

D21 Aleksandra / Poland / German Studies

Interaction partner(s): German students

Moment of enquiry: SS 07

Experience of difference: Behaviour expectations for invitations

Aleksandra, a Polish student, has been invited to coffee and cake by German friends. Early in the afternoon, she gets ready to go to her friends' house. She hasn't eaten lunch on purpose, as she is looking forward to the German specialities. When she arrives at her friends' house, she realises that they are indeed serving only coffee and cake. That surprises her, as in Poland an invitation for coffee and cake means that an opulent meal will be served. After one piece of cake, her German friend Lisa asks if she would like another piece. Aleksandra replies politely "No thank you" and waits for her German friend to repeat the offer. Instead, Lisa accepts the reply and doesn't ask her anymore. Instead, she starts a lively conversation with Aleksandra, giving her her full attention. Aleksandra is hoping in vain to be asked again whether she would like something to eat, as she is still hungry, but she doesn't want to ask if she could have some more. Finally, she goes home hungry.

1. What attitude toward a guest are the Polish student's convention expectations based on, and why does she decline the friend's offer?
2. What is the concept of hospitality underlying the German friend's behaviour?