
Part III. Maximiliano E. Korstanje's Legacy: Tourism, Terrorism, and the Future of Critical Tourism Studies

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the contribution of Maximiliano E. Korstanje to the study of tourism, terrorism, and the contemporary crisis of hospitality in Western societies. Through a sociological and interdisciplinary approach, the paper explores Korstanje's argument that tourism must be understood beyond its economic dimension, as a social institution shaped by globalization, capitalism, mobility, and systems of power. Particular attention is given to his analysis of the decline of unconditional hospitality, the securitization of travel after terrorism, and the transformation of the stranger from guest into potential threat. The paper further discusses his controversial proposition that tourism and terrorism represent interconnected expressions of global mobility and symbolic communication, as well as his contributions to dark tourism and Thana Capitalism, where death, disaster, and insecurity become incorporated into contemporary tourism economies. By examining his theories of risk perception, fear, surveillance, and commodified memory, this study argues that Korstanje has significantly expanded critical tourism scholarship by revealing the political and ethical tensions underlying modern travel. Although his work remains debated due to its theoretical ambition and provocative concepts, it provides an influential framework for understanding how tourism reflects the broader anxieties and contradictions of Western modernity.

Key Words: Terror, Memory, Violence, Risk Perception, Mobility Theory

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From Tourism Sociology to a Critical Theory of Mobility

One of Maximiliano E. Korstanje's enduring contributions lies in his effort to reposition tourism within the broader tradition of critical social theory. While much tourism research has traditionally focused on destination competitiveness, marketing, consumer behavior, and economic development, Korstanje has consistently argued that tourism is fundamentally a sociological phenomenon that reflects the organization of modern societies. Throughout his work, tourism is understood not merely as leisure but as a mechanism through which capitalism reproduces social order, legitimizes inequality, and shapes collective identities. This perspective has contributed to the emergence of what may be described as a **critical sociology of tourism**, in which travel is interpreted as an institution embedded within relations of power rather than simply an expression of individual freedom. Drawing upon Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Freud, Norbert Elias, René Girard, and Jean Baudrillard, Korstanje proposes that tourism reproduces the contradictions of modernity instead of transcending them (Korstanje, 2018). Unlike conventional tourism studies, which frequently regard travel as an inherently positive activity associated with intercultural dialogue and peace, Korstanje argues that tourism simultaneously generates exclusion, dependency, environmental degradation, and new forms of inequality. His work therefore encourages scholars to move beyond celebratory narratives of globalization and to examine the hidden social costs of mobility.

Tourism After 9/11 and the Transformation of Western Consciousness

The attacks of September 11, 2001, occupy a central place in Korstanje's intellectual development. Rather than interpreting 9/11 exclusively as a geopolitical event, he regards it as a historical turning point that fundamentally altered the relationship between mobility, security, and hospitality.

According to Korstanje, Western societies entered a new era characterized by what might be called the **normalization of permanent insecurity**. Airports became spaces of surveillance; borders were increasingly militarized; tourism destinations incorporated

security into their branding strategies; and travelers gradually accepted extraordinary monitoring procedures as routine components of international mobility.

This transformation extended well beyond terrorism itself. It reflected a broader cultural shift in which uncertainty became institutionalized. Security ceased to be an exceptional response to isolated threats and instead became a permanent organizing principle of tourism. In this context, Korstanje argues that tourists increasingly participate in systems of surveillance voluntarily. Through biometric passports, digital boarding passes, travel applications, GPS tracking, facial recognition technologies, and health certifications, travelers contribute to the production of data that allows states and corporations to monitor mobility with unprecedented precision. Consequently, tourism becomes inseparable from surveillance capitalism, where movement itself generates valuable information.

Tourism, Fear, and the Production of Social Order

A recurring theme throughout Korstanje's scholarship is the relationship between fear and social organization. Rather than viewing fear as a psychological reaction to objective danger, he conceptualizes it as a socially constructed mechanism through which institutions organize behavior. Governments, media organizations, insurance companies, security industries, and tourism corporations all participate in producing narratives of risk that influence mobility decisions. Terrorism functions effectively because it exploits these communicative systems rather than because of its military capacity. This interpretation represents one of Korstanje's principal theoretical innovations.

Tourism has traditionally been analysed through concepts such as motivation, satisfaction, authenticity, or destination image. Korstanje instead proposes that **fear itself has become one of tourism's central organizing principles.**

Tourists increasingly evaluate destinations according to:

- political stability,
- terrorism risk,

- pandemic preparedness,
- cybersecurity,
- environmental resilience,
 - health infrastructure,
 - insurance availability.

Travel therefore becomes an exercise in uncertainty management. This perspective anticipated many developments observed during the COVID-19 pandemic, when health risks replaced terrorism as the principal determinant of global mobility without fundamentally altering the underlying mechanisms of surveillance and risk governance.

Dark Tourism, Collective Memory, and Moral Consumption

Korstanje's work on dark tourism extends beyond descriptive analyses of sites associated with death. He argues that dark tourism reveals important transformations in the relationship between memory, capitalism, and morality.

Modern societies increasingly preserve tragedy through museums, memorials, interpretation centres, and heritage attractions. These institutions undoubtedly perform valuable educational and commemorative functions, yet they also participate in tourism economies that depend upon attracting visitors. According to Korstanje, this produces an important paradox. The commercialization of memory does not necessarily trivialize suffering, but neither can it be separated from economic interests. Memorial museums require funding, visitor services, infrastructure, marketing, and tourism development. Consequently, remembrance becomes inseparable from consumption.

This interpretation forms part of his broader theory of **Thana Capitalism**, according to which contemporary capitalism increasingly creates value from fear, catastrophe, death, and insecurity. Tourism participates in this process by transforming sites of tragedy into spaces where ethical reflection, education, and commercial activity coexist. Rather than condemning these developments, Korstanje invites scholars to investigate the political

economy of remembrance. His work asks how societies negotiate the tension between preserving memory and generating economic sustainability.

Academic Influence and International Reception

Korstanje has published extensively across tourism, sociology, anthropology, disaster studies, security studies, and hospitality research. His books and articles have appeared through publishers including Routledge, Palgrave Macmillan, Emerald, Springer, Apple Academic Press, and IGI Global. Beyond his individual publications, he has edited numerous collections that have brought together researchers from different disciplines to examine issues such as tourism security, hospitality, resilience, disaster management, and globalization. His influence is particularly evident within **critical tourism studies**, where scholars have increasingly questioned the assumptions of neoliberal tourism development, destination branding, and resilience discourse. By introducing concepts such as the **crisis of hospitality**, **Thana Capitalism**, and the proposition that **tourism is terrorism by other means**, Korstanje has encouraged researchers to rethink the ethical and political dimensions of tourism. Although these concepts remain controversial, they have generated sustained scholarly debate precisely because they challenge established paradigms.

Critiques of Korstanje's Scholarship

As with many scholars who propose ambitious theoretical frameworks, Korstanje's work has attracted significant criticism. One criticism concerns the highly abstract nature of his arguments. Some researchers suggest that his theoretical concepts occasionally exceed the available empirical evidence. While ideas such as "tourism is terrorism by other means" stimulate intellectual debate, critics argue that they may oversimplify the substantial differences between leisure mobility and political violence. Others contend that his work sometimes adopts a structural perspective that underestimates individual agency. By emphasizing capitalism, globalization, and institutional power, Korstanje occasionally gives less attention to the diversity of tourist experiences across different cultural and historical contexts. His interpretation of

hospitality has also generated debate. While many scholars acknowledge the increasing securitization of international mobility, some argue that hospitality continues to exist in multiple forms beyond state surveillance and commercial exchange. Community-based tourism, volunteer tourism, religious pilgrimage, and indigenous tourism, for example, may preserve reciprocal forms of hospitality that complicate his diagnosis of a generalized Western crisis. Finally, some critics have questioned whether concepts such as **Thana Capitalism** are better understood as philosophical critiques than as empirically verifiable social theories. Nevertheless, these criticisms also highlight the originality of Korstanje's contribution. His work is not intended simply to describe tourism but to provoke theoretical reflection concerning the relationship between mobility, capitalism, ethics, and violence.

Korstanje's Place in Contemporary Tourism Theory

Perhaps Korstanje's greatest contribution lies in expanding the intellectual boundaries of tourism studies. He demonstrates that tourism cannot be understood in isolation from wider debates concerning political economy, globalization, security, memory, migration, and social theory. His scholarship has encouraged tourism researchers to engage more directly with classical sociology and contemporary philosophy while simultaneously opening dialogue with terrorism studies, disaster studies, anthropology, and political science. Unlike many tourism scholars who remain within disciplinary boundaries, Korstanje consistently treats tourism as an entry point for understanding broader transformations in modern society. Questions concerning fear, hospitality, surveillance, death, and mobility become central to understanding not only tourism but Western civilization itself. Whether one accepts all of his conclusions or not, his work has undoubtedly enriched critical tourism studies by introducing new conceptual tools for analysing the social consequences of globalization.

Conclusion

Maximiliano E. Korstanje's contribution to tourism and terrorism studies extends well beyond the analysis of travel behavior or destination management. Through an

ambitious interdisciplinary synthesis, he has developed a critical theory that connects tourism with hospitality, globalization, capitalism, terrorism, memory, surveillance, and fear. His work challenges conventional assumptions that tourism is inherently peaceful, demonstrating instead that it is deeply embedded in the political and economic contradictions of modern society. Central to his legacy are the concepts of the **crisis of hospitality**, **Thana Capitalism**, and the provocative proposition that **tourism is terrorism by other means**. These ideas have reshaped discussions of tourism security, dark tourism, and mobility by emphasizing the symbolic and structural dimensions of violence rather than viewing terrorism simply as an external threat to travel.

His analyses of risk perception, surveillance, and the commercialization of memory have become increasingly relevant in a world marked by terrorism, pandemics, geopolitical instability, climate emergencies, and technological transformation. By linking tourism to broader questions of ethics, governance, and social order, Korstanje has established himself as one of the leading critical voices in contemporary tourism scholarship. Although his work remains controversial and continues to generate debate, its significance lies precisely in its capacity to challenge dominant paradigms and stimulate new avenues of interdisciplinary research. His scholarship demonstrates that tourism is not merely an industry but a privileged lens through which to understand the tensions, anxieties, and contradictions of contemporary Western society.

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