

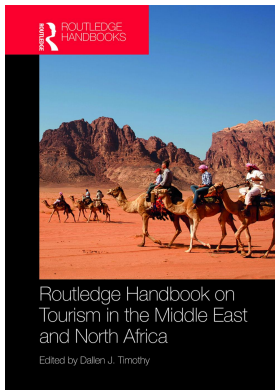
This article was downloaded by: 10.3.97.143

On: 24 Mar 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



Routledge Handbook on Tourism in the Middle East and North Africa

Dallen J. Timothy

Deciphering ‘Arab hospitality’

Publication details

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315624525-6>

Marcus L. Stephenson, Nazia Ali

Published online on: 07 Dec 2018

How to cite :- Marcus L. Stephenson, Nazia Ali. 07 Dec 2018, *Deciphering ‘Arab hospitality’ from:* Routledge Handbook on Tourism in the Middle East and North Africa Routledge

Accessed on: 24 Mar 2023

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315624525-6>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT

Full terms and conditions of use: <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms>

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

6

DECIPHERING 'ARAB HOSPITALITY'

Identifying key characteristics and concerns

Marcus L. Stephenson and Nazia Ali

Introduction

Hospitality is deeply embedded in the cultural, economic, historical, political, social, theological and traditional landscapes of people and populations of Arab civilisations and nations. These embodiments in hospitality are also perceived necessary to sustain the development of tourism in the Arab nations, service the tourist gaze, and fuel the hospitality industry in the Arab world. In fact, the omnipresent role of hospitality across this region is well documented, particularly in such countries as Iraq (Fernea Warnock 1989), Jordan (Al-Oun & Al-Homoud 2008; Shryock 2004), Morocco (Fernea Warnock 1975), Oman (Eickelman 1984) and Yemen (Meneley 1996).

Crucially, hospitality is seen as being synonymous with the Arab world because Arabs are 'famed' for the hospitality they show to their guests (Barnes 2013). Unfortunately, however, these perceptions have been increasingly confounded by socio-political constructions of the 'Arab other', agitated by the global phenomenon of Islamophobia (see Stephenson & Ali 2010). The spaces of hospitality where the (Arab) host comes into contact with the (Arab and non-Arab) guest to deliver the Arab hospitality experience in the private, commercial and social domains are examined within this chapter. Based upon Lashley's (2000: 4) conceptualisation of such hospitality domains as the private realm, the assessment considers the role of the home in the Arab world because it often determines the primary socialisation of hosts into conducting hospitable practices. This is in contrast to the commercial domain, which focuses on the provision of hospitality as a formalised service encounter and economic exchange. Therefore, the social focus is directed to dealing and communicating with strangers who are paying customers.

The work acknowledges critical aspects of (in)hospitality in the Arab world, associated with formal and informal practices and provisions. The formal dimension inspects how Arab hospitality is personified, symbolised and represented in the hospitality industries, and therefore examined in the context of the commercial (or commodified) domain. The informal aspect is examined by interpreting the roots of Arab hospitality in view of Bedouin rituals and cultures to comprehend how *karam* (hospitality) has been traditionally communicated to strangers within (and beyond) the private and social domains. *Karam*, however, is generally interpreted as 'generosity' or 'hospitality', though it can denote 'nobility', 'grace' and 'refinement' (Shryock 2004: 36).

Therefore, the chapter begins by reviewing the roots of Arab hospitality, particularly in the context of pre-Islamic and Islamic societies and cultures. The Bedouin, prominent in the Abrahamic (e.g. Christian, Judaism and Islamic) theological narrative, continue to exert an influence on Arab hospitality. The spaces of hospitality—the private, commercial and social domains—are observed to comprehend host–guest relationships in non-Western settings. Moreover, within the context of both the informal and formal provisions and practices of Arab hospitality, there is a paradox whereby the inhospitable and hostile climate towards Arabs and Muslims actually nullifies pre-modern perceptions of Arab (or Bedouin) hospitality. As the Arab world, including countries in the Middle East and North Africa, accommodates 93 per cent (approximately 341 million) of the world's Muslims (De Silver & Masci 2017), this chapter draws upon the theology of Islam to analyse the commercial, private and social spaces of hospitality.

Arab hospitality: Pre-Islamic and Islamic attributes

The theology of hospitality in an Arab context can be located in the three Abrahamic (monotheistic) faiths—Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Therefore, an 'Abrahamic legacy' can be interpreted as a 'shared and second language', that is, an expression (and extension to others) of human kindness (Shryock 2012: 21). In theological teachings, Abraham's act of kindness and generosity is representational, where he invited three travellers into his tent, not knowing they were angels in the guise of humans, and provided them with food, rest and shelter. This narrative is a marker of the virtue of hospitality in monotheistic religions, indicating the role ethics plays in hospitality, particularly towards strangers. The socio-symbolic importance associated with greeting the guest (the traveller or stranger) in the Arab world and welcoming him/her into one's abode is rooted in pre-Islamic cultures and rituals associated with 'Bedouin Arab hospitality' (Al-Oun & Al-Homoud 2008; Barnes 2013; Sobh, Belk, & Wilson 2013). Consequently, Arab hospitality is symbolically associated with narratives that can be traced back to the pre-Islamic era, mythologised through such legendary characters as Hatim al-Tai, who was a poet from Ha'il in the northwest region of Saudi Arabia and who died in 578 AD. He has been famed in the Arab world for his extreme generosity to others (see Stetkevych 2000). Arab hospitality has been popularised by historians and social analysts as having the ability to progressively influence the future status of the guest. According to Attar (2005: 19):

For the ancient Arabs, hospitality, in its general and wider sense, also means that it was possible for a stranger to become part of the tribe. If one shared a meal with his hosts, or tasted a few drops of the host's blood he would become part of the family and the group.

However, Bravmann (1962) associated generosity of the pre-Islamic period with charity of the Islamic era, as expressed in the Qur'an (1997) (Chapter 57, Verse 7) in terms of spending one's wealth through focusing on charitable deeds, for instance:

Believe in Allah and His Messenger and spend out of that in which He has made you successors. For those who have believed among you and spent, there will be a great reward.

Therefore, generosity continued to manifest itself in many ways in Islam. Informatively, the illustrious Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta (2004: 4) travelled throughout parts of the Islamic world

from Asia to West Africa from 1325 to 1354CE, noting ways in which hospitality was situated and presented. He thus observed that travellers were 'entertained' and 'hospitably welcomed' at resthouses and hospices, often maintained by 'generations of benefactors'. Siddiqui (2017) links the virtue of hospitality with the theology of Islam to highlight the ethical relationship between the host and guest/traveller, which suppresses the potential for hosts to experience inhospitable or hostile encounters with people viewed as strangers. Sobh et al. (2013: 446) note that there is a 'general consensus among Muslim scholars that hospitality and generosity toward guests are an integral part of faith in Islam'.

Charles Montagu Doughty, an English writer travelling through the Arabian Peninsula during the 1870s and living amongst Bedouin communities, often indicated how he was positively received by others in hospitable ways. These experiences encouraged him to view Arab hospitality in a genuine and organic way, despite disagreement from other fellow Europeans. Doughty (1921: 152, 257) states:

In the hospitality of the Arabs is kinship and assurance, in their insecure countries. This is the piety of the Arab life, this is the sanctity of the Arabian religion, where we may not look for other. Returning one day, in Syria, from a journey, I enquired the way of a countryman in the road. It was noon; the young man, who went by eating bread and cheese, paused and cut a piece of his girdle-cake, with a pleasant look, and presented it to the stranger: when I shook the head, he cut a rasher of cheese and put it silently to my mouth; and only then he thought it a time to speak. Also if a stranger enter vine-yard or orchard, he is a guest of that field; and, in the summer months, the goodman, if he be there, will bring some of his fruits to refresh him ... I speak many times of the Arabian hospitality, since this I have been often questioned in Europe and for a memorial of worthy persons.

Nonetheless, there is a point at which it is necessary to acknowledge the persistence of 'regimes of hospitality' often determining the way in which hospitality is constructed, conveyed and negotiated. The commercial hospitality and tourism industries are arguably proactive in such a determination. Shryock's (2004) ethnography of the Balga Bedouin living in the suburbs of Amman, Jordan, illustrates the application of regimes of hospitality in relation to gender dimensions. Opportunities for unmarried females to work in heritage sites socially compromise traditional values, as they are used as 'bait to attract tourists' (2004: 46), thus representing a social risk, especially if they play a direct role in commercial transactions and activities deemed to be culturally inappropriate (e.g. serving coffee to male tourists). Understandably, the spatial difference between the male guest and the Arab woman has also been a significant defining factor of Arab hospitality within private space. This has been influenced at varying degrees by socio-cultural notions of 'honour and shame', particularly within the context of the more traditional societies (Young 2007: 49). Accordingly, Young's (2007: 50) study concerning the Rashaayda Bedouin of eastern Sudan, indicated that it should not be always assumed that men are fundamentally the 'dispensers of generous hospitality' and women are the 'mere bystanders', as this would underestimate the crucial role of women in the 'exchange of food and shelter'. The modernisation of gendered roles and responsibilities challenges the degree to which Arab hospitality can fully retain its conventional elements and customary features.

Indeed, the boundaries of the theology of Islam are being challenged, especially in the context of the impacts of modernity and globalisation. Faith is often 'tested' through problematic ways in receiving others in modern times, especially in the context of economic

migration and urban development. This is apparent by the ways in which guests, particularly Asian immigrant workers, do not always consistently receive hospitality and hospitable relations in Arab countries. As discussed later, this could thus indicate that conformity to Arab principles and legacies of hospitality are not always pervasive. Nonetheless, in terms of regimes of hospitality, one system of Arab hospitality concerns the fact that, in a non-particularistic way, hospitality is culturally and spatially determined. Accordingly, individuals across the Arab diaspora can share with one another through mobility and migration a discourse of hospitality based on pan-Arab notions of hospitality, induced by a common language and religion (though not entirely), as well as similar cultural idiosyncrasies (Stephenson 2014). This may manifest in such activities as pan-Arab cultural and sporting events, or even at a micro-level of interaction in terms of mutual affinities with one another within the context of common places and spaces in everyday life.

Feghali (1997) observes that hospitality thus predates the third Pillar of Islam: *Zakat* (giving alms or charity). Arab societies place heavy weight on hospitality as a core value, which contains undertones of Bedouin traditions that have retained their importance in Islam. Nonetheless, in terms of Islamic doctrine the importance of *karam* (hospitality) persists. Shryock (2009: 34) emphasises that ‘it is a compliment to say of a man who forgets his prayers, but treats his guests well that “hospitality is his religion”’. There are several references in the Qur’an which emphasise the importance of looking after guests well and welcoming them in ‘God’s name’ (Siddiqui 2017). In the Qur’an (1997), *Surah Hud* (Chapter 11) states:

And certainly did Our messenger (i.e. angels) come to Abraham with good tidying; they said ‘Peace’. He said, ‘Peace’, and did not delay in bringing (them) a roasted calf (Verse 69) ... So fear Allah and do not disgrace me concerning my guests. Is there not among you a man of reason (Verse 78).

Surah adh-Dhariyat (Chapter 51, Verse 24–27) indicates the theological narrative of hospitality:

Has there reached you the story of the honoured guests of Abraham (Verse 24). When they entered upon him and said, ‘[We greet you with] peace.’ He answered, ‘[And upon you] peace; [you are] a people unknown’ (Verse 25). Then he went to his family and came with a fat [roasted] calf (Verse 26). And placed it near them; he said, ‘Will you not eat?’ (Verse 27)

The above quotations from the Qur’an underscore the prominence of hospitality, generosity and kindness towards guests. Islamic hospitality is thus entrenched within other forms of Islamic scripture. Vukonić (2010: 40) observes that the Prophet’s Hadith (146) states that: ‘There is no wellbeing in a family which does not welcome and treat guests well.’ Subsequently, being hospitable to others is seen in the Hadith as a pathway to paradise (‘Jannah’) (2010: 40). These principles underpinning Arab hospitality further echo the theology of Islam, which promotes the importance of duty and obligations to others rather than self-indulgence. Hence, as noted in the Qur’an (1997) (Chapter 4, Verse 36):

Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful.

Private spaces of Arab hospitality

The social and symbolic function and structure of the family home in Islamic communities are indicative of Arab hospitality and the Islamic elements of hospitality (Memarian, Toghr-oljerdi, & Ranjbar-Kermani 2011; Othman, Arid, & Buys 2015; Sobh & Belk 2011). Hospitality can be operationalised in terms of family gatherings and events, but modesty is integral to the production of hospitable activities. As Othman et al. (2015: 21) express:

Maintaining physical modesty through dress code becomes an integral part of protecting the females' body privacy while allowing hospitable activities to continue within a home.

Although houses in the Arab world can be very welcoming to guests, they often serve to 'safeguard their own integrity, which is often described as *hurma*, as "sacredness" or "inviolability"' (Shryock 2004: 36). Therefore, the domestic area or the home of the host, represents private space that guests and extended kin, friends and strangers enter to receive basic hospitality provision of food, rest and shelter. The private space is an embodiment of theological and philosophical forces of duty, obligations to others, and ethical relations between hosts and guests. However, Siddiqui's (2017) interpretation of hospitality within the context of private domains in Islam and Christianity suggests that religion precedes philosophy, especially as hosts are aware of the presence of God. Therefore, it can be argued that hospitable relations are triadic (i.e. God–host–guest). As Siddiqui (2017: n.p.) suggests:

We ourselves are all guests of God's hospitality and have an obligation to show hospitality to others. Thus, our hospitality to others is a sign of our love for God as God is always present when guests are present at the table.

From a young age, children in Arab homes are socialised into the importance of hospitality as both a personal quality and a symbol of status (Feghali 1997). There is a symbolic relationship between hospitality and status, which extends to honour, reputation and sovereignty (Young 2007; Shryock 2009, 2012; Sobh et al. 2013). Moreover, in terms of status it is clear that power relations surface in private spaces as hosts strive to preserve their honour, reputation and sovereignty. At the same time, however, guests 'judge' the quality of their Arab hospitality experience. Accordingly, one significant concern for the host is that if she/he fails to provide (or be seen to provide) a hospitable encounter or experience, this could trigger the guest to later speak ill of the host to fellow kin. The host's character, honour and reputation could thus be tarnished and her/his sovereignty weakened (Shryock 2012).

The laws of hospitality are arguably meaningless without the symbolic performance of rituals, which are also central to the construction of Arab identities. Moreover, the hospitality rituals are symbolic of Bedouin pasts and continue to exert their influence over Arabs in the domestic sphere (Sobh et al. 2013). In private space, or what Sobh et al. (2013) refer to as 'home hospitality', the Arab host–guest relationship is secured through the ritualised drinking of Arabic coffee. The preparation, serving and drinking of Arabic coffee (*ghahwa*) in the Arab home helps the host to earn a reputation for generosity, or *karam* (Young 2007), thus shielding the host from being demonised and shamed by a guest. In Jordan, for instance, a cup of coffee is shared with guests to secure the status and sovereignty of the host (Shryock 2004, 2012). The coffee ritual is a sequential act and is essential in assimilating the guest as a stranger (in the home) into the private space of hospitality (Sobh et al. 2013). In addition to sharing coffee, the host and guest

consume food together, which is a customary and ritualised act attached to Arab food culture. Food is symbolic in hospitality because it is perceived as an embodiment of God. In Islam and Christianity, when one is near food she/he is in God's presence (Siddiqui 2017). Sobh et al. explain the gastronomic culture of Qataris:

After serving coffee and dates, the host typically brings a range of local snacks and desserts called *fualah*. The variety and amount of *fualah* will vary based on the status of the guest, the occasion of the visit, and whether the guest is expected or the visit is improvised. *Fualah* is generally followed by a traditional dinner for men (rice and lamb) and increasingly a modern banquet for women. Display is very important and there should be more food than the party could possibly eat.

(2013: 452, authors' emphasis)

The challenges concerning such forms of hospitality relate to the social pressure for guests to conform to the consumption of generous offerings and not offend the host. In a lifestyle study of Qatari women, Donnelly et al. (2011) found that as social courtesy and hospitality were central features in the social interaction of women during social gatherings and home events, women would often feel obliged to eat types of food that were knowingly unhealthy food choices. Food is thus inextricably linked to conceptions of Arab hospitality, which was also a popular perceived attribute prior to the modernisation of the Arab world. Doughty (1921) recalled the worthiness of the hospitality that he received in his Arabian Peninsula travels, especially in terms of being presented with a variety of food and beverage when he visited various camps and villages: a sacrificed yearling lamb (1921: 235), rice and steaming mutton (1921: 236), sacrificed bull (1921: 210), dates and coffee (1921: 60), buttermilk (1921: 309) and tamarind (1921: 358). The presentation of high quality food to guests is also characteristic of Arab hospitality in pre-Islamic times. According to Stetkevych (2000: 98):

for hospitality in the quintessential Bedouin sense implies also offering the guest meat: the camel breeder slaughters a camel and the huntsman brings in the best of his kill. Within this ethos, generosity was thus held as the Bedouin's emblematic virtue.

Eating and drinking rituals associated with Arab hospitality have been subjected to Orientalist (visual and verbal) constructions, popularly portraying Arabs eating in an uncivilised manner. These textual images of Arabs performing hospitality in terms of sitting together and feasting, and eating large quantities of food with their hands are presented to the West as an uncivilised performance. Thus, the 'Othering' of Arab hospitality in the private space takes place through the 'Western' gaze as the Orient is Orientalised because gastronomic cultures are aligned to notions of the 'savage body', which contain undertones of animality (Steet 2000: 86). Steet argues that *National Geographic* photographs and captions in the 1930s and 1940s demonised representations of Arab hospitality in a non-Western, exotic and non-European context. The images captured Arabs as undertaking hospitality and thus contributing to the Orientalisation of Arab hospitality for the Western gaze. For instance, in response to a photographic caption: *Bedouins of the Author's Escort Enjoy a Meal of Rice and Dried Shark (October 1932)*, Steet (2000: 86–87) infers that Arab hospitality was perceived to be undesirable and undomesticated, stating:

The caption to a 1932 picture of Arabs sitting on the ground eating ... read: 'Using no knife or fork, the Arab takes rice in his right hand, squeezes it into a ball, and bolts it. If fowl or mutton is served, the leader of the party tears it to pieces and tosses a

portion to each diner, who deftly catches it in mid-air.' [...] These were not pictures of men sitting in a huddle on the ground; these were pictures of non-Europeans eating, and more specifically, Arabs who ate like animals. This framing changed everything. Viewers looked for and at difference; the photographs, therefore, became interesting and could reveal much more than they did at first glance.

Said's (1978) work on Orientalism is pertinent in realising how hospitality has historically been portrayed by the West, where art and literature have aided the construction of stereotypes of the Orient (the 'East') and in this case the Arab world (see also Kabbani 1986). Culture and daily life has been depicted as static, uncivilised and inferior—irrespective of the fact that Bedouin hospitality has been portrayed and characterised as 'legendary' (Withey 1998: 256). Nonetheless, hospitality is not something which is stationary in time and space. Fattah and Eddy-U (2017) examine ways in which Egyptian Bedouin are represented in English-language tourist brochures and how tour operators wish to preserve the traditional images of Bedouin life, irrespective of the fact that these communities have been socio-culturally and economically transformed through modernisation. This is acknowledged by the way in which 'warm hospitality' and the willingness of hosts to respond to tourist activities are projected and constructed (Fattah & Eddy-U 2017: 201). However, in some Arab states (UAE and Qatar, for instance) there have been significant capital investments in the development of destinations that are highly sophisticated, technologically advanced and innovatively driven (see Scharfenort 2017; Stephenson 2014; Wakefield 2017). Subsequently, it could be argued that there is an attempt in parts of the Arab world (intentional or otherwise) to disassociate from traditional elements of social life and authentic representations of the past through a process of de-orientalisation. Indeed, the way in which hospitality has been artificialised and impersonalised represented key elements of the postmodernisation of hospitality in parts of the Arab world.

Commercial spaces of Arab hospitality

The Bedouin desert has been transformed into an urban landscape where the 'old' has merged with the 'new' to deliver the Arab hospitality experience (Al-Oun & Al Homoud 2008). Commercial spaces of hospitality occupy a tangible and an intangible presence in Arab cities, where there is often no perceivable alternative than to develop the hospitality and tourism industries. The depletion of oil over the next century in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, for instance, indicates the crucial importance of these industries in strengthening economic buoyancy (Stephenson 2017). As Stephenson (2017: 6) reaffirmed: 'As the oil sector is not labour intensive, the need for states to diversify and create more labour-intensive industries is imperative.' Ironically, however, for members of the GCC region, notably UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, there have been challenges in terms of encouraging nationals to work in the tourism and hospitality industries (Sadi and Henderson 2005; Stephenson et al. 2010), which affect the extent to which Arab hospitality products are actually grounded by the geo-cultural idiosyncrasies and attributes of the region. Subsequently, limitations in the availability of cultural ambassadors of hospitality in parts of the Arab world could threaten the long-term survival of Arab forms of formal hospitality within a regional context.

Therefore, the non-Arab host is often a perpetual reality in terms of welcoming and servicing the new non-Arab guest, which proliferates as the hospitalities industries expand to respond to market demands resulting in 'the actual practice of non-Arab hospitality' (Sobh et al. 2013: 456). Moreover, the 'new' extends to the arrival of guests from non-Arab nations as these have been the target markets for businesses in Arab cities, despite the fact that such

'new' people and populations 'do not subscribe to the same culture of hospitality' (Barnes 2013: n.p.). However, non-Arabs serving and servicing hospitality in commercial spaces could also potentially challenge Oriental discourses and representations, as well as romanticised imagery of the exotic 'Arab Other'. This reflects Sardar's (1998: 165) position that there has been a common movement or indeed a digression from the 'quest for cultural authenticity'. For instance, Dubai had to 'forfeit the true principles of Arabian/Bedouin hospitality' with its ambition to become a neo-global (tourism) city, consequently staging hospitality which is detached from the past in terms of location (e.g. desert) and oral narratives (e.g. stories) (Barnes 2013).

Despite the commercial spaces of hospitality, where economically driven exchanges or transactions take place between the host and guest in the Arab world, theological and philosophical principles and practices have not been eradicated altogether. In fact, the religious obligation to take care of guests and the philosophical duty to offer hospitality are embedded within commercialised Arab hospitality products, services and experiences (Friese 2004; Siddiqui 2017; Zamani-Farahani & Henderson 2010). In some Arab countries, Islam retains its governance within hospitality-related commercial activities (e.g. tourism) and cannot necessarily be fully compromised. Saudi Arabia, for instance, already has the 'Islamic resources and infrastructure in place' to help develop Islamic forms of hospitality and tourism beyond the pilgrimage product (Ekiz, Öter, & Stephenson 2017: 133). Also, the Emirate of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates has the potential to become a central hub in the region for Islamic tourism (Ashill, Williams, & Chathoth 2017). These authors acknowledge that the destination has an abundance of services, activities and attractions that can cater for Muslim (and non-Muslim) travellers. Sharjah thus embodies a form of hospitality that is family oriented and associated with Islamic traditions.

Traditional Arab hospitality can still be found in many forms across the Arab nations. Kan Zaman at the Abu Jaber Estate in Amman, Jordan, for instance, is a tourist village home to a large restaurant and coffee shop, souk and array of shops selling glassware, jewellery and ceramics (Teller 2013). For Shryock (2004: 43), the Kan Zaman is a place where Orientalist images of 'traditional hospitality' thrive as karam retains its symbolic and spiritual value in the ritual of preparing and serving coffee. This form of hospitality can also publicly represent heritage. The 'traditional village of al-Saha', located in a southern suburb of Beirut, is an illustration of how hospitality can be a touristic event though based on inherent elements of Islamic and cultural forms of hospitality. Alcohol is not available to visitors and Islamic principles underpin entertainment, along with the demonstration of Islamic and Arabic architecture, art, music and poetry. The profit accrued from this enterprise is donated to the Al-Mabarrat, a philanthropic body administering charities for people in need (Mona 2006).

One of the significant challenges relates to the extent to which it is really possible to differentiate between authentic and inauthentic forms of Arab hospitality, and also between traditional and non-traditional forms of hospitality. To contextualise commercialised notions of Arab hospitality within a more contemporary post-Bedu context would indeed be historically misplaced. The traditional trade routes themselves fuelled commercial hospitality across the Middle East region, where caravanserais, teahouses, guesthouses and wakalahs fostered capitalist development (Rodinson 2007). Arab cities and towns are as global and cosmopolitan as those in the West, witnessing the mass immigration of people and populations from both developed and developing worlds. As a result, Arab nationals have often found themselves to be the minority population, whereas migrants are the majority. In the UAE, for instance, 11.5 per cent of the total population represents Arab nationals, which means that 88.5 per cent are foreign nationals. In Qatar, 10.1 per cent represents Arab nationals, while 89.9 per cent are foreign nationals (Gulf

Labour Markets and Migration 2016). Labour-led migration from developed and developing countries to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states played a major role in changing the demographic landscape of particular Arab nations.

Hospitality experiences of (labour) migrants (as non-Arabs) differ from that of the hosts (Arabs), which could be seen to undermine the theological virtues and philosophical morals embedded in Arab hospitality. The extension of private forms of Arab hospitality to migrant 'guests' (considered as foreigners by their Arab hosts) is not always forthcoming, though commercial Arab hospitality may well extend to the wealthy migrants (e.g. from Western countries). In Qatar, for instance, such hospitality is provided by a non-Arab (e.g. non-Qataris) labour force (Sobh et al. 2013), which is not uncommon in such states as Kuwait and the UAE.

Nonetheless, given that Islam is the dominant religion in the region, Arab hospitality is inextricably tied to Islamic forms of hospitality. This form of hospitality is becoming increasingly visible. Stephenson (2014) argues that Islamic hotels and Shari'a-compliant products and services have significant scope for future development. However, he observes that given the movement towards establishing ultra-modernised places and destinations, Islamic traditions could be endangered. He states:

Nevertheless, grandiose plans that place significant emphasis on extravagance and luxury could be counterproductive to the expansion of self-effacing forms of hospitality pertinent to Islamic hotel sector development. Consequently, the fundamental objective would be to produce moderate developments, which focus more on the essence of Islam and at the same time reflect a sense of community pride and value.

(Stephenson 2014: 159)

Indeed, there are forms of public and commercial hospitality based on various gradations and perceptions of Islamic purity, which would always need to be contextualised in relation to both liberal and conservative interpretations of Islamic forms of hospitality across Arab states.

Hospitality and inhospitality in social spaces

Nonetheless, if migrant workers from low socio-economic backgrounds confront inhospitable and hostile climates in the host destination, where they have little access to spaces of hospitality, then this could indicate that elements of Arab hospitality have profoundly changed. Accordingly, there may well be a dialectical relationship between inhospitality and hostility manifested in particular ways. A critical issue in the discussion of hospitality is hostility, as Derrida (2000: 45) raises in his essay on the *Foreigner Question*: 'the foreigner (*hostis*) welcomed as guest or as enemy. Hospitality, hostility, *hospitality*'. Although the kafala (sponsorship) system, established to meet labour demands in particular nations such as those on the Arabian Peninsula, welcomed low-skilled migrant workers, they too faced socio-economic inequalities (Coates Ulrichsen 2016).

The long-term challenges faced by unpretentious forms of hospitality, whether linked to Islamic teachings or cultural idiosyncrasies, concern the extent to which perceptions of Islamic hospitality are overshadowed by socio-political constructions of hostility, imbued by Islamophobia. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre, the international Muslim (and Arab) community has become susceptible to public distrust and anti-Muslim sentiment. Islamophobia compromises the perception of Islamic communities as being hospitable, civilised and safe (Stephenson 2014: 162). Therefore, this fear can affect hospitable exchanges,

relations and experiences. Said (1997: iv) notes how Islam is incriminated on a number of conjectures, stating:

Yet there is a consensus on 'Islam' as a kind of scapegoat for everything we do not happen to like about the world's new political, social and economic patterns. For the right, Islam represents barbarism; for the left, medieval theocracy; for the centre, a kind of distasteful exoticism.

Contemporary representational concerns over popularised perceptions of Arabs as being hostile to others, or outsiders, challenges traditional and Islamic conceptions of hospitality and hospitableness. Such persistence in the long-term will no doubt counteract the positive attributes of Arab hospitality that have prevailed, though in various forms, since the pre-Islamic era.

Conclusion

The role that Arab hospitality plays in private, commercial and social spaces is inherently complex, especially as Arab nations transcend from the pre-modern to modern and postmodern times: in this transition deconstructions of hospitality are often caught up in the trajectories of Orientalism and de-Orientalism. Despite contextualising Arab hospitality, it should be noted that the social space of hospitality does not exist in isolation but is located within private and commercial spaces and domains.

It is clear that pre-Islamic values and virtues of hospitable relations are still prevalent in the Islamic era. The 'old' Arab hospitality is a tourist attraction and there are attempts to stage the authentic 'old' hospitality in the commercial domain, but by non-Arabs working in the hospitality industry. The stranger (e.g. tourist and/or immigrant) as a guest cannot always successfully reach the 'back stage', or the private space where the laws of hospitality stemming from pre-Islamic and Islamic theologies authenticate Arab hospitality—or gaze upon the fantasised visuals of Orientalist representations of Arab Bedouin hospitality.

Future theoretical and conceptual interpretations of Arab hospitality should persist in examining the role of the guest in view of private, commercial and social spaces of hospitality. Future research agendas could aim to investigate the contribution women make to hosting and staging the Arab hospitality experience. This would advance our understanding of patriarchal ideologies underlying the preservation of male honour, reputation and sovereignty in Arab homes and in public spaces too. There is potential to pursue a case study approach on how socio-economic power across the Arab world, social class and strata-based inequalities characterise and determine Arab hospitality. This could therefore be contrasted to looking at cases concerning how hospitality intersects with, and is defined by, excessive wealth and conspicuous consumption.

Although there is a need to be aware of the boundaries of Arab hospitality based on disposable income and economic power, it would also be crucial to distinguish how this form of hospitality interconnects with religious groups beyond Islam, most notably amongst the Arab Christians. Such positioning would encourage a more multi-dimensional approach to deciphering Arab hospitality to develop. Moreover, as this chapter inspected hospitality in the Arab world there is potential to research the Arab diaspora in non-Arab nations (e.g. Argentina, Brazil, France and the US), especially to comprehend the transitional nature of Arab hospitality in the context of migration studies. In view of the above, future researchers deconstructing

the theories, philosophies and theologies of Arab hospitality could thus look in more depth in relation to national boundaries, rural and urban distinctions, deeper cultural idiosyncrasies and gender differentials.

References

- Al-Oun, S., & Al-Homoud, M. (2008) 'The potential for developing community-based tourism among the Bedouins in the Badia of Jordan', *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 3(1): 36–54.
- Ashill, N.J. Williams, P., & Chathoth, P. (2017) 'Examining the marketing opportunities of Sharjah as an Islamic tourism destination', in M.L. Stephenson, & Ala Al-Hamarneh, *International Tourism Development and the Gulf Cooperation Council States: Challenges and Opportunities* (pp. 171–184). London: Routledge.
- Attar, S. (2005) 'Conflicting accounts on the fear of strangers: Muslim and Arab perceptions of Europeans in Medieval geographical literature', *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 27(4): 17–29.
- Barnes, J. (2013) 'Bedouin' hospitality in the neo-global city of Dubai', *E-International Relations*. Available online: www.e-ir.info/2013/10/16/bedouin-hospitality-in-the-neo-global-city-of-dubai/ (Accessed 2 July 2017).
- Battuta, I. (2004) *Travels in Asia and Africa*. 1325e1354 (H.A.R. Gibb, Trans.). Oxon: Routledge Curzon.
- Bravmann, M.M. (1962) 'The surplus of property—an early Arab social concept', *Der Islam*, (Berlin), 38(62): 28–50
- Coates Ulrichsen, K. (2016) *The Gulf States in International Political Economy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- De Silver, D., & Masci, D. (2017) 'World's Muslim population more widespread than you might think'. Pew Research Centre. Available online: www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/31/worlds-muslim-population-more-widespread-than-you-might-think/ (Accessed 12 July 2017).
- Derrida, J. (1997/2000) *Of Hospitality*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Donnelly, T.T., Al Suwaidi, J., Al Bulushi, A., Al Enazi, N., Yassin, K., Rehman, A.M., Hassan, A.A., & Idris, Z. (2011) 'The influence of cultural and social factors on healthy lifestyle of Arabic women', *Avicenna*, 3: 1–13.
- Doughty, C.M. (1921) *Travels in Arabia Deserta, Volume 2*. London: Philip Lee Warner.
- Eickelman, C. (1984) *Women and Community in Oman*. New York: New York University Press.
- Ekiz, E. Öter, Z., & Stephenson, M.L. (2017) 'Tourism development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Determining the problems and resolving the challenges', in M.L. Stephenson, & A. Al-Hamarneh, *International Tourism Development and the Gulf Cooperation Council States: Challenges and Opportunities* (pp. 124–139). London: Routledge.
- Fattah, A.A., & Eddy-U, M. (2017) 'Representation of Egyptian Bedouins in English-language tourist brochures', in H. Almuhrzi, H. Alriyami, & N. Scott (eds), *Tourism in the Arab World* (pp. 188–206). Bristol: Channel View Publications.
- Feghali, E. (1997) 'Arab cultural communication patterns', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 21(3): 345–378.
- Fernea Warnock, E. (1975) *A Street in Marrakech: A Personal View of Urban Women in Morocco*. New York: Doubleday.
- Fernea Warnock, E. (1989) *Guests of the Sheik: An Ethnography of an Iraqi Village*. New York: Doubleday.
- Friese, H. (2004) 'Spaces of hospitality', *Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 9(2): 67–79.
- Gulf Labour Markets and Migration (2016) 'GCC: total population and percentage of nationals and foreign nationals in GCC countries'. Demographic and economic database. Available online: <http://gulfnmigration.eu/gcc-total-population-percentage-nationals-foreign-nationals-gcc-countries-national-statistics-2010-2016-numbers/> (Accessed 21 July 2017).
- Kabbani, R. (1986) *Europe's Myths of Orient*. London: Pandora.
- Lashley, C. (2000) 'Towards a theoretical understanding', in C. Lashley, & A. Morrison (eds), *In Search of Hospitality: Theoretical Perspectives and Debates* (pp. 1–17). London: Routledge.
- Memarian, G.H, Toghr-oljerdi, S.M.H., & Ranjbar-Kermani, A.M. (2011) 'Privacy of house in Islamic culture: A comparative study of pattern of privacy in houses in Kerman', *International Journal of Architecture and Urban Planning*, 21(2): 69–77.
- Meneley, A. (1996) *Tournaments of Value: Sociability and Hierarchy in a Yemeni Town*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Mona, H. (2006) 'Pious entertainment in Beirut: Al-Saha traditional village', *ISIM Review 'Popular Piety'*, 17: 10–11.

- Othman, Z., Arid R., & Buys L. (2015) 'Privacy, modesty, hospitality, and the design of Muslims homes: A literature review', *Frontiers of Architectural Research*, 4: 12–23.
- Qur'an, The (1997) *Arabic Text with Corresponding English Meanings*. Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: Abul Qasim Publishing House.
- Rodinson, M. (2007) *Islam and Capitalism*. London: Saqi.
- Sadi M., & Henderson, J.C. (2005) 'Local versus foreign workers in the hospitality and tourism industry: A Saudi Arabian perspective', *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 46(2): 247–257.
- Said, E.W. (1978) *Orientalism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Said, E.W. (1997) *Covering Islam: How the Media and Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Sardar, Z. (1998) *Postmodernism and the Other: The New Imperialism of Western Culture*. London: Pluto Press.
- Scharfenort, N. (2017) 'Tourism development challenges in Qatar: Diversification and growth', in M.L. Stephenson, & A. Al-Hamarneh (eds), *International Tourism Development and the Gulf Cooperation Council States: Challenges and Opportunities* (pp. 140–155). London: Routledge.
- Shryock, A. (2004) 'The new Jordanian hospitality: House, host and guest in the culture of public display', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 46(1): 35–62.
- Shryock, A. (2009) 'Hospitality lessons: Learning the shared language of Derrida and the Balga Bedouin', *Paragraph*, 32(1): 32–50.
- Shryock, A. (2012) 'Breaking hospitality apart: Bad hosts, bad guest, and the problem of sovereignty', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 18: 20–23.
- Siddiqui, M. (2017) 'Welcoming in God's name: Hospitality in Islam and Christianity', Religion and Ethics. Available online: <http://www.abc.net.au/religion/welcoming-in-gods-name-hospitality-in-islam-and-christianity/10096180> (Accessed 9 March 2017).
- Sobh, R., & Belk, R. (2011) 'Domains of privacy and hospitality in Arab Gulf homes', in Z. Yi, J.J. Xiao, J. Cotte, & L. Price (eds), *Asia-Pacific Advances in Consumer Research, Volume 9* (pp. 88–90). Duluth, MN: Association for Consumer Research.
- Sobh, R., Belk, R.W., & Wilson, J.A.J. (2013) 'Islamic Arab hospitality and multiculturalism', *Marketing Theory*, 13(4): 443–463.
- Steet, L. (2000) *Veils and Daggers: A Century of National Geographic's Representation of the Arab World*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Stephenson, M. L. (2014) 'Deciphering "Islamic hospitality": Developments, challenges and opportunities', *Tourism Management*, 40: 155–164.
- Stephenson, M. L. (2017) 'Deciphering international tourism development in the GCC region', in M.L. Stephenson, & A. Al-Hamarneh (eds), *International Tourism Development and the Gulf Cooperation Council States: Challenges and Opportunities* (pp. 1–25). London: Routledge.
- Stephenson, M.L., & Ali, N. (2010) 'Tourism, travel and Islamophobia: Post 9/11 journeys of Muslims in non-Muslim states', in N. Scott, & J. Jafari (eds), *Tourism in the Muslim World* (pp. 235–251). Bingley: Emerald.
- Stephenson, M.L., Russell, K.A., & Edgar, D. (2010) 'Islamic hospitality in the UAE: indigenisation of products and human capital', *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 1(1): 9–24.
- Stetkevych, J. (2000) 'Sacrifice and redemption in early Islamic poetry: Al-Ḥuṭay'ah's Wretched Hunter', *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 31(2): 89–120.
- Teller, M. (2013) *The Rough Guide to Jordan*, 5th edn. London: Rough Guides.
- Vukonić, B. (2010) 'Do we all understand each other?', in N. Scott, & J. Jafari (eds), *Tourism in the Muslim World: Bridging Tourism Theory and Practice* (pp. 31–45). Bingley: Emerald.
- Wakefield, S. (2017) 'Transnational heritage in Abu Dhabi: Power, politics and identity', in M.L. Stephenson, & A. Al-Hamarneh (eds), *International Tourism Development and the Gulf Cooperation Council States: Challenges and Opportunities* (pp. 235–244). London: Routledge.
- Withey, L. (1998) *Grand Tours and Cook's Tours: A History of Leisure Travel, 1750 to 1915*. London: Arum Press.
- Young, W.C. (2007) 'Arab hospitality as a rite of incorporation: The Case of the Rashaayda Bedouin of Eastern Sudan', *Anthropos*, 102: 47–69.
- Zamani-Farahani, H., & Henderson, J.C. (2010) 'Islamic tourism and managing tourism development in Islamic societies: The cases of Iran and Saudi Arabia', *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 12: 79–89.