

Hospitality and Migration within the Canadian Social Fabric: Guest and Host Factors in Manitoba

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Abstract : Canada defines itself as a country of immigration and a multicultural nation, ideologically, politically and programmatically (in terms of its integration practices). As such, principles of hospitality may seem, at first glance, incontestable, given the convergence of the views of the majority of Canadian politicians on the need to welcome, each year, a significant number of immigrants and to offer them the hospitality that facilitates their transition to Canadian citizenship. However, immigrants are welcomed in a Canadian societal context in which power and resources are unevenly distributed, resulting in complex social relationships between hosts and newcomers. Qualitative data obtained from newcomers in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, focuses on experiences of hospitality, with special attention to host-guest social and power dynamics, contested policies on foreign credential and micro spaces of belonging in a multicultural context. The act of welcoming a newcomer is inherently shaped by both macropolitical structures and everyday relational practices that can lead to experiences of belonging, marginalisation, empowerment and/or disempowerment depending on economic agenda, humanitarian and humanistic orientations. We first explore the extent to which immigrants experience hospitality in relation to unequal distribution of power and resources as well as cultural discontinuities. We then examine ways in which immigrants have been able to find sanctuaries of hospitality within their own ethnocultural communities. Finally, we discuss the complexity of hospitality in a multicultural context and offer critical insights on host factors that may produce, develop and nurture hospitable environments.

Keywords : migration, hospitality, diversity, culture, race

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