

Book review

Tourism, Global Crises and Justice: Tourism Transition to a More Just and Sustainable Future

Edited by **Dr Raymond Rastegar, Dr Freya Higgins-Desbiolles and Dr Lisa Ruhanen**
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This book, edited by Dr Raymond Rastegar, Dr Freya Higgins -Desbiolles and Dr Lisa Ruhanen, three leading and influential experts who examine the interaction between tourism, injustice, inequality, socio-ecological dichotomies and other pressing global issues, is a collection of high-quality perspectives on the relationship between the tourism sector and various forms of social injustice around the world. This book stems from the special edition “*Global Tourism Crisis and Justice*” published in the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* in 2021. Amidst the push to revise tourism studies’ approach to tourism spaces, relational epistemology, more-than-human perspectives and the multi-scale impacts of tourism on local socio-ecological systems, this work is crucial in highlighting the negative aspects of contemporary tourism as well as the potential for new pathways towards a responsible future for all stakeholders in the sector.

The book features a comprehensive introduction, followed by four sections exploring justice through various critical perspectives. In total, the book comprises 14 chapters written by contributors from various countries, with case studies from nearly every continent. The editors emphasise the importance of highlighting contributions from authors working in marginalised linguistic and geographical contexts, thereby facilitating a more nuanced understanding of injustice and raising important questions about how these phenomena are interpreted by

academics embedded in local contexts rather than through an outside perspective. The various injustices discussed in this book – ranging from precarious workers and vulnerable children to migrants, indigenous peoples, rural communities, women and marginalised tourists – demonstrate the various ways in which tourism can harm regions and threaten the social structures of destinations. Therefore, this book is an invaluable resource for those who are just beginning to explore these themes. While its contents are useful for researchers at all stages of their academic careers, its diverse perspectives on justice and abundant case studies make it particularly suitable for those transitioning from master’s to doctoral programmes or for those in the early stages of their doctoral studies.

This introduction guides readers through the theoretical foundations of the entire book, which is framed by a framework that combines “narratives of injustice,” “affirmations of diverse and local knowledge, narratives and sovereignty” and “transformation of relationships to decolonise and negotiate new paths.” This triangular framework emphasises the importance of addressing existing injustices in order to achieve engaged and transformative outcomes, which can only be achieved through the integration of diverse worldviews and knowledge systems in the context of the current dual crisis. The editors highlight the urgent need to unravel the persistent negative impacts of anthropocentric tourism systems and urge a more radical response to facilitate a just transition that can also address the challenges posed by climate change and climate injustice. They propose a decolonial approach to reformulating the tourism system,

urging changes in the way tourism research is conducted to remedy what they call the “epistemic injustice” that arises from Western approaches imposed on the developing world (p. 6).

The diverse theoretical frameworks presented throughout the chapters allow readers to assess the extent to which injustice and inequality arise from the neoliberal, capitalist and extractive nature of mass tourism. The editors categorise the chapters into three subcategories, which are then organised into four sections. The subcategory “Recognising different worlds and knowledge” highlights the diverse cultural and historical environments in which these injustices arise (Chapters 1, 2 and 5). The subcategory “Solidarity in and through tourism to build collaboration” emphasises the importance of collaboration in local contexts to address injustice and facilitate pathways towards equity, inclusion and solidarity among stakeholders in the tourism metabolism (Chapters 3, 6, 7 and 8). Finally, the editors emphasise the subcategory “Addressing power imbalances: decolonisation,” which responds to the urgent need to transform global power dynamics and challenge the supremacy of Western perspectives and imperial frameworks (Chapters 2, 4, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 14).

The first part of this book is entitled “Activating Justice” and begins with a compelling narrative on critical race theory and its application in tourism (Chapter 1). Benjamin and Laughter use the concept of counter-storytelling to describe the experiences of Black travellers, highlighting the potential of darkened storywork in qualitative research and the inclusion of alternative narratives. In Chapter 2, Bigby, Hatley and Jim explore the personal relationships between visitors and Indigenous cultural heritage in Oklahoma (USA) using a critical Indigenist methodological framework that combines autoethnography with collaborative efforts. They reveal the

complexity of narratives surrounding the interrelationships between humans, tribal nations, the environment and non-human beings during times of crisis. This demonstrates how tours led by local Indigenous individuals can facilitate pathways to empowerment and justice for local communities and their cultural heritage. In Chapter 3, Kalish and Cole approach justice through feminist alternative economics and care ethics. They analyse alternative economics to challenge existing feminist perspectives on economics and focus their discussion on feminist care ethics, social solidarity economics and human rights-based economics. The resulting “Feminist Alternative Tourism Economy” framework serves as a bridge between these concepts, demonstrating its potential to promote more gender-equitable societies and, thus, more equitable tourism systems. The final chapter of this section by Wu, Li, and Wang investigates rural China to enhance equity for community-based tourism enterprises, places and well-being. As the only quantitative contribution in this book, this study shows that perceived fairness positively influences place identity and subjective well-being, thereby enhancing the status and fair treatment of local rural tourism stakeholders.

The second section, entitled “Including marginalised tourism stakeholders,” begins with a study by Canosa and Graham examining the marginalisation of children in voluntary tourism and orphanages, which they critically analyse as a form of modern slavery. This conceptual paper develops a theoretical framework centred on children’s rights by challenging the role of children in tourism, research and planning while proposing a structure for their responsible involvement in shaping tourism justice, place and space. In Chapter 6, Burrai, Buda and Stevenson integrate concepts of alienation, ethical responsibility and hospitality to investigate the participation of migrant

and marginalised groups in tourism production and consumption. Through their analysis of migrant-led city tours in Leeds (UK), they uncover narratives that have the potential to promote fairer treatment of marginalised communities and build equitable relationships with guests, creating tourism experiences as “participatory alienation” that overcome social issues such as exclusion, hostility and intolerance. Chapter 7, written by Riordan, Robinson and Hoffstaedter, investigates the pressing issue of unfair treatment of precarious workers on online delivery platforms. Research conducted in Melbourne (Australia) uncovers the complex injustices faced by delivery workers, highlighting the intersectional challenges inherent in their working conditions. These workers actively respond to these challenges through their agency and resistance. The concept of dignity emerges as critical in shaping decent working conditions for delivery workers and in navigating the complex interactions between platforms, consumers, businesses, institutions and other stakeholders.

The third section, “Tools and processes that shape (in)justice in tourism,” begins with Seyfi, Hall, Saarinen and Vo-Than examining the impact of sanctions on Iranian tourism in the context of crisis-justice relations. The authors highlight key issues arising from these sanctions, including restrictions on mobility rights (entry and exit), limitations on digital rights (lack of online accommodation listings or financial transactions) and challenges to gender justice, noting in particular that women are often the first to lose their jobs as a result of enforced political isolation. In response, local tourism stakeholders can engage in performative tourism-based empowerment initiatives that effectively counter the disempowerment caused by these distributional sanctions. Chapter 9, by Buzinde and Caterina-Knorr, presents an interpretive investigation of tourism policy in Kenya and Rwanda. They analyse multi-level

inclusivity covering social, ecological and relational aspects through a decolonial lens to address “African rights and needs” to decolonise and redefine its educational systems and practices, thereby establishing a vision for self-development. The final chapter of this section, by Paddison and Hall, examines the impact of policy formation and governance structures in an urban context, with a focus on the inequalities that may arise. Using York (England) as a case study, the authors apply concepts of spatial and geographical justice to describe how fragmented approaches to public policy formation and tourism planning, rooted in neoliberal consumer capitalism, can lead to distributional injustice and the exclusion of local residents from the planning and use of city centres.

The final section of the book, “Facing crisis, building justice, and tourism transition”, begins with Yang’s exploration of the phenomenon of qiongyou in China. This demand-side perspective on justice highlights the collective socio-cultural resistance of poor travellers who identify themselves and their right to access tourist sites, which are often restricted to certain social groups in order to facilitate more inclusive tourism participation. Qiongyou emerges as a challenge to state-led closure and commodification of tourism. In Chapter 12, Hunt, Barragán-Paladines, Izurieta and Ordóñez apply sovereignty theory to analyse the complex and multifaceted challenges of sovereignty in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador. They describe how the ongoing crisis, driven by increased mobility, has raised issues related to territorial, diplomatic, livelihood and conservation sovereignty. This has exacerbated environmental conflicts stemming from differing value systems and worldviews.

Higgins-Desbiolles, Scheyvens and Bhatia in Chapter 13 discuss orphanages and voluntourism, criticising the phenomenon of “white saviourism” and Western colonial

ideology in voluntary activities. They highlight the importance of locally rooted and managed models that can steer the current direction towards mutual solidarity. Through their investigation of the Cambodia Children's Trust, they explore the Village Hive Model for orphanages, which relies on local knowledge and collective engagement for empowerment and capacity sharing. The book concludes with a chapter by Tomassini and Lamond, which offers a theoretical exploration of spatial justice and the interconnection of mobility in tourism encounters. They propose a new theoretical framework for mobile open spatial justice, which combines posthuman ontology and affirmative ethics, highlighting affective relationships and interactions in tourism spaces. The aim of this framework is to reshape critical thinking in tourism studies by moving away from associations embedded in exploitative and exclusive paradigms.

The chapter by Tomassini and Lamond serves as a convincing conclusion to this volume and can be seen as a fundamental starting point for future investigations into the interaction between justice and tourism. By introducing posthuman affirmative ethics and shifting the focus from "people" to "acts" in affective relationships in tourism, this investigation may open up new possibilities for formulating spaces in tourism that transcend human or geographical boundaries. This approach paves the way for future collections and studies that equally incorporate ecological and environmental perspectives into justice, an area that this volume largely ignores

in favour of social issues. This approach aligns with holistic explorations of socio-ecological justice, which provide a comprehensive understanding of justice through the lens of regenerative tourism systems, as recently argued by Lazic & Della Lucia (2024) and Rastegar (2025). The holistic perspective transcends dualism and fragmentation, which continue to dominate discussions on human-nature coexistence and justice, including in the tourism sector. This opens up opportunities for new theorising that reconsiders concepts of space and place in tourism, positions tourists as co-actors rather than passive observers and recognises non-human agents that actively influence relational epistemologies. Books such as these, edited by Rastegar, Higgins-Desbiolles and Ruhanen, which describe various inequalities and injustices in tourism, are highly relevant to current and future academic discourse. They highlight aspects of the tourism sector that are often overlooked and remain marginalised in tourism research. In an era marked by dual crises and global challenges, these books serve as an urgent wake-up call, raising awareness about the harmful impacts of neoliberal capitalism and extractive practices, while proposing promising solutions to address complex and layered problems.

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