Consuming Hospitality

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Introduction

Consumption refers to a broad set of practices, processes and outcomes (Bell and Valentine, 1997; Holt, 1995; Miller, 1995; Patterson, 2006). Consumption involves the reception, interpretation and use (i.e. transformation and incorporation) of objects, actions, spaces, sights, sounds, smells and events. Consumption may therefore have physical, embodied and material dimensions, but it may also have symbolic, psychological and emotional ones in terms of what is being consumed, when, how and the resulting consequences (Miller, 1995; Shove, Trentmann and Wilk, 2009). Consumption may be considered as experience, involving different sensations and emotional states (Holt, 1995; Patterson, 2006). Consumption also involves acquiring, assigning and manipulating meanings attached to objects and experiences (Miller, 1995; Patterson, 2006). Interpreting and assigning meaning to the acts, objects and spaces of consumption is also used to classify the people, places and organisations involved (Bell and Valentine, 1997; Bourdieu, 1984).

Within the context of the following discussion, consumption is not considered a passive nor a unidirectional process of reception or interpretation by the 'consumer'. Consumption requires people to engage, invest and to perform the practices of consuming (Warde, 2005). It is also important to acknowledge at the outset that hospitality is co-created through a series of spatial, material, performative and representational practices involving the simultaneous input of producers and consumers (cf. Lugosi, 2014a; Ritzer, 2015). Consumer input may be restricted to perception, but it often involves actions and practices beyond psychological processes; it requires consumers to mobilise various competencies and resources (Lugosi, 2008). This chapter, however, focuses on the consumption or reception of hospitality rather the broader process of production or co-creation.

Within this chapter I distinguish between different forms of hospitality according to the underlying logics that shape how and why it emerges, and I consider the diverse implications for those involved in its consumption. For example, some forms of hospitality consumption are chosen because they bring benefits for their consumers. I argue that hospitality may be consumed as play, which has hedonic benefits. It may be consumed to ensure safety and wellbeing. The consumption of hospitality may also underpin social organisation and group cohesion. However, I also consider how hospitality can be imposed and used coercively as forms of control, or within the process of domination. I explore how hospitality can be used in the process of identification as individuals engage in consumption

practices to articulate their sense of selves, as well as their belonging to or difference from others. I also consider how hospitality consumption may be used to ascribe or impose identities and position others in attempts to control and dominate.

The function of choice is an important consideration in the following discussion of hospitality consumption. Choices require knowledge and capabilities to appreciate different options regarding what to consume, when and how, and having the resources and opportunities to decide between options. Hospitality-related consumption choices involve freedom *from* constraints or threats and freedom *to* act and experience, suggesting permission and entitlement. Arguably no choice regarding the consumption of leisure is totally without constraint (Rojek, 2010). However, as the discussion below illustrates, choices concerning consumption involve differing degrees of freedom from and to depending on the contexts and underpinning logics of hospitality as well as the capacities of consumers.

Hospitality as play

Conceiving hospitality as play suggests that consumption is a liminal or liminoid activity (Turner, 1974, 1982, 1992). The term 'liminoid' refers to moments of time out of ordinary time in contemporary consumer culture during which people abandon or at least challenge certain norms and obligations, albeit for short periods (See also Sherringham and Daruwalla, 2007; Turner, 1992; Lugosi, 2007). Visiting restaurants, bars and nightclubs, for example, reflect leisure (non-work) consumption.

The opportunity for liminoid consumption is often a central feature of commercial hospitality, tourism and leisure. Hotels become are frequently treated as spaces of disinhibition, where consumer can indulge desires, for example illicit interactions (Berdychevsky, Poria and Uriely, 2013; Harper, 2008; Ho, 2008; Pritchard and Morgan, 2006). Bars and nightclubs are spaces for social interaction and hedonistic consumption of alcohol and other (legal and illegal) substances (Andrews, 2005, 2009; Lugosi, 2009; Malbon, 1999). Cafes and bars can act as sites for sociality and intellectual encounters, and occasionally as spaces for deviant behaviour and the exchange of revolutionary ideas (cf. Barrows and Room, 1991; Katovich and Reese, 1987; Kneale, 1999; Laurier, 2008; Warner, Talbot and Bennison, 2013). Restaurants and other foodservice outlets can offer gastronomic experiences, encounters with new and 'strange' cultures, and to some, the reinforcement of family values and a release from the burdens of domestic work (cf. Germann Molz, 2007; Long, 2004; Lugosi, Robinson, Golubovskaya, Foley and Harwell, 2016; Shaw and Dawson, 2001).

Conceiving hospitality consumption in commercial contexts as freedom from normative pressures and freedom to engage in hedonistic behaviours has a number of implications. For commercial hospitality, leisure and tourism operators, it is a central feature of their business propositions for their clientele. The ability to construct appealing offerings and delivering positive experiences therefore represents financial opportunities (Gilmore and Pine, 2002; Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Morgan, Lugosi and Ritchie, 2010). However, these can also represent operational challenges and risks for organisations. Liberated consumers engaging in hedonistic consumption may lead to the harassment of staff and having to deal with people not conforming to social norms (Guerrier and Adib, 2000; Poulston, 2008; Lugosi, 2014a). Deviant behaviour among some customers can jeopardise the experience of other consumers and tarnish the image of organisations

leading to loss of business. Disinhibited consumption may thus need to be controlled and allowed with specific restrictions set upon it. For example, venues can impose limits on the amount that can be consumed, who they allow into a venue, what are tolerable levels of deviant behaviour, and the sanctions for people exceeding them (Lugosi, 2014a).

Hospitality as safety and shelter

A well-established theme in discussions of historical and contemporary hospitality is safety (Burgess, 1982; Derrida, 2001; Fourshey, 2012; Lashley, 2008). Notions of shelter, safety and security within hospitality can be viewed as freedom from the threat of physical, psychological or emotional harm (see e.g. Lee, 2013). Receiving and consuming hospitality among migrants, refugees and children without families is seen as crucial to ensuring their short-term survival, as well as their long-term wellbeing, (re)integration and socialisation into society (Doty, 2006; Kravva, 2014; Sirriyeh, 2013; Sredanovic and Lelleri, 2015). Places of shelter and food provision are also important for helping homeless people, albeit often temporarily (Arnold, 2004; Bolland and McCallum, 2002; Hogeveen and Freistadt, 2013).

Natural and man-made crises often prompt hospitable responses. For example, terrorist attacks, severe weather conditions such as snow falls and rains have caused injuries, trapped people in cities and destroyed their homes, and the acceptance of hospitality provided by residents and businesses enabled people to overcome the impacts of the resulting social, psychological and economics shocks (cf. Anjaria, 2006; Knable, 2002; Lugosi, 2014b). Hotels have become safe spaces during a number of armed conflicts around the world (Fregonese and Ramadan, 2015). Social and economic crises have also forced people to seek support in obtaining food from sources such as food banks and religious institutions (Kravva, 2014; Lambie-Mumford, 2013; Loopstra and Tarasuk, 2012). However, as a number of critics have noted, hospitality is often a short-term response to the symptoms of broader social problems, e.g. political instability, economic inequality and segregation, without necessarily addressing their root causes (Kravva, 2014; Lambie-Mumford, 2013; Loopstra and Tarasuk, 2012).

The consumption of hospitality, and engaging in hospitality related transactions, can, however, help to articulate stronger and more sustained notions community, which serves to resist threats. For lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual/transgender (LGBT) consumers, for example, food, drink and retail settings have often been ‘safe’ spaces, allowing them to express their sexuality whilst negating risks of violence and persecution (Brown, 2000; David, 1997; Lugosi, 2009). Consuming within such hospitable spaces has also enabled LGBT consumers to maintain a sense of economic and social visibility in society rather than being contained in hidden, marginal social spaces (Binnie and Skeggs, 2004; Moran, Skeggs, Tyrer and Corteen, 2001; Skeggs, 1999). Economic visibility in the marketplace may help to empower LGBT consumers because they are seen as a lucrative segments by commercial service providers whose interest it is to cater for their needs. Social visibility through hospitality consumption also serves to ‘normalise’ and legitimise the presence of LGBTs in hetero-centric societies. However, it is important to be mindful that visibility is dependent upon people’s ability to pay and thus be legitimate consumers, so social acceptance is not open to all and is not an uninhibited consumer choice (Lugosi, 2009). Increased visibility within consumer spaces may also have the contrasting effect of prompting further surveillance and violence (Moran and Skeggs, 2004).

Hospitality as wellbeing

A theme closely related to and emerging out of notions of safety is wellbeing. Wellbeing is itself a contentious concept, which can refer to physiological, emotional and physical dimensions, and academics have argued over its definition and measurement (Dodge, Daly, Huyton and Sanders, 2012). However, on a more general level it refers to a state involving positive affect and satisfaction, in which there is a balance between social, psychological and physical challenges and resources (ibid.). It has been argued that historically hospitality was often provided and consumed as part of charitable behaviour to help ensure the wellbeing of socially disadvantaged (Bennett, 1992; Heal, 1984). Hospitality could therefore be considered directly socially functional as it was given to those who depended on it i.e. the hungry, poor, sick, disabled and displaced. However, Bennett's (1992) work also suggests that hospitality could also be indirectly functional as hospitable events were used by wealthy to raise funds to support the socially marginalised and disadvantaged.

Arguably, the consumption of recreational hospitality continues to fulfil similar functions in contemporary society. The notion of recreation (re-creation) implies, liberated and liberating consumption, which can have social and psychological benefits (Rojek, 1995). It can be an outlet for venting social and psychological tensions, thus supporting individual and collective wellbeing. Hospitality spaces also support wellbeing and health by enabling people to receive care and facilitating social connectedness, reducing social exclusion. Beyond addressing short-term safety needs in response to crises, the consumption (and provision) of hospitality can contribute to towards longer-term community cohesion and resilience. For example, Lugosi (2011) noted that community hospitality initiatives such as the Eden Project's 'Big Lunch' events sought to bring neighbours together and (re)build a sense of local community through the collective consumption of food and drink (http://www.thebiglunch.com/about/). Similarly the Macmillan Cancer Support Charity launched the 'Coffee Morning' initiative, where people could raise money for the charity through participating in hospitable social events (http://coffee.macmillan.org.uk/). Within such non-commercial settings, consumption serves a broader sense of collective self-interest and wellbeing.

The mobilisation of hospitality for promoting community and sociability is in response to the increasing fragmentation of society and the recognition that social isolation has negative impacts of physical and mental health (Coyle and Dugan, 2012; Luo, Hawkley, Waite and Cacioppo, 2012; Melton, 2014; Steptoe, Shankar, Demakakos and Wardle, 2013). It has been argued that consuming in hospitality spaces such as day and health centres for the elderly and for people suffering from serious illnesses can help their recovery and improve their health (cf. Cheang, 2002; Glover and Parry, 2009; Rosenbaum, Ward, Walker and Ostrom, 2007; Rosenbaum, Sweeney and Massiah, 2014; Rosenbaum, 2006; Rosenbaum, Sweeney and Windhorst, 2009; Simpson-Young & Russell, 2009). The ability to access hospitality and hospitable spaces can thus be seen as social and psychological resources. Commercial hospitality spaces can also serve community needs and improve wellbeing in other ways. In the United Kingdom, for example, within rural, isolated and socially excluded communities, public houses have taken over the provision of postal, grocery and community health services, where existing commercial and governmental bodies have withdrawn, whilst also maintaining their more general role in facilitating social interactions (Cabras and Mount, 2016; Muir, 2012; Sandiford and Divers, 2011, 2014).

It is worth commenting on the role of hospitality consumption within organisational and work settings, which can support the functioning of organisations and the wellbeing of its stakeholders (Lugosi, 2014b). Work-related meals, such as business lunches, are used to build contacts, make good impressions with potential colleagues and clients, and display power through the food ordered and the knowledge of drinks such as wines (Adams, Adams and Seff, 2000; Dienhart and Pinsel, 1984; Jay, 2006; Roger, 2003). Discussions of inducting new employees make references to the importance of offering drinks and food (e.g. Connelly, 2005), pointing out that opportunities to consume together are key aspects of the welcome. Research also showed how rituals of food preparation and consumption in the workplace help to reinforce group identity and interdependence (Driver, 2008; Lee, 2001; Thomson and Hassenkamp, 2008; Valentine, 2002). Practices of food and drink consumption within organisations can also help to cope with the stresses of work (Stroebaek, 2013).

Studies have shown how work relationships extend into non-work contexts, through such hospitality consumption as drinking after work, eating together at lunch and socialising with colleagues outside the workplace (cf. Altman & Baruch, 2010; Flores-Pereira, Davel and Cavendon, 2008; Mitchell, Boyle, Burgess and McNeil, 2014; Strangleman, 2010), and there is increasingly a blurring of the divide between work and leisure. Importantly, research suggested that people who engage in work-related drinking benefit in the form of higher incomes (cf. Peters, 2009; Peters & Stringham, 2006; Ziebarth & Grabka, 2009).

The preceding discussion suggests that consuming hospitality ensures social cohesion in the workplace and it should therefore be seen as a positive part of organisational life. However, it important to be stress that hospitality within organisations may be used more divisively. Rituals and routines of hospitality consumption, for example during work-related meals or social functions, also help to articulate boundaries, hierarchies and various regulatory regimes (Di Domenico & Phillips, 2009; Rosen, 1985). Hospitality is not equally available to everyone and it always has the potential to exclude some and place the interests of some parties over others. Decisions regarding who is invited, what they are entitled to, how they should conduct themselves and how they should reciprocate reflect the instrumental nature of hospitality to position and control.

Hospitality as imposition

It is important to acknowledge that the reception and consumption of hospitality is not freely chosen by all. However, imposition exists on a continuum, with milder and more severe forms. At the milder end is hospitality having to be consumed because people are caught in ongoing, obligatory transactions with hosts analogous to gift relations (Burgess, 1982; Mauss, 1990). As Derrida (2000) has suggested, hospitality does not exist in pure, altruistic forms – giving both implies the requirement to accept and to reciprocate (see also Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000; Komter and Leer, 2012; Kosnik, 2014). The refusal to accept hospitality when offered may be considered an insult to the giver (Hobbs, 2001; Pitt-Rivers, 2012). Similarly, failure to show gratitude and to reciprocate can lead to tensions and on occasion, open conflicts. The acceptance of hospitality also represents a power relationship where rules have to be observed, for example etiquettes of drinking and eating (Curro, 2014; Visser, 1991). Accepting hospitality suggests being obligated to perform the roles of the guest in transactions of hospitality.

Imposed hospitality can also take different forms; for example, during travel and tourism, consuming food, drink and shelter may done out of necessity rather than personal

choice. Such consumption contexts may have limited choices regarding what is available, and few or no alternative providers to choose from. This may be the case in some resorts and transport hubs (i.e. stations, airports and seaports), and on airplanes, trains, cruise ships and on organised tours, particularly when a third party has the power to decide where, when and how hospitality is consumed (cf. Dann, 1999; Harrison and Lugosi, 2013; Weaver, 2005).

Hospitality is also imposed on people in institutional contexts where, by default, freedoms are constrained, for example in hospitals, care homes, schools and state provisioned housing (Edwards, 2013; Johns, Hartwell and Morgan, 2010; Wingate-Lewinson, Hopps and Reeves, 2010). Within such contexts, the providing institutions have considerable control over where people must take shelter, what food and drink can be consumed, when, where and how (Edwards, 2013; Johns, Edwards and Hartwell, 2013; Wingate-Lewinson, Hopps and Reeves, 2010). Furthermore, hospitality in such institutional contexts is determined by broader factors such as the budget allocated to provide shelter and sustenance and the motivation behind hospitality i.e. rehabilitation, health promotion, care and welfare provision (Bland, 1999; Edwards, 2013; Hartwell and Edwards, 2003; Hendy, Williams and Camise, 2005).

Organisationally or institutionally imposed hospitality takes more severe forms in prisons, secure mental institutions and detention centres, for example housing migrants and refugees (cf. Brisman, 2013; Gibson, 2003; Minca and Ong, 2016; Pugliese, 2002; Smith, 2002; Valentine and Longstaff, 1998; Rozakou, 2012). Such contexts reflect what Goffman (1968) called 'total institutions'. Within total institutions, there is clear role and power distinction between the providers and recipients of hospitality. Behavioural norms, mobility and use of space are strictly imposed upon 'captive guests' (i.e. refugees, detainees, prisoners and patients). In short, the practices of hospitality consumption are defined by the total institution, which is itself a proxy agent of larger state institutions. States enact political ideologies and project power through imposed consumption of hospitality.

Hospitality as identification and positioning

The preceding discussion of hospitality representing freedom, choice and imposition point to broader issues concerning the identities of those who consume it. In order to explore these issues, it is worth taking a moment to consider the notion of identity. Social scientists argue that identities not are determined solely by genetics, nor should identities be seen as stable, fixed properties of individuals (Lugosi, 2013). Identities are fluid, undergoing constant re-construction. Importantly, the notion of self-as-process implies that identities are never finalised projects; instead they are rearticulated through our thoughts, behaviours, embodied actions and speech acts. Notions of self are shaped by our environment, technology and social relations (Hall and Du Gay, 1996). Authors have argued that it is more useful to think about selves through the notion of *identification* (e.g. Bhabha, 1990, 1996; Hall, 1996). Who we think or feel we are is shaped by how we identify with or against an 'other', or others. Any notion of self and identity is thus relational and subject to contestation and change. However, it is also useful to highlight the tensions between identity and identification as being a choice and identity as being ascribed by others.

The consumption of hospitality is one of many domains of social activity through which identity is constructed, adopted and ascribed. Sociologists, anthropologists and geographers often argue that the consumption of hospitality is a conscious choice by people

to articulate a sense of belonging to a group, establish some political tie or to distinguish themselves from others (Cuthill, 2007; Craggs, 2014; Fregonese and Ramadan, 2015; Lashley, Lynch and Morrison, 2007; Lugosi, 2013; Sloan, 2004). It is also possible to argue that the notion of free choice is a fallacy. Our choices regarding where, when and how we consume hospitality, for example, which restaurant we patronise or who we socialise with, are shaped such factors as gender, ethnicity and class habitus (Sloan, 2004; 2013; Williams, 2002). Nevertheless, people with greater access to social, cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1984), and those who have entitlements to mobility, for example because they are legal citizens in a state, have a greater choices over how identities are constructed and articulated through the consumption of hospitality.

Even within such consumption of hospitality, identities remain contested and open to manipulation and re-articulation. The reshaping of identities may emerge as people physically consume hospitality and as their consumption is mediated and represented by others. For example, consuming in a restaurant or hotel may reflect one type of identification with an immediate social group (cf. Bell and Valentine, 1997; De Solier, 2013; Getz, Robinson, Andersson and Vujicic, 2014; Sloan, 2004; 2013). However, as those embodied experiences are mediated through social media, their implications for notions of identity can change. For instance, people viewing and commenting on such consumer experiences via social media may have alternative perspectives on the people involved and the activities, which may reinforce or contest identity claims (Osman, Johns and Lugosi, 2014; Lampel and Bhalla, 2007; Lugosi, Janta and Watson, 2012; Watson, Morgan and Hemmington, 2008). Commercial organisations may also capture and analyse social media representations of hospitality consumption to create new taxonomies of consumers, segment markets and target consumers with marketing promotions (Lugosi, Janta and Watson, 2012; Sigala, Christou and Gretzel, 2012). Identification and the articulation identity through hospitality consumption is therefore subject to commercial exploitation.

The projection and imposition of identity and position through hospitality consumption takes many forms, some more insidious than others. Craggs (2012) for example argued that hotels in colonial Africa were sites for assigning status to various ethnic groups. Creating segregated spaces and events within hotels were mechanisms through which Europeans continued to assert their 'dominant' status. Food and drink related events were used to create shared spaces of consumption that temporarily brought together different ethnic groups. However, such events continued to be used to articulate the inferiority of the 'other' and the superiority of the colonisers, with allowances made for a privileged few African elites deemed to be 'worthy'. Importantly, because hotel spaces were used to designate and segregate, they also became the focus of resistance (Craggs, 2012). Actively engaging in multi-racial dining became a form of politicised consumption through which racist policies and beliefs could be visibly challenged.

The relative freedom to choose how identities are constructed and how identification is performed can be contrasted with those who do not have such entitlements. This may include people who do not have access to or cannot mobilise appropriate forms of capital, but the notion of ascribed identity has different dimensions for those consuming imposed hospitality i.e. prisoners, the homeless, undocumented migrants and refugees (Gibson, 2003; Darling, 2009; Hogeveen and Freistadt, 2013; Kravva, 2014; Minca and Ong, 2016; Pugliese, 2002; Rozakou, 2012). The imposition of hospitality becomes part of institutional or state strategies to strip people of their former identities as they are 'contained' within institutions. Importantly, the construction of identity through imposed hospitality arguably

has longer term effects as migrants and refugees are treated as individuals who need to reciprocate for the 'generous' hospitality they have received (cf. Healey, 2014). The perceived obligation to show gratitude to the 'host' may continue to construct notions of identity after they have left the spaces of migrant 'care' and containment.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered different drivers and rationales for consuming hospitality and the implications this may have for groups and individuals. The discussion has suggested that the underpinning logics of hospitality may fundamentally shape what forms it may take, how it is consumed and by whom. Consuming hospitality may thus be opportunities for some people, for example to connect, grow, heal, escape or demonstrate status. For others hospitality and the need to consume it in specific ways may be a threat, particularly as it is used to classify and to restrict movement or choice. In principle this suggest there is a clear distinction between freedom and constraint. However, it is important to remain mindful of the fact that no hospitality-related choice is completely unrestricted because it always takes place within a social context. So even if consumption is supposedly freely chosen, choices are always shaped by the resources available to people, whether it is in the form of economic capital, knowledge or competence. Some hospitality-related decisions are, however, much more overtly controlled and governed by others. Imposing the consumption of hospitality, and the forms that it can take, offers a way to exercise and project power.

Distinguishing between different forms of hospitality consumption based on its underlying logics opens up a number of lines of enquiry. It points to the need to examine the resources and competencies that shape the (perceived) choices of those who receive and consume hospitality. It also helps to consider why and how hospitality consumption may become a threat to some or an opportunity to others in different contexts. Examining the underlying logics of hospitality consumption may also help to reveal why it is produced or mobilised in very specific ways by individuals, organisations and states. However, within any such study of hospitality consumption it is also important to avoid treating it as passive reception. Those receiving and consuming hospitality are part of the co-creation process, and even within imposed forms of hospitality, they have some agency in shaping how they accept it, how they participate, how they are controlled through it and are defined by it.

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