

Justice Narratives in Urban Greening Initiatives

A Positive Discourse Analysis Approach

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Problem

- “We continue to be focused on the fact that alongside the physical outcomes of these crises, there is a parallel challenge of how to democratically transform the social and political institutions that reproduce our state of unsustainability into those that can support just, circular, biobased societies (Steffen et al., 2018).”
– Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning (Ellis, et al. 2020)
- David Schlosberg, Isabelle Anguelovski
- Urban areas need ‘greening’
- How ‘just’ are greening initiatives?
 - Neighborhood perspective
 - Administrator perspectives



Concepts

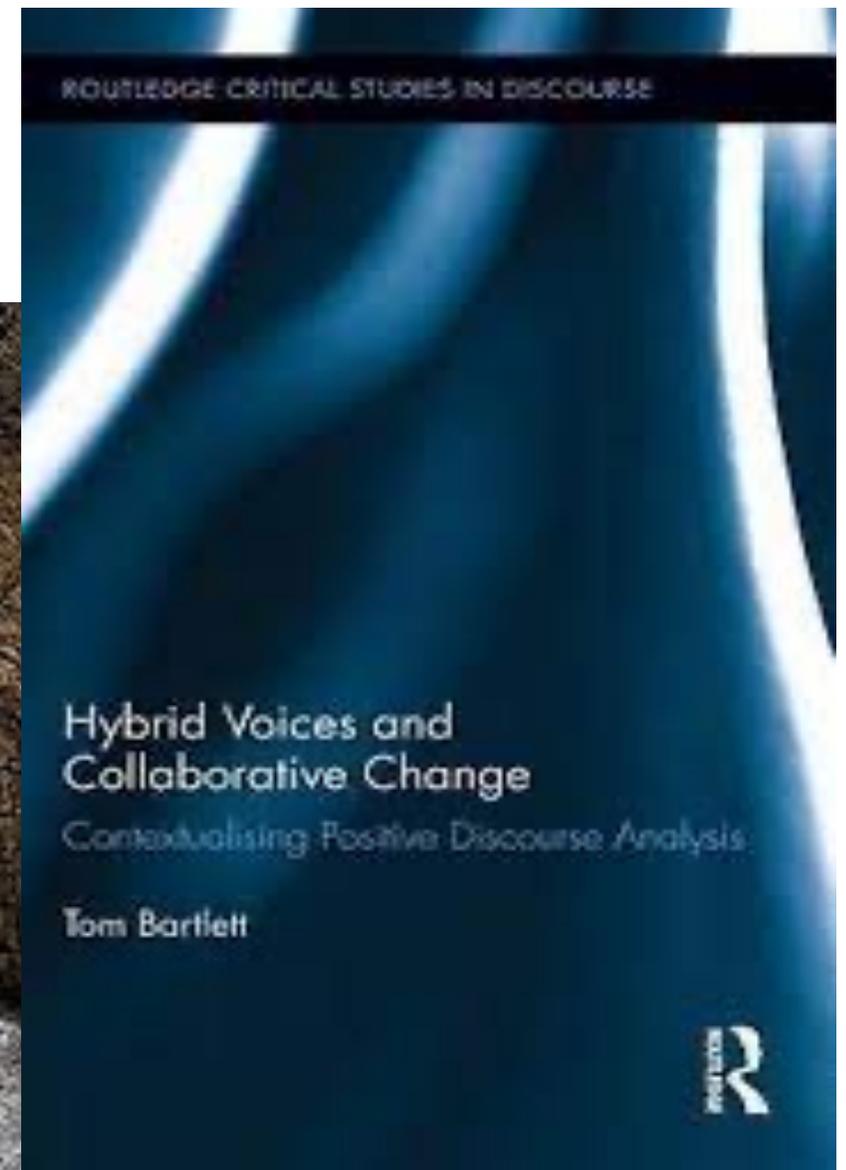
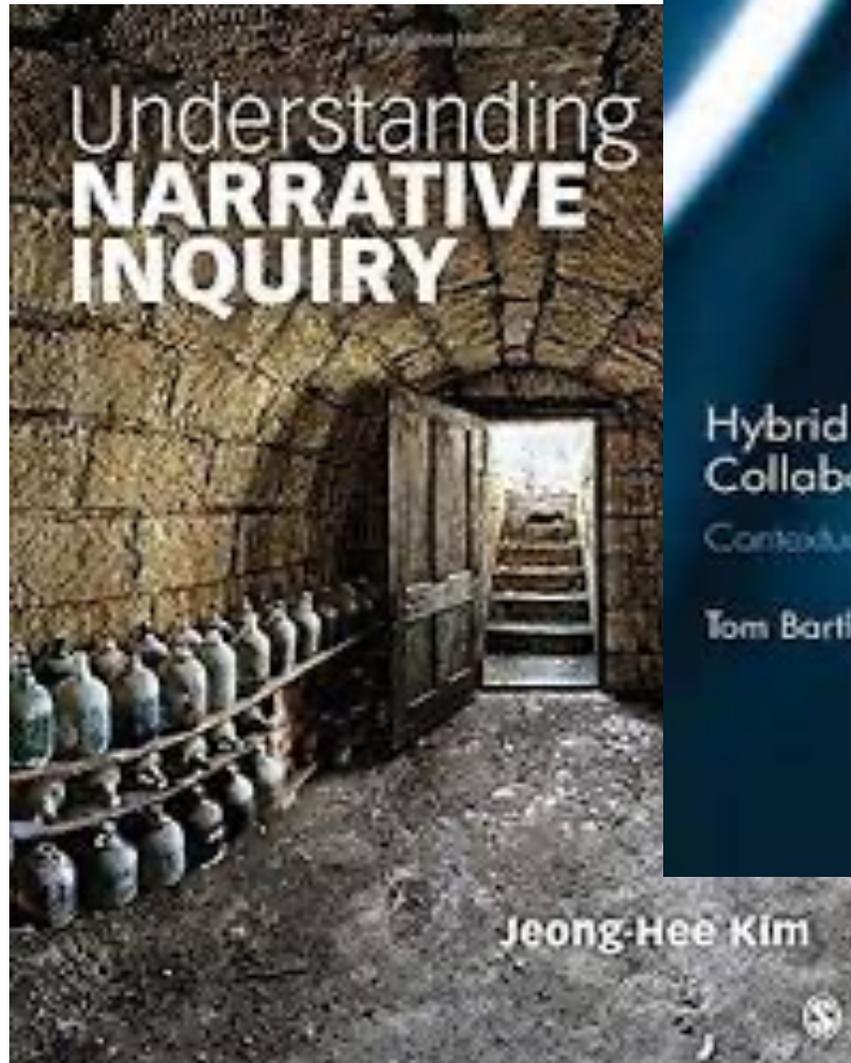
Justice narratives – means for communicating underlying ideologies about how societies *ought to* work. Narratives are textual and/or visual, usually in the form of a metaphor, and exemplary of a broader discourse.

Nonhegemonic (justice) narratives – narratives that communicate justice ideologies of systemically weak actors

Hegemonic (justice) narratives – narratives that communicate justice ideologies of systemically powerful actors

Narrative analysis – deconstruction and interpretation of narratives into thematic and/or metaphorical parts. Narratives can be textual and/or visual

Positive Discourse Analysis (a sub-field of Critical Discourse Analysis) – a critical process of deconstruction *and* reconstruction (J. R. Martin; Tom Bartlett; Jessica M. Hughes)



Questions

1. How do nonhegemonic justice narratives construct and are constructed by the HL/BL initiatives?
2. How do these justice narratives articulate tensions in hegemonic justice narratives?
3. What alternative directions for improving justice in urban greening initiatives might such a comparison offer?



PDA lens

- More than a discussion of power and how power shapes society
- Start of another kind of discourse that deconstructs oppression and reconstructs resistance (Hughes 2018)
- “The lack of positive discourse analysis (PDA?) cripples our understanding of how change happens, for the better, across a range of sites—how feminists re-make gender relations in our world, how indigenous people overcome their colonial heritage, how migrants renovate their new environs and so on. And this hampers design and perhaps even discourages it since analysts would rather tell us how the struggle was undone than how freedom was won.” (Martin 2004:9)

The High Line in New York City, USA

Friends of the Highline

- “[...] we’re devoted to reimagining the role public spaces have in creating connected, healthy neighborhoods and cities.”

Melva Max, owner of La Luchonette

- “The High Line was a Trojan horse for the real-estate people.”



The BeltLine in Atlanta, Georgia, USA

BeltLine Partnership

- “[The BeltLine Partnership] ensures all Atlantans have the chance to participate in and benefit from [The BeltLine’s] economic growth for generations to come.”

Janaya Keaton



Justice according to whom? –Exactly!

Hegemonic discourse \longleftrightarrow Nonhegemonic discourse

- Power is not a zero-sum game
- Furthering the discussion

Does PDA open up understandings of justice—what it is and how it can be achieved?

Questions?

- We appreciate feedback!
- Get in touch! lurissa411@gmail.com (Lurissa den Dulk)