

Hospitalidade: Saberes e Fazeres culturais em diferentes espaços sociais

Darci Kops

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Undoubtedly, the discussion on hospitality was misunderstood for decades. For policymakers and capital owners, tourists are good, and protesters of the material asymmetries produced by tourism are bad. Rather, for sociologists and fieldworkers, tourists are mobile naïve consumers who are disinterested by anyone who is functional to the maximization of their pleasure or reluctant to be gazed. The point is both sides are right. Hospitality oscillates from the necessary openness for tourism industry works to the spirit of tolerance that leads nations towards durable international understandings.

In the present book, Brazilian scholar Darci Kops examines adamantly the anthropological roots of hospitality going beyond what is already written in the industry of tourism and hospitality. In this respect, Kops appeals to hospitality as the symbolic platform where actors interact each other whose main function is oriented to produce “reciprocity”, as well as a new way of understanding among peoples. Starting from the legacy of Kant who envisaged a unique World united by reason and peace, Kops acknowledges that hospitality, which originally was one of the troubling aspects of philosophy from its onset, currently offers a valid option towards the struggle against “sectarism”.

At a closer look, this globalized world rests on paradoxical paradigms because while universal values are promoted by trade, hospitality and tourism, serious doubts are casted respecting to counter-actions against mobility, which oscillates from terrorism to other radical expressions as neo-Nazism, racism and, in recent decades, the rise of ethnic cleansing in the underdeveloped world. This raises some interesting questions, what is the World Kant dreamed? Is this world more hospitable than our ancestors left?

This fascinating book is formed by 15 chapters which are finely integrated in three main sections. The first introductory part discusses to what extent hospitality serves as instrument for citizens to gain a further sensibility respecting to social injustice and ecology. As the problem was above formulated, social discontent in local communities may be very well ushered by cells or groups that threaten the adoption of more sustainable ways of consumption. Sensibility is a key factor for hosts and guest achieve a climate of further understanding in next years. As this backdrop, Kops focuses on the role played by the psychological agreement in the daily life of workers. Hospitality as a main cultural value

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should be socialized to all citizens engendering the source for the creation of a culture of hospitality. Whenever the conflict surfaces, dialogue would be a fertile path towards a rapid solution. Understanding the place of “The Other” in this world, I can strengthen an organizational contract which poses as an alternative to curb conflict and violence worldwide. In second section, Kops examines the current limitations of education and the lack of a clear epistemology to interact with others peacefully. Instead of educating our children to compete (struggle) with others, the introduction of the paradigm of hospitality allows us to coordinate with others to achieve collective goals. To better current education constructivism should be placed under the lens of scrutiny. His main thesis is that without interactions and a frank dialogue between students and teachers the process of communication reaches higher levels of dispute and rivalry, affecting the knowledge-production facet. This happens because in Kops’ viewpoint, hospitality, which means more than a simple profitable hotel, should be rechannelled as a cultural matrix which helps changing pathological styles of lives. It not only opens the doors to welcome strangers, tourists or migrants but also engenders sustainable social behaviour that improve the current inter-cultural meetings. Respecting the plurality of spaces and practices, hospitality should be understood as a significant aspect of democracy and education.

Last but not the least, in the third section, Kops explores the meaning of movement, which encompasses the leisure travels and other experiences. Travels are seen as rites of passage that are ingrained in a much deeper process. While traveling, the self not only changes its previous prejudices or stereotypes but also is contrasted by “the radicalized other”, who will question its already existent beliefs. For Kops, here, in this point, is where the process of education obtains its most successful stage. This is the reason why travels should be incorporated to curricula to form more open generations. The education of hospitality, as Kops adheres, is a vital process to learn from others for improving the understanding of the world. We have arrived to a facet of capitalism where living became a difficult concept to grasp. A better dialogue and socialization among ethnicities and human groups seem to be one of the tenets of hospitality. In so doing, a new epistemology of hospitality should be adopted in organizational psychology, education, social science and humanist arts. Going critically beyond the existent paradigms in education, he proposes hospitality as a new instrument to produce more open cultures, which encourages a universal spirit towards what Kant dubbed “global peace”. Hospitality is based on two pillars. On one hand, sensibility places the State in a position to understand the other’s suffering while secondly, the conception of the law, whereby hospitality can be offered, such a protection should be oriented to more vulnerable citizens. Given these conditions, hospitality should pave the ways for the creation of a tourism more interested by the others instead of commoditizing them as simple products. This discussion as it was stipulated by Kops continues as a hot debate left by Senior sociologists such as MacCannell, Urry, Boorstin, Krippendorf and Graburn. To what extent the other is genuinely accepted or commotised by modern gazers is one of the puzzling aspects this book attempts to unravel. For Kops, the current practices of hospitality are closed towards a one-sided discourse that encourages commercial profits instead of dangling other possibilities in the horizon. This project is intended to scholars, students and policymakers in developing hospitality not only as a relational form of behaviour in organizations but also in all the societies.

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About the reviewer

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Maximiliano Emanuel Korstanje has a BA degree in Tourism; is an Anthropologist at the University of Moron, Argentina; and is pursuing a PhD (candidate) degree in Social Psychology from John F. Kennedy University, Argentina. One of his areas of expertise is the study of the role played by mass media and journalism in the transmission of media events and public spectacles. Korstanje was born in 1976 in the borough of Palermo in Buenos Aires. In 2002, he completed his BA in Tourism from the University of Moron in Argentina. A couple of years later, he was incorporated as an Expert in Tourism Ministry. In 2007, he gained an entrance to AIEST (International Association of Expert and Scientific in Tourism, Saint Gallen Switzerland). In 2008, he successfully finalized a master's degree in Anthropology in Flacso, Buenos Aires Argentina. Nowadays, Korstanje is writing his PhD Thesis in Social Psychology for John F. Kennedy University in Argentina regarding the risk perception theory applied on tourism and travels. Maximiliano Emanuel Korstanje can be contacted at: maxikorstanje@hotmail.com