other developments which generate large amount of private car travel, regardless of whether or not they are in public transport corridors. PPG6 remains the central plank of the government's retailing policy.

Speculation that the arrival of Wal-Mart might lead to a relaxation of such policies was swiftly rebutted by Caborn, who indicated that positive planning for such developments in the locations where the government wanted them was the key to success. It is worth repeating a central plank of his argument as it is the latest restatement of government policy: "One of the great benefits of our plan-led system is that it gives certainty, clarity and consistency. The government's policy on town centres and retail development, set out in PPG6, is very clear - we expect new retail

development, as the first choice, to be in town centres. This is consistent with our policy to regenerate our town centres and to make sure that everybody has access to a range of local shops, whatever their choice of transport, as part of our key objective of social inclusion."

As a result food retailers in particular are beating a hasty retreat to new formats in town centres. Discounters such as Aldi and Lidl are already able to utilise smaller sites with greater flexibility. Tesco Express and new Sainsbury's country town formats are part of the fightback.

Flexibility in formats, reduction in parking levels, adaptation of the sequential test to extensions, conditions and mezzanines all herald the hard task which lies ahead as retailers and developers grapple with the many-headed hydra of government policy.

Anthony Bowhill is principal of Anthony Bowhill & Associates.

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The Grocer

December 02, 2006

The people's planopoly

SECTION: ANALYSIS; Pg. 28

LENGTH: 1368 words

HIGHLIGHT: Friends of the Earth are whipping up opposition to all supermarket planning applications these days. And people are listening. Liz Hamson reports

The battle lines have been drawn. On one side are Friends of the Earth, local community groups and small independent retailers. They accuse Tesco et al of: browbeating local authorities with "legalised bungs" (aka planning gains); submitting planning applications for extensions or changes of use after permission has been granted; and demanding restrictive clauses in planning consents to prevent rivals developing nearby sites. On the other side are the multiples, pleading their case for a more relaxed planning regime. Some claim there's now an embargo on out-of-town development.

But who will win the planning war? There is all to play for. The Competition Commission is expected to tackle whether competition issues should be considered when planning applications are decided in its emerging-thinking document due shortly. At the same time, Kate Barker, the Treasury adviser who has been reviewing the planning regime since the spring, was due to publish her final report on whether the current regime restricts competition and the growth of the economy as The Grocer went to press. Her findings could form the basis of a planning White Paper next year. Planning was also mentioned in the Queen's Speech. And in his pre-Budget speech next Wednesday, the Chancellor could well give his verdict on controversial proposals for a planning gain supplement, through which any increase in value generated by a planning consent would be taxed. With so much at stake, the tactics of both sides have

become increasingly aggressive. For Tesco and Asda in particular, FoE and its friends seem to have come off better in recent skirmishes. Last week, a proposal was rejected before it had even made it to planning application stage. Councillors in Darlington voted against Tesco's plans to develop land there after a public consultation exercise in which 78% of residents opposed the retailer's plans. And at the beginning of last month, the Planning Inspectorate alluded to a FoE report about a Tesco Extra in nearby Burnage when rejecting Tesco's application to develop a large store next to Stretford Leisure Centre in Trafford, Manchester. "Although Tesco has predicted an impact of 0.39% with regard to small and local neighbourhood centres, it is an average figure and does not reflect what may happen to the very small centres to any useful degree," said the inspectorate. "What is persuasive, however, is the evidence produced by interested persons on the effects of the opening of a Tesco Extra store in Burnage. "Needless to say, neither Tesco nor Asda is happy with FoE's growing influence. "I wonder whether they've ever made a positive contribution to any debate," says a disgruntled source close to Tesco. "FoE is misleading and misrepresenting people all the time. They're not interested in a sensible debate at all. "Accusations of strategic land banking are hardly fair when it takes as long as it does to secure planning consent, he argues. "Sometimes it can take five years to obtain a planning consent - that's not good for anyone. "Asda takes a similar line. But it concedes the restrictive nature of the planning regime has forced retailers to extreme measures. "There's lots of skulduggery going on. There's no suggestion Tesco has broken the law but there's an element of gaming," says a spokesman. The needs test, by which planners assess whether a community requires additional retail outlets, should be abolished in favour of a competition test that would allow unrepresented names to enter the market, he suggests. "If you put Waitrose, M&S, Whole Foods Market into towns that don't have them, everyone would raise their game and customers would get extra choice," he says. "Clearly, there's a pretty weighty argument of consumers lacking choice. Only 35% of towns and urban areas have four multiple retailers. In rural areas it's only 20%." The supermarkets are not the only ones irked by FoE's aggressive tactics. The assertion everything in the regime favours the supermarkets is totally misleading, says John Stockdale, retail specialist at planning consultants CgMs. "Our advice to big

retail clients is they have a less than 50% chance of success with any out-of-town application," he says. "FoE seems to carry an enormous amount of weight when it comes to being able to generate inquiries. It's extraordinary when so much of its evidence is based on hearsay. "Predictably, FoE remains unapologetic. "The future of retail in the town centres is dictated by Tesco and Asda," says its supermarkets campaigner Sandra Bell. "Reform of the planning gain system is needed. It would be better if the money went into more central pots and was not used as a local bribe. That gives Tesco and other supermarkets too much sway. It gives them an unfair advantage over small chains and independent stores. "FoE, which is soon to publish an update of its Calling the Shots report detailing alleged abuses of the planning regime by the supermarkets, wants the government to tighten Planning Policy Statement Six governing town centre development. Barker's suggestion the planning regime is so restrictive it is slowing the economy's growth is misguided, says Bell. "There's a complete misconception that all out-of-town development has come to a halt. "Small retailers, too, are anxious about the possibility of a relaxation of PPS6. "We are concerned by the school of thought that plays to the idea that planning is a nuisance and gets in the way of the economy - as the big four have been arguing to the Commission," says a spokesman for the ACS. "We don't believe that's true. We're absolutely clear the worst thing that could happen for competition is a weakening of the existing restrictions. Tesco's dominance is a symptom of the problem rather than the cause." Others are more concerned about the government's proposal to introduce a planning gain supplement. "Everyone with a stake in development has been very vocal in their opposition," says Paul Browne, head of property and planning at the BRC. "It's likely to delay and, in some cases, deter retail development of brownfield sites that are already typically most costly to develop." He is confident Barker will consider the economic implications of the current regime. However, he questions how effectively any changes would be enforced by under-resourced and often poorly skilled planning authorities. PPS6 only came in last year and has already placed a massive burden, he points out. "There's a requirement for councils to be more proactive in how they plan for retail growth. There's more stuff coming out in terms of guidance. "The irony is that the supermarkets, too, are being asked to do a lot more - planning gain

cuts both ways after all - and they're being asked it on behalf of the very communities now on the attack. Whether their concerns or those of the pressure groups have more sway over government should begin to become clearer over the next few weeks.

The people versus Tesco

The Grocer has seen one of the letters submitted by Friends of the Earth to the Competition Commission, attacking supermarket extensions. Schemes under fire include: Tesco Ruthin, Denbighshire: FoE argues Tesco opened a 2,745m² store in August and a week later submitted an application to expand the store to 4,126m² store. The application was refused in October. Tesco Brighouse Road, Queensbury, West Yorkshire. Planning permissions were granted for food stores of 1,394m² and 3,251m², but Tesco submitted a planning application in July 2005 for a 5,519m² scheme as well as a petrol station. The decision is still pending. Asda Pwllheli, Gwynedd. Planning permission was granted in 2002 for a Safeway. In it was a condition restricting the size of the store to protect the "vitality and viability of the town centre". In 2005, Asda acquired the site and submitted an application to increase the retail floorspace by 26%. Permission was granted and the store opened in October 2006. Tesco Carlisle, Cumbria. In 2002, outline permission was granted for a 3,715m² store. In 2005, before work had commenced, Tesco submitted an application to increase the floorspace by 78%. The city council rejected the application in August 2005 and an appeal is pending.

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