

# Anthropology Department Spring 2013 Colloquia

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## *Discreet Economy: Luxury Hospitality in the Context of Postsocialist Transformation of Czech Society*

Hospitality represents a sphere of social life which is heavily loaded with morality and it also constitutes a separate industry. Czech language has separate words for the two notions: pohostinnost, which stands for hospitality as a traditional value; and pohostinství, which refers to hospitality industry. After the fall of socialism, hospitality industry in former Czechoslovakia and later in the separate Czech Republic has become an arena for negotiating the postsocialist transformation of the society. The media and popular discourse on services have been characterized by complaints about poor level of Czech hospitality resulting from complete state ownership of facilities offering hospitality under socialism. On the other hand, there are now luxury restaurants, which are considered a mark of individual success as well as of economic transformation and prosperity. This talk will offer a case study of one luxury restaurant in Prague and show how hospitality, luxury, work, tipping practices, and inequalities between workers and customers were negotiated and contested by workers in the context of postsocialist transformation. The concept of discreet economy will be introduced to analyze exchanges between agents, inequalities between them and workers' strategies of resistance.

IVETA HAJDÁKOVÁ is a PhD candidate in Anthropology at Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague. Her research is focused on luxury hospitality and gastronomy in the Czech Republic, service work, consumption of luxury services, and postsocialist transformation of hospitality and gastronomy. She is currently a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Columbia University in New York.

MONDAY, APRIL 15TH  
3:30 - 5:00PM  
261, SOCIAL SCIENCES 1