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# RETHINKING THE SPACE OF TOURISM, ITS POWER-GEOMETRIES, AND SPATIAL JUSTICE

## ABSTRACT

This article critically reflects on the space of tourism and its intersection with spatial justice. Despite the urgency to embrace a more just, sustainable, tourism the space of tourism has not yet received a sufficiently forceful reflection. Our study contributes to filling that gap by proposing a novel theoretical framework that combines Massey's spatial turn in the social sciences, with the posthuman, affirmative ethics of Braidotti, while drawing on elements of Field Theory/Hodological Space in Lewin. We move from an overview of the sociological space of tourism, articulated by neoliberal capitalism, through a critique built upon the spatial turn in the social sciences, arguing that space is relational, imbued with power geometries, the product of interrelations, and always under construction. We develop a conceptual model that draws on Latour's Actor-Network Theory and aspects of Field Theory, which understands space as an individual lived experience (hodological space). That theorisation is then extended to the space of tourism through the lens of the posthuman, affirmative ethics, and mobile ontologies of both human and non-human actants. In doing so the novel theoretical framework we develop exposes the complexity and nuance of the space of tourism and enables the possibility of spatially just tourism.

## Keywords

*Space, Sustainable Tourism, Posthumanism, Field Theory, Hodological space, Justice*

## INTRODUCTION

In the last decades the growth of tourism (UNWTO, 2020) has interweaved with an enduring questioning of such an industry and its role within a neoliberal, globalised, world; underpinned by the intense mobility of capital, goods, and people (Boluk et al., 2019). Tourism has been widely critiqued as an expression of a fluid global society, affected by the 'tourist syndrome' (Bauman, 2000; Franklin, 2003). A global society divided by mobility injustice (Sheller, 2018) and social injustice (Bauman, 1996; Ritzer, 2012). While the uncontrolled growth of tourism – understood as overtourism (Milano et al., 2019a; Milano et al., 2019b) – has seen widening economic and social inequalities, and unbalanced power-relations (Bianchi, 2018; Jamal & Camargo, 2014; Jamal & Camargo, 2018; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018), crises, such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic, have exposed new fears and uncertainties for contemporary society and its 'tourist syndrome' (Jamal & Budke, 2020; Jamal & Higham, 2021; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Rastegar, 2020). Such uncertainties have been at the centre of a growing academic debate, one that advocates for a critical rethinking of tourism in favour of social and ecological justice (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020), novel future tourism scenarios (Lew et al., 2020), and the socialising of tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2022).

This conceptual article builds on the idea that crises reveal meaning and can facilitate a critique of a given condition (Mbembe & Roitman, 1995; Roitman, 2013; Spracklen & Lamond, 2016). Critique is intimately connected with creation because “critique is not only a sterile opposition but also an active engagement of the conceptual imagination in the task of producing sustainable alternatives” (Braidotti, 2011, p. 6). Hence, our article aims to critically reflect on the mobility and spatial justice within, and throughout, tourism. Bauman, in *Liquid Modernity* (2000), stressed how mobility is the most coveted value and that the freedom to move is a stratifying factor of our times. Urry, in *Sociology beyond societies: mobilities for the twenty-first century* (2000), identified mobilities as a pivotal concept within the emerging spatial social sciences and humanities. However, mobility is not only relational and plural (Caletrio, 2016; 2017; Sheller & Urry, 2006), it also creates winners and losers, and divides as much as it unites (Bauman, 1998). Uneven mobilities and unjust spatialities produce unbalanced power relations because “power is a situation or a process, not an object or an essence” (Braidotti, 2011, p. 4). This urges the adoption of a cartographic approach, where “a cartography is a theoretically based and politically informed reading of the process of power relations” (ibid, p.4). Consequently, a cartographic approach conveys a political understanding of mobility conditions in a globalised context; it does so by identifying “the various power differences between distinct forms, categories, and practices of movement for both human and nonhuman mobile units” (ibid, p.11). This means that an emphasis on complex mobilities is advocated, one that sets out a novel ontological basis for relational spaces and for the understanding of how such relational spaces are produced through social practices, such as tourism (Sheller, 2018).

This article is inspired by the spatial turn in social sciences, stimulated by the works of Lefebvre (1984), Urry (De Gregory & Urry, 1985; Urry, 2000) and Massey (2005). Such pivotal works investigated the complex movements of capital, together with the resulting sociological space. More specifically our work draws on the three propositions on space elaborated by Massey (2005), conceiving space as the product of interrelations, as the sphere of a contemporaneous plurality and multiplicity, and always under construction. Massey’s work influenced the development of a mobilities turn in sociology by stimulating ideas of mobile sociology (Urry, 2000; Sheller, 2017), theorisations of spaces as flow and network (Sheller, 2018), and a growing interest in studies of places as the product of socio-spatial relations imbued with power-geometries (Bélanger & Silvey, 2020; Sheller, 2017; 2018). Hence, Massey’s ruminations on space (2005) encourage us to rethink the space of tourism and the role justice plays in such spaces.

The sociological space of tourism, together with its practices, are largely the product of modern western culture and the production systems of neoliberal capitalism (Bianchi, 2018; Higgins-

Desbiolles, 2018). In such neoliberal space tourism has been discussed as disregarding the needs and well-being of the local community (Higgins-Desbiolles & Bigby, 2021; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2019a; 2019b; Tomassini et al. 2021) urging a call to action to socialise tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles et al. 2022). Conversely, we understand and investigate tourism as mobility *praxis* in an unjust spatiality and as a lack of affective relationships. To interpret such unjust mobility *praxis*, we draw on aspects of Field Theory and hodological space (Lewin, 1951; 2015; Janni, 1984) arguing that behaviours - here meant as 'mobility actions' - are impinged by the totality of coexisting and interdependent forces within a space that - by becoming an individual lived experienced - results in a hodological space. The hodological space (ὁδός in ancient Greek means 'way') is neither a Euclidean space nor a space of knowledge but the space of the itinerary as an aspect of Lefebvrian lived and perceived space (Lefebvre 1984), understood, and experienced by a subject in movement (Janni, 1984). Though the notion of the *subject*, as we shall discuss later, also needs some re-thinking. Consequently, our work examines how neoliberal spatiality, with its unjust power-geometries, result in uneven mobility actions that are the expression of a mono-dimensional hodological space made of given, privileged, uneven, preferred itineraries, and relations. From Lewin (1951; 2015) we take the idea that in order to rethink the spatiality of tourism we need to understand spatiality as an affective field of complex and nuanced relationships, rich in itineraries and trajectories. We argue that such richness and heterogeneity present a landscape of multiplicity that cannot be grasped through a singular conceptual narrative. So that a spatially just Tourism can emerge, we suggest, a posthuman affirmative ethics is needed to contrast the commodification and depoliticisation of justice in tourism (Guia, 2021). This is possible because such an ethical approach "rests on an enlarged sense of interconnection between self and others, including the non-human or 'earth' others" (Braidotti, 2013, p. 190) and "bases the ethical relation on positive grounds of joint projects and activities" (ibid. p.190).

This approach enables us to rethink a novel posthuman spatial/relational ontology for a just tourism space, and to interweave the notions of space and justice; where justice not only concerns "people's lives, their well-being, homes, communities, and work; the places they travel to, and the journeys they undertake" (Jamal, 2019, p. 28). Through a networked nomadic ontology (Latour, 2007; Braidotti, 2011) and posthuman affirmative ethics (Braidotti, 2013; Guia, 2021), we argue that justice also concerns a human and non-human otherness that has, so far, largely been racialised, naturalised, and sexualised, in negative terms, as a diminished otherness. Numerous are the initiatives and projects trying to overcome an unfair spatiality, ground in a diminished otherness, while stressing the urgency of a posthuman, affirmative, ethics that emphasise political responsibility and an ethical commitment to tourism space. Projects like 'Migrantour' ([www.migrantour.org](http://www.migrantour.org)) and 'Roots Guide' ([www.rootsguide.org](http://www.rootsguide.org)) aim to unpack the potential of both migrant heritage and connections with different places and people in urban spaces (Ormond &

Vietti, 2021). Similarly, initiatives like 'Marry an Amsterdammer for a day' (Nicholls-Lee, 2019) propose temporary affective relationships, as a means of addressing a tourist/local dualism. whilst challenging overtourism as a phenomenon. A gendered approach to spatial justice is largely discussed by Leslie Kern (2020) in 'Feminist City: Claiming Space in a Made-Man World' as well as being part of the work of Jane Jacobs (Adhya, 2012; Brandes Gratz, 2011). The urgency of socialising animal-based tourism via a posthuman lens is discussed by Carol Kline (2022) and emerges also in projects like 'How is Water' ([www.cyanplanet.org/how-is-water](http://www.cyanplanet.org/how-is-water)) where people are virtually connected with the ocean and marine environment conservation via empathic emotional experiences created through immersive media. Hence, in this article, we set the ground for novel conceptualisations of a future, just, tourism, where "for the future to be open, space must be open too" (Massey, 2005, p. 12). Such an approach draws together the mapping of such spaces (cartography) with an understanding of how the map's features are associated and connected (topography). It means exploring how the notion of relational space, imbued with multiplicity, heterogeneity, and always under construction, can intersect tourism and disrupt its neoliberal, anthropocentric, power geometries and forces, while prompting affective encounters and actions of affirmative ethics (Braidotti, 2011; 2013) and deep justice (Guia, 2021). Facilitating a perspective on tourism that no longer needs to be synonymous with a commodification of space (Gainsforth, 2019).

The structure of our article is as follows. First, it provides a critical overview of the tourism space produced by modern, neoliberal, capitalism, with uneven spatiality, mobility injustice, and neo-colonial practices. Then, it proceeds to present a perspective on Field Theory (Lewin, 1951; 2015) and hodological space (Janni, 1984), through a discussion of conceptualisations of open spatiality (Latour, 2007; Massey, 2005), posthuman Nomadic Theory, and affirmative ethics (Braidotti, 2011; 2013). In doing so our article offers a novel theoretical framework, one that is grounded in an open, posthuman, relational ontology, that can facilitate a spatially just tourism.

## **MODERN AND NEOLIBERAL SPATIALITY**

This section draws on the idea that the search for wealth and individual self-interest (see Adam Smith, 1999: 'Wealth of Nations' originally published in 1776) has been construed as a rational rather than affective enterprise, one that, together with its constant seeking for profit and capital accumulation (Power et al. 2017; Granovetter, 2018), as stressed by Weber (1930) in 'Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism', constitutes the foundations of the modern cultural political economy (Sum & Jessop, 2015). Hence, the current debate on the fragilities of advanced global capitalism is grounded in the idea that advanced capitalism has been underpinned by misleading values dating back to the Modern age and classical political economy (Bruni, 2020). Such misleading values have resulted in theorisations of the wealth of nations, economic growth, capital

accumulation, and distribution, that largely disregards social collective wellbeing (Bruni & Porta, 2005; Bruni, 2020). By conceiving space “as knowledge and action, in the existing mode of production” (Lefebvre, 1984, p. 11), the modern profit-oriented economic vision led to a construal of space that largely comprehended it in terms of a flat surface for transit and trading, with centres and peripheries. Eriksen (2010, p. xi) in his foreword of the 2010 edition of Wolf’s *Europe and the people without history* stresses how “the centrifugal forces of modernity are continuously counteracted by the centripetal forces of community, and the human need to make sense of the world together in collectives ensures a certain degree of cohesion” (p. xi). Moreover, he highlights, “the networked capitalist world [has become] ...a framework, or scaffolding, for almost any serious inquiry into contemporary cultural and social dynamics” (p. xiii).

In this study we elaborate on how modern capitalism, in its current neoliberal manifestation, has produced a tourism space that is imbued with social inequalities, uneven spatial and mobility justice, and unbalanced power-geometries (Bianchi, 2009; Boluk et al., 2019; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019; Jamal, 2019). Such spatial injustice has been largely understood as “directly attributable to the global expansion of European mercantilism and then capitalism” (Britton, 1982, p.333) as “the most important cause of structural distortions” (Ibid. p.348). Hence, the debate on tourism justice in the neoliberal capitalism appears deeply intertwined with the evolution of colonial space-economy (Britton, 1980; 1982; 1991) as well as with neocolonialism (Everingham & Motta, 2020; Mbaria & Ogada, 2016; Mkono, 2019; Wijesinghe et al., 2017). We have become used to imagining space as a surface, continuous, and given, and as a land stretching out around us (Massey, 2005). A surface in which people, capital, and products transit, and tourism mobility appears as an assertion of privilege and power imbalance (Tomassini & Cavagnaro, 2020). “So, easily this way of imagining space can lead us to conceive of other places, peoples, cultures simply as phenomena on ‘this’ surface” (Massey, 2005, p. 4). Space itself has consequently become a commodified entity (Lefebvre, 1976; 1984; Massey, 1994; 1999), where justice is pushed to the side as a secondary or irrelevant consideration. As Braidotti (2011, p. 25) argues, “[a]dvanced capitalism is a different engine in that it promotes the marketing of pluralistic differences and the commodification of the existence, the culture, the discourses of ‘others’, for the purpose of consumerism. Consequently, the global system of the post-industrial world produces scattered and polycentered, profit-oriented power relations”.

The tourism phenomenon, together with its practices, have been largely understood as organically intertwined with the development of industrial capitalism, the advent of novel technologies, infrastructures, systems of production, and novel topological and cartographic competencies (Borocz, 1992). The tourism industry has grown within a Euclidean space, scientifically measured, and mapped by the Modern Western World. The Enlightenment’s humanistic tradition has

identified and legitimised leisure travelling as an interest towards an 'otherness', one that is made of geographical distances, ethnic, cultural, and species diversities, that has created centres and peripheries as well as a juxtaposition between an ideal moral, cognitive, aesthetic Western model, and those of the other (Braidotti, 2011; 2013). Moreover, D'Eramo (2017) highlights how the seriality, anonymity, and automatised of the touristic procedure and touristic space resonate with those of the seriality, anonymity, and automatised of activities inside a traditional industrial plant. Both serialities are shaped by the 20th century concept of urbanity and the principle of urban zoning, assigning to each urban space a specific mono-functional destination like housing, industrial activities, trade, and leisure activities (D'Eramo, 2017; Moskowitz, 1998). This conveyed not only a fragmentation of the space and its functions, but also a flattening of the multiplicity and richness of the relations taking place in such spaces (Massey, 2005; 2009). Hence, the contemporary space of tourism is closely interlaced with the way space has been constructed. A construction that is understood via the misleading profit-oriented values of the Modern age (Bruni, 2020), unbalanced power-relations, uneven mobility practices of modern and neoliberal capitalism (Wolf, 2010; Massey, 2005), the commodification of 'others' (Braidotti, 2011; 2013), the 20th century concept of functional urban spatiality (D'Eramo, 2017), and the neoliberal paradigm of cities whose aim is to create economic value (Gainsforth, 2019). Spatiality, composed in this way, becomes a domain of market prominence and resource management for profit. The mobility of people becomes one framed by commercial payoff and, at a personal level, leisure becomes something that requires negotiation. Within such a frame of reference, the orientation of an organisation's environmental agenda becomes construed as a route to obtain a competitive advantage. From an individual perspective, touristic mobility becomes a way of suggesting/displaying status and the accruing of social and cultural capital. The relational affectivity and social justice of such mobility becomes obscured, often implicit and overlooked, and frequently side-lined, or deliberately ignored. To both radically unpack such spatiality and propose an alternative framework an alternative construal of space is required; it is that to which we will now turn.

## **FIELD THEORY AND HODOLOGICAL SPACE: SPACE AS A FIELD OF FORCES AND RELATIONSHIPS**

As an initial step towards rethinking the space of tourism and the affective associations of tourist mobilities and the environment needed for a more just, ethical, and sustainable tourism (Jamal & Higham, 2021; Boluk et al., 2019), we begin by drawing out ideas associated with those of lived-space, or hodological space, developed by Kurt Lewin (2015).

Hodological space is a behavioural/interactional space; one that is lived. As such it is neither homogeneous, isotropic, nor multi-dimensional. It is a field of forces with privileged spots,

directions, and itineraries (Janni, 1984). Within neo-liberalism/late capitalism this becomes expressed as an uneven flat functional spatiality, made of unbalanced forces and geometries of power. Whilst it can be argued that such a spatiality resonates with Lewin's ontology in his formulation of field theory, with its implicit acceptance of an ontological binary of subject and environment; it is not his ontology that interests us. Articulated in this way, lived-space within neo-liberalism/late capitalism manifests as uneven mono-dimensional space that, once operationalised, can sustain unjust tourism and mobility praxis. Whilst our article goes back to Lewin's work (1951; 2015) and draws on concepts within Field Theory, and hodological space, we can develop a novel theoretical framework for an open mobile spatial justice in tourism by interweaving those ideas with a Posthuman ontology and an affirmative ethics.

Concerns within tourism studies, such as those discussed in much of the debate around over tourism or the negative environmental and cultural impact of visitor mobilities, tend towards a distinction between the action/behaviour of the tourist and the environment (Higgins-Desbiolles 2019a) stressing the urgency to socialise tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles et al. 2022) as well as to reconnect the space of tourism and citizenship (Tomassini et al. 2021). Such arguments are commonly framed around the tourist's impact on the setting, either directly through their bodily presence in the visited space, or indirectly through such factors as transculturation (Ortiz, 2019), cultural commodification (Macleod, 2006), cultural appropriation (Said, 1979), or a consequence of various technologies of mobility (Kaplan, 2002; Vannini et al., 2021). We can interpret Lewin's conceptualisation of field and hodological space - the latter elaborated further by Janni (1984) - to move the focus from the individual's actions to the relationship between the exhibited behaviour and the context in which that behaviour occurs.

For Lewin, behaviours are impinged by the totality of *coexisting* and *interdependent* forces within a space, understood as lived-space. The core idea of a spatiality conceptualised as the lived-space of a route, or journey, that is manifest through the field of relations - and forces - between the subject in movement and the space it lives in and travel to, is what we take from Lewin (2015) and hodological space (Janni, 1984). Whilst we do not embrace his ontology, we draw on his idea of understanding space as a field of forces shaping behaviours, here referred to as a mobility praxis. *Hodos* (ὁδός) translates as the road, route, or the way (as in direction and form of travel) taken. Lived-space (hodological space) is not a straightforward, Euclidean, path, but the space of the itinerary, as lived, understood, and experienced by a subject in movement (Janni, 1984). A Euclidean trajectory would resonate with the uneven flattened plain of the neo-liberalist framework we discussed earlier. One where the individual traverses a space whilst the two remain two disentangled entities. Consequently, the regime of power resides in the former and the latter becomes little more than that on which it acts. While the geometries of power may be challenged



and confronted, they remain in place and, for the most part, intact. Such a neoliberal uneven flat spatiality, imbued with unjust power-geometries and forces, results in uneven mobility actions and (lack of) affective relations that are expressions of a mono-dimensional hodological spaces made of given, preferred, itineraries and movements on a flat surface. Hence, a space understood via an ontology rooted in the dualism subject/object seems not to allow for a deep justice (Guia, 2021; Guia & Jamal, 2020) nor spatial justice.

Lewin's first thorough exposition of hodological (lived) space appears in *The Principles of Topological Psychology* (Lewin, 2015). Lewin locates behaviour as the function of a relationship between the person and their environment and represents that relationship through a simple equation:

$$B = f(P, E)$$

Where B stands for behaviour,  $f$  – is a function of the person (P), and their environment (E). The focus is on the relationship, not the P or the E, or the impact one has on the other. For Lewin the person could never be fully grasped without a consideration of their relationship to the environment, and vice versa. What we are proposing differs from Lewin but is strongly connected back to this formulation.

First, our attention is on the mobility praxis of tourism, here understood as the affective relations, taking place in tourism space. Such affective relations reach beyond the behaviour of individuals or groups to one that is revealed through human and non-human associations as they are made apparent through the geometries of power. Relationally, this might include tangible and intangible aspects of culture/heritage, imaginaries of space, place, and time, as well as behaviour of visitors, hosts, residents, and diasporic communities. Borrowing from Doreen Massey's three propositions on space (2005), which we will discuss in depth shortly, Lewin leads us to recognise space is always under construction and the product of interrelations and interactions (albeit one, we suggest, of human and non-human participants). Consequently, our formulation replaces the E of Lewin with an s (spatiality), using the lower case to indicate that this is both neither a thing-in-itself nor a preferred perspective.

Second, as we seek to establish an affective tourism relation that is just, ethical, and environmentally sustainable, it is important to value the active part non-human actors play in such a framework. To use the language of Bruno Latour, the focus is not simply on human actors but on human and non-human *actants* (Latour, 2007). For Latour (2004; 2018) actants emerge from a complex network of associations, where, in place privileged positions, there are perspectives on

the network. Such *perspectives* encompass those of human and non-human actors (hence his preference for the more neutral term *actant*). We thus replace the “P” (Person in Lewin) with an “a”, for actant. Maintaining our stylistic choice, where a lower-case s was adopted for spatiality (s) to indicate the lack of a privileged perspective, we use a lower-case “a” in this position.

Because we are seeking to emphasise the mobility praxis of tourism in terms of affective relations taking place in tourism space, we have chosen to use a capitalised “A” in place of Lewin’s “B” for *behaviour*. We are now able to re-articulate, for our purpose, the basic formula espoused in Topological Psychology (Lewin, 2015) as:

$$\mathbf{A} = \mathbf{f} (\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{s})$$

Expressed in words: The affective relation of tourism (A), is a function (f) of the relationship between the actants (a) and the principles of spatiality (s) adopted, where the focus of attention is on the relationship rather than the factors in that relationship, as things-in-themselves. As a baseline statement this goes some way to rethinking the space of tourism, however, if we are to grasp this in a way that enables us to challenge the power geometries manifest within an identified area it is important to unpack further what an open relational space looks like as well as the needed ontological base and ethical approach required to prompt spatial justice. It is towards that which we now turn.

### FOR AN OPEN RELATIONAL SPACE

We argue that despite the urgency to embrace a more just, ethical, and sustainable tourism (Jamal & Higham, 2021; Boluk et al., 2019) in an enduring state of crisis (Roitman, 2013), the theoretical and political implications of tourism space and its rethinking have not received a thorough reflection. To address that gap we built on Massey’s (1994; 2005; 2009) theorisations of space to re-think the spatiality of tourism and its relationship with justice. By using this approach, justice not only concerns human beings and their lives and wellbeing at home, at work, at leisure, and on holiday (Jamal, 2019) but it also embraces a posthuman stance. Such a posthuman stance deeply questions the anthropocentric and neo-colonially dominant approaches to the ‘otherness’ that inhabits the world, which becomes understood as a naturalised, racialised, sexualised ‘otherness’ (Braidotti, 2011; 2013). Posthumanism, and the Nomadic Theory associated with it (Braidotti, 2011), advocates a justice rooted into an affirmative ethics, one that “rests on an enlarged sense of inter-connection between self and others, including the non-human or ‘earth’ others, by removing the obstacles of self-centred individualism on the one hand, and the barriers of negativity on the other” (Braidotti, 2013, p. 190).

Beside chiming with the networked ontology of Bruno Latour (2007), this approach conveys an affirmative ethics based on collective bonds and proactive commitment, where a global affective community - made of networked locally situated communities - is kept together by the positive ground of shared projects and activities (Braidotti, 2011; 2013). In Braidotti's words (2013, p. 49): "I define the critical posthuman subject within an eco-philosophy of multiple belongings, as a relational subject constituted in and by multiplicity, that is to say a subject that works across differences and is also internally differentiated, but still grounded and accountable". Hence the posthuman affirmative ethics - and its implications for spatial justice - is grounded in a rhizomatic subjectivity, as discussed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) in terms of a non-hierarchical subjectivity, that lacks centre and peripheries, that misses a beginning, a middle, and an end, as well as a privileged position or point of view. According to this approach, spatial justice in tourism can emerge, as the result, from the intersection of a posthuman affirmative ethics with a rhizomatic relational subjectivity in an open space made of mobile ontologies.

In our reasoning we draw heavily of the spatial theory of Doreen Massey, as expressed - particularly - in *For Space* (Massey, 2005) and the collection of essays in *Space, Place, and Gender* (Massey, 1994). Massey's critical geography conceives spatiality through three intertwined modalities, all of which need to be in place for the emergence of spatiality. Like a carefully structured architectural form, the removal of one of these modalities will result in an absence of spatiality. Those intertwined propositions are, first: "we recognise space as the product of interrelations, as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny" (2005, p. 9). Second: "we understand space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality" (ibid), and finally: "we recognise space as always under construction" (ibid). Anderson (2008, p. 228) argues: "the three propositions [...] aim to enable us to ponder the challenges and delights of spatiality and subsequently open up the political to the challenge of space [...] disrupting how political questions are formulated, perhaps intervening in current arguments, and perhaps contributing to alternative imaginations that enable different spaces to be". Thus, the approach we propose is grounded in a conceptualisation of space as a lively, heterogeneous, and political response to global capitalism, social inequalities, and the power geometries it generates (i.e. space is imbued with and a product of relations of power, which have their own geography). Spatiality and mobility are both shaped by and reproduce power differentials in society (Bélanger & Silvey, 2020).

In Massey's spatial theory (2005), the first two modalities of Massey (2005) also raise questions about who/what is involved in such multiple and heterogeneous interrelations; how space is constructed at those points where such interrelations take place, and through what process(es) that construction occurs. It is here we are drawn to bring in the actor network theory of Latour

(2007). It is important to note, at this stage, that Massey argues in *For Space* (2005) place is not a location, it is an event. That event of place draws in what Castoriadis (1997), and Anderson (1983) refer to as the imaginary of place. However, event as process takes on an *evental* aspect, one that sits at the foundation of all three of Massey's modalities. It also resonates with the removal of a privileged position when it comes to Latour's *actant(s)* because - in his terms (Latour, 2007) - *actant(s)* and spatiality are little more than different perspective in a network of associations.

In *Reassembling the Social* (2007) Latour identifies non-human active agents and the social as emergent from diverse perspectives in a network of associations. In seeking to overcome the linguistic assumption of actors as human beings, Latour replaces the term actor with *actant* – de-personalising it in the process. A central aspect of *actants* is the recognition that they are not relationally privileged. *Actants* are assembled through a network of associations. In this sense *actant* differs from Lewin's (1951; 2015) person as Latour (2007) suggests that the actant lacks a privileged position being grounded in a relational, rhizomatic ontology. Following Latour (2007), since *actants* are removed from a privileged position, there can no longer be any claim to a hierarchy in how *actants* interact with the environment. It is this theme that Latour explores in *Politics of Nature* (2004) and *Down to Earth* (2018). In those texts he considers hierarchical ontologies, referred to in *Down to Earth* as a view from Sirius, as central to sustaining a divide between ourselves, errantly construed as a primary actant, and our planet. A divide that has led to the existing climate emergency, and exploitative practices throughout human history. He argues that it is only by flattening the ontology (i.e. adopting a view that is *down to earth*) that real progress and justice can occur.

Hence, such theorisations of space (Massey, 1994; 2005) - together with their interplay with Latour's (2007) notion of *actant* and posthuman Nomadic Theory/Affirmative Ethics (Braidotti, 2011; 2013) - set the ground for a novel theoretical framework that can result in a rethinking of spatial justice in tourism. As Massey (2005, p. 11) stresses: "only if the future is open is there any ground for a politics which can make a difference. [...] For the future to be open, space must be open too" (ibid, p. 11-12).

## **A POSTHUMAN THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF MOBILE ONTOLOGIES FOR SPATIAL JUSTICE IN TOURISM**

In this study a critical reflection on spatial justice in tourism is intertwined with posthuman conceptualisations questioning the humanist paradigm, with its presumed *civilising* ideal of universal commodification (Braidotti, 2006; 2013; 2019). That approach is broken as it has resulted in mass exploitation of people and place. Massey's ruminations on space (2005), the Posthumanism mobile ontology with its relational rhizomatic subjectivity and affirmative ethics

(Braidotti; 2011; 2013; Latour, 2007) constitute a theoretical perspective that can offer us guidance on a novel understanding of tourism, and spatial justice in tourism studies (Guia & Jamal, 2020; Guia, 2021; Cohen, 2019). We have critically reflected on a novel ontic foundation for a sustainable just tourism space that provides a conceptually rich picture of space, tourism, and mobility from a perspective of field theory, hodological space, posthuman ontology, and affirmative ethics.

In this study we have assumed that tourism has been intrinsically, historically, ontologically, epistemologically embedded in the idea of 'otherness' (e. g. in terms of geographical distance, cultural difference, encounters with other human or non-human subjects and species) and in the existence of power-relationships and power-geometries (e. g. locals-visitors, host-guest, etc.). Moreover, tourism - in neoliberal capitalism and global mobility practices - is highly representative of a space conceived as a flat 'transit' surface; namely a commodified space largely understood as *tourism destination* and imbued with *mono-dimensional uneven and privileged itineraries* (Lewin, 2015; Janni, 1984). The tourists' relation and interplay with a naturalised, racialised, and sexualised otherness in the commodified neoliberal space, where tourism takes place, exposes privileged uneven itineraries, relations, and mobilities practices that have led to unbalanced power relations and uneven power geometries, resulting in ever widening problems of spatial justice.

Our novel theoretical framework for spatial justice in tourism assumes an open spatiality made of multiple connections, relations, and networks. Such open spatiality is multiple, always under construction, and never given (Massey, 2005). A space where human and non-human *actants* constitute such spatiality through a networked non-hierarchical ontology (Latour, 2007). This means that tourism, if it is to be sustainable, just, and future-proof, should not happen in a flat, commodified, space, continuous and given. Neither is it appropriate for tourists to transit through a surface made of advantaged itineraries and mobility practices. Spatial justice via tourism cannot occur through such assertions of privilege, power imbalance, and mobility injustice. Using Guia's words (2021, p. 517): "taking Posthumanism seriously means actively resisting the co-optation of tourism by the market, that is, learning to contest neoliberalism [...] it paves the way for reintroducing political responsibility, solidarity, and advocacy as positive world-making practices with which to subvert the current commodification and de-politicisation of all forms of tourism".

Hence, we assume that spatial justice in tourism can occur by conceiving tourists as *co-actants*, entangled in a relational spatiality made of multiple relations with multiple others (Latour, 2007; Massey, 2005). As such, tourists can create spatial justice by conceiving the space in which they move as open, posthuman, mobile, and relational. In doing so, we take a critical stance on neoliberal tourist mobilities, actions, and practices, that currently express an uneven hodological

space that is neither isotropic nor multidimensional; it is a field of forces with privileged spots, directions, and itineraries (Janni, 1984). In place of that, our article draws on the work of Lewin (1951; 2015), by extending his conceptualisation of Field Theory and hodological space to tourism studies, interweaving that perspective with a Posthuman axiology and ontology, to offer a novel theoretical framework for an open, multidimensional, mobile spatial justice in tourism.

We have revisited Lewin's equation  $B = f(P, E)$  (Lewin, 2015), rearticulating it as  $A = f(a, s)$ . Moreover, we understood those terms relationally, through an open mobile spatiality, made of posthuman *actants*. This has meant exploring the interplay of ideas in the work of Latour (2007), Massey (1994; 2005; 2009), and Braidotti (2011; 2013). What emerges is a theoretical framework where spatial justice in tourism *can* occur. It conceives tourists not as moving through linear mono-dimensional itineraries and mobility practices that are rooted in privileged power-geometries and relations. Instead, tourists are conceived as *actants* within a relational network of associations, actively co-constituting a spatiality that is not a field of forces with privileged perspectives, directions, and itineraries; instead, it is an open relational space 'exploded' into a multiplicity of dimensions, networks, and relations. In such an open, posthuman, spatiality, human and non-human *actants* (e.g. those articulated as *tourists*) lack a privileged position in relational networks, whilst acknowledging they are active components of ethically driven affirmative relations and actions.

Hence, we assume that justice in such an open, mobile, relational, spatiality can happen through a posthuman affirmative ethics. Posthumanism with the aligned Nomadic Theory (Braidotti, 2011; 2013) offers a promising ethical approach to rethink spatial justice in tourism. Such a promising sustainable, ethical, affective approach consists in the positive affirmation of a monadic interconnected subjectivity and relies on a broader feeling of interconnection and belonging among humans and non-human others, beyond a self-centred individualism (Braidotti, 2013). Hence, "to be posthuman [...] implies a new way of combining ethical values with the well-being of an enlarged sense of community, which includes one's territorial or environmental interconnections" (ibid, p. 190). This means: "Posthuman theory also bases the ethical relation on positive grounds of joint projects and activities, not on the negative or reactive grounds of shared vulnerability" (ibid, p.190). Moreover, "the stated criteria for this new ethics include non-profit; emphasis on the collective; acceptance of relationality and of viral contaminations; concerted efforts at experimenting with and actualizing potential or virtual options; and a new link between theory and practice, including a central role for creativity" (ibid, p. 191). Therefore, "the pursuit of collective projects aimed at the affirmation of hope, rooted in the ordinary micro-practices of everyday life, is a strategy to set up, sustain and map out sustainable transformations" (ibid, p. 192).

Casting a posthuman affirmative ethics into an open mobile relational spatiality means opening tourists up to various transformative relationships rooted into the affirmation of hope and belonging to a global community, with its localised situations, by being engaged with the positive affirmation of a sustainable, just, tourism.

## CONCLUSION

This article offers a theoretical reconsideration of the tourism space, rethinking its connection to spatial justice. We argue that as spatially just touristic relations have, to date, been argued from within a framework that ultimately undermines spatially just tourism the *space of tourism* has only received limited attention. Consequently, its theoretical, practical, and political implications require a radical rethinking.

Our theoretical article aims at casting a novel light onto spatial justice in tourism; it does this by offering a novel theoretical ground for its reconceptualisation. In doing so we have interweaved a critical reflection on modern and neoliberal spatiality through Massey's (1994; 2005) theorisations on space, Latour's monadology of actants in his actor-network theory, and the Posthuman Nomadic Theory and affirmative ethics of Braidotti (2011; 2013). For this we have also drawn on Lewin's developments within (1951; 2015) Field Theory and hodological space in the social sciences (Janni, 1984).

Our novel approach has led us to unpack the base relationships of tourism's uneven mobility and spatiality as well as its ontic foundation. We did that by reshaping Lewin's (2015) original conceptual equation on the articulation of the relationship between behaviour and the environment. Our iteration presents the mobility praxis of tourism as affective relations that take place in tourism space as a function of a posthuman actant and an open relational spatiality. For us, this does not mean offering a sterile critique of tourism space with its unbalanced power relations, uneven mobilities, and unjust spatiality but, on the contrary, it means offering a critique conceived as creation and active engagement with possible sustainable alternatives (Braidotti, 2011).

The proposed theoretical lens, together with our reframing of Lewin's formula, is not a conclusion, meant as a universal principle that postulates general rules or seeks universalisation. Instead, its aim is to reposition and reorientate critical thinking in tourism studies from a perspective that breaks those associations which, in previous perspectives, have inadvertently rested on exploitative and exclusionary frameworks. We have done this by challenging practices of spatial injustice and uneven mobility that are rooted in unbalanced power relationship as well as in privileged itineraries and relations.

Our contribution aims at supporting the building of further knowledge, opening novel lines of investigation in tourism studies. It does so by exploring novel disruptive (evental), and ground-breaking approaches to spatial justice in tourism. We understand this study as a contribution to rethinking tourism, one that goes beyond unfair and misleading dualisms and juxtapositions grounded in an alterity that alienates the *other*. It represents a call to action to investigate how power-geometries work in touristic spatial relations and ask which affective relations can prompt spatial justice. This means that future research should take the proposed conceptualisation of  $A = f(a, s)$  and investigate it further, testing it in different contexts, situations, and places as - for instance - in the aforementioned projects and initiatives like 'Migrantour', 'Roots Guide', 'Marry an Amsterdammer for a day', and 'How is water'. This would convey a novel understanding of spatial justice in tourism by exploring the mobility praxis and affective relations as actions of posthuman affirmative ethics taking place within tourism space.

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