

Risks, totems, and fetishes in Marx and Freud

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Abstract

This essay was inspired by and elaborates on several ideas in Maximiliano Korstanje's (2011; 2012) contribution on a model of risk. Korstanje points out that risks are not probabilities of hazards, dangers, or losses, but narratives serving to modify human behavior. He raises several areas of behavior as illustrations: terrorism, automobiles, and local, interpersonal crime. Finally, his paper cites the contributions of Sigmund Freud and other theorists on totems, taboos, and by extension fetishes. Also following Korstanje (2011; 2012), risks were primarily

understood in economic terms, especially in a capitalist political economy. My elaboration seizes on these ideas as they were addressed by Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. Risk, as a discourse, not only paves the ways for circulating some goods in some directions, but also prevents the circulation of others. As a result of this, it allows the monopolization of power in aristocracies.

Key words: *crime, fetish, Freud, Marx, risk, terrorism totems*

Introduction

Recently, it is not surprising to see therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists offering their services to treat with pathologies related to anxiety, phobias, fear and uncertainty. As never before, we live in an age of risk, and this leads to lay-people to experience serious problems of trust in their relationships. Psychology and psychiatry today have become in an instrument of replicating risk intervening in the social situations of self. However, this intervention does not tackle all environmental factors that create the risk, unless only indoctrinating the self. This begs two interesting question, are we witnessing an inflation of risk?, is the risk connected to economies, in what way?.

In United States, almost 6.2 million of citizens experienced a phobia disorder while this problem ranges adults from 18 to 54 years old. Some statistics reveals that 1 in 23 people suffer phobias, which represents 4.25% of the population¹. Although this information may be criticized from many views, what is important to highlight is the fact phobia affects regularly to people who is economically active working inside the productive forces of industrial societies. G. Nardone emphasizes that the reasons behind panic attacks, phobias and obsessive-compulsive disorder are polysemic and circumscribed to previous working definitions. Under such circumstances, Nardone (2009) argues that psychological structures follow complex and unabated interests. Whenever psychologists examine the patient's pathology, they access only a memoirist past which is elaborated by subjects following symbolic and emotional dynamics. This recall is no other thing than an insight on the motivational forces of behaviour irrespective of how the facts happened. Clinical diagnosis sometimes reinforces the previous assumptions creating a depiction of reality. The hegemony of therapists in questions to fears and phobias is troublesome because prevent the interdisciplinary research. Anthropology following this has something to say along with the connection of taboo and risk. Even, S. Freud was an expert in ethnological studies that advanced too much thanks to anthropology legacy.

This essay-review explores not only the legacy of Freudian as well as Marxian developments respecting to the fetishes, but also reconsiders everything what has been written in specialized literature respecting to risk. Far away of being a probability, risk encompasses a discourse that allows the collapse of economy. What we will discuss throughout this work, is in what manner. As the previous argument given, Korstanje points out that risks are not probabilities of hazards, dangers, or losses, but narratives serving to modify human behavior. He raises several areas of behavior as illustrations: terrorism, automobiles, and local, interpersonal crime. Finally, his paper cites the contributions of Sigmund Freud and other theorists on totems, taboos, and by extension fetishes. Also following Korstanje (2011; 2012), risks were primarily understood in economic terms,

¹ Source. Phobia Stats. 2009. Available <http://www.fearofstuff.com/phobia-stats/>

especially in a capitalist political economy. Our elaboration seizes on these ideas as they were addressed by Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud.

Similarly, Marx wrote of totems and fetishes mainly from the perspective of political economy. Freud delved into their psychological import. We argue that Marx and Freud dealt with the same thing and in similar ways. They both treated totems and fetishes as things and practices functioning to ward off anxiety. Also, they both treated totems and fetishes as promoters of illusion, one from the psychological and the other from the political perspective. Totems and fetishes represent ways people try to ward off anxiety, and they function as building blocks of illusions. We begin with Marx's striking statement that capitalism confronts people with reality for the first time in human history, because the capitalist mode of production dissolves all impediments to its spread and penetration. The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and *man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life* [emphasis added], and his relations with his kind. (Marx and Engels 1848:207)

Nonetheless and despite the compulsion to face reality, bourgeois social relations rely on mystifying the real conditions of life, because the bourgeoisie—that is the haute bourgeoisie and owners of capital—need to mystify the people who produce capital. Owners need to promote illusion so they can keep their dominating position in the social hierarchy. They know that if the mass of people caught onto the game, their privileges would not long survive. The bourgeoisie mystify as a means of defense of their position.

Freud wrote about totems and fetishes from a psycho-economic perspective, but he did so in two respects. He wrote several books devoted to social, as opposed to individual psychology, and these books mainly analyzed the origin of religion. He attributed the origins of religion to totemism. He also wrote about totemic defenses in the form of fetishes with respect to individual, intrapsychic economics. Totems and fetishes memorialize and defend against anxiety. They act as screens against memories, totems for social memories and fetishes for the personal. In Marx's terminology, totems and fetishes take the form of political economic institutions and commodities, respectively. For both Marx and Freud, totems and fetishes defend the status quo by concealing reality.

Freud's Totemism and His Theory of Religion

Most of Freud's explicitly social thought deals with religion. Religions are belief systems distinguished from other kinds of belief systems in that they are based on faith and authority. They are systems rooted in meanings. In his last full length treatment of religion, *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), Freud sought to explain Judaism and certain character traits attributed to Jews as a people. His specific aim holds less importance for the present than the logic he used to achieve it. Freud rejected certain objections to his earlier *Totem and Taboo* (1913), and made a point of reaffirming what he had written previously (1939:131). He reiterated in briefer form what he had argued at length in 1913.

He summarized it as follows. The original human society took the form of a horde or band. All males were the leader's sons; all females were his property, either wives or daughters. The leader enforced his authority with violence, including death or castration. At some point, the brothers united to overpower their father. The rebellion was fueled by hatred and fear alloyed with feelings of reverence, and these two emotions together prompted a desire to take his place. That is, the point was not merely narcissistic rage and desire for freedom, but to hold the father's place in the social order. To forestall continual intra-group warfare, the brothers took several steps. They erected a totem, a representation of the father, and accorded it a sacred character. Freud called

attention to the double meaning of 'sacred.' "It is the ambivalence which in general dominates the relation to the father. [The Latin] 'sacer' means not only 'sacred,' consecrated,' but also something we can only translate as 'infamous,' 'detestable' (e.g. 'auri sacra fames). "Execrable hunger for gold." Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI 816" (1939:121 and n.). Totemism, following the ideas of William Robertson Smith, Freud said was the primary form of religion. In agreement with Emile Durkheim (1912), this sacred character defines religion. It is pivotal for understanding his pronouncement that religion was a social kind of neurosis.

What is sacred is obviously something that may not be touched. A sacred prohibition has a very strong emotional tone but has in fact no rational basis. For why, for instance, should incest with a daughter or sister be such a specially serious crime—so much worse than other sexual intercourse? (Freud 1939:120)

Totemism and its later religious derivatives, according to Freud, carries the power of prohibition through symbolic effect—that is, it forces the ego to inhibit action toward a desired aim, not through reality testing, but through meaning. Taking this line of thought somewhat further, but not I think violating Freud's intent, is that incest and its positive charge, exogamy, are the primary social norms. Their force is represented by the totem, a kind of fetish for the inhibited drives and around which later religious embellishments build their doctrines. Through this logic, Freud built his conclusion that religion is neurosis writ large.

From that time [*Totem and Taboo*, 1913] I have never doubted that religious phenomena are only to be understood on the pattern of the individual neurotic symptoms familiar to us—as the return of the long since forgotten, important events in the *primaeval* history of the human family—and that they have to thank precisely their origin for their compulsive character and that,

accordingly, they are effective on human beings by force of the historical truth of their content. (1939:58)

Religion, for Freud, embodies the dialectical struggle and the inherent discontent of the human condition. With all its observable trappings, its symbols, rituals, doctrines; religion tells the tale of not only human history, but the continuous conflict among three moments of being human: the biophysical, the psychological, and the social. They all condition each other. When speaking of humanity, the pure organism is an impossibility. Mind and society are not add-ons, they are essential.

Freud gave a central role to religion in his social thought, because, like neurotic symptoms, religion represents, albeit in distorted, condensed, displaced, and symbolic forms the phylogenetic history of human sociality. Moreover, religion reveals the connection between ontogeny and phylogeny. That is, religion recapitulates what individual confessors experience in their personal early histories.

Humans develop through childhood in more or less the same way because of epigenetic predispositions in human physiology. For instance, humans are born with small heads, because they have to fit through the birth canal. Consequently, much human brain development occurs after birth. The developmental needs of the brain go along with a lengthy dependency period. Post-birth brain development coupled with a lengthy period of physical development and years of biologically necessary dependency mean that human socialization accounts for a great part of mental and psychological development. Throughout this development humans develop an enculturated ego. That ego defends the organism from trauma. It uses a variety of defensive mechanisms to deal with external reality, to be sure, but more pertinently, to deal with internal threats. It tries to serve the id, which demands drive satisfaction, whilst simultaneously, it serves the superego's prohibitions and tries to avoid punishing emotions such as guilt. The ego's defenses appear in dream work and

the forms of neurosis, and these are the same as the empirically accessible functions and structures of religion: condensation, displacement, and symbolization (really image formation). Dreams and symptoms exhibit these defenses as symbols (hysteria), rituals (obsessional neurosis), and rationalizations. The last of course is humanity's natural way of dealing with life, as humans may not be rational animals, but they are definitely rationalizing animals. Dreams, neuroses, and religion all present dramas. In the case of the latter two, the same drama repeats continually.

Freud posited a primeval drama, his story of the primal horde, to account for religion. Despite its improbability in ethnological terms, the primal horde drama does resemble the oedipal drama. In fact, it more than resembles it; it is a reenactment of it. But which came first, oedipus or the primal horde? The answer to that question displays Freud's dialectic, because the answer is neither came first. They occur together; they condition each other, and they explain each other. Early humans, assuming for the moment they are anatomically modern humans, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, fantasized the primal horde drama. True, maybe occasionally some early human groups actually enacted it, but that occurrence is no more necessary than the actual seduction of children by parents, because unconscious processes do not distinguish between thought and external reality. Nevertheless, they either enact it or fantasize it, *because* they have superegos and egos that have formed as a result of their individual oedipal dramas. Freud's primal horde drama finds reenactment in small groups with regularity. Therapy groups, task groups, committees, not the least academic committees, disclose it all the time (Bion 1961; Parsons and Bales 1955). They are not engaged in a religious ritual, rather religious rituals use the drama as part of their institutionalized forms. The reenactment of the primal horde occurs in groups as reenactments of shared oedipal experiences. The primal father, threatening, domineering, and adored re-occurs regularly in ordinary social life.

For Freud, fetishism is a perversion that avoids neurosis. The fetish symbolizes the phallus. Fetishists choose any number of different kinds of objects as phallic representations. They choose according to the peculiar particulars of their personal, psychological biographies. The choice of object is less important than its function: it wards off anxiety and stimulates sexual excitement. In

his clinical work, Freud discovered that the fetish, in whatever form it takes, represents a missing penis (1905, 1927). The fetish serves as a solution to the castration complex, which involves anxiety about castration. The fetish reassures the fetishist that s/he will not be castrated and that women really have penises. Formation of the fetish depends on disavowal: pretending what was seen was not seen. At the same time the reassurance of the missing women's penis is displaced onto the fetish object. The fetish produces sexual stimulation because if castration is not a risk, then the fetishist is free to indulge his or her sexual fantasies. Of course, the castration complex also lies at the base of totemism, because the totem represents an overcoming of the castrator—the primal father. Both the totem and the fetish allay anxiety in non-neurotic ways, that is they do not produce neurotic symptoms.

Freud defined and described anxiety as a signal of danger. "Anxiety is a reaction to a situation of danger. It is obviated by the ego's doing something to avoid that situation or to withdraw from it. It might be said that symptoms are created so as to avoid the generating of anxiety" (1926:128-9). The difference between fear and anxiety, between realistic and ego determined reactions, versus unrealistic imagined fears lies at the bottom of symptoms, fetishes, and totems. For example, the ego can take steps to protect itself from external threats, by hiding, avoidance, or employing various safety devices such as the safety belts used by who must work high off the ground. The ego cannot use such tactics for internal threats based on fears of imagined castration or other punishments for forbidden desires. The latter are the source of symptoms, totems, and fetishes.

Whereas neurotic symptoms and fetishes are individualistic, totems are social. Totems are culturally shared symbolic representations of common experiences. According to Freud, the oedipus complex and castration anxiety are part of normal human development. It is in that sense that they are shared. Totems and religion in general, for which the totem is the template, solve by condensing, displacing, and symbolizing human problems into a particular image. Because they have a social and cultural foundation, they give rise to institutionalized reinforcements—churches for

example. At certain times and in certain places, questioning the bases of religious institutions amounted to heresy, which was suppressed often violently. The heretic becomes anyone who would question or dispute the narrative of the totemic religion. Such heretics pose a threat to the established social order, because they call into question the neat solution the totem has offered. The totem solves on a mass scale the economic problem of how to inhibit human drives by repressing and displacing them onto the totem. Marx offered an analysis about a different level of economy, not the psycho-economic but the political economic.

Marx and the Fetishism of Commodities and Capital

Marx first used the concept of fetish to refer to economic things in a series of articles in 1842. He relied on the exposition of religious fetishism by Charles de Brosses (1760), Auguste Comte's materialist treatment of the stages of religion (1841), and Ludwig Feuerbach's analysis of Christianity (1841). The basic idea in all three is that religious belief and practices involve investing material objects—statues, painted rocks, bits of bone, and so on—with supernatural powers. For a Western version, consider the power attributed to holy water, or in medieval times, to pieces of the “True Cross.” Evident to the outside observer, but not to believers, is that the fetish object has power because and only because people have invested it with powerful qualities. In this respect, Freud's sexual fetish object, and religious fetish objects operate similarly. The fetishistic shoe, to use one common example, arouses sexuality because and only because the fetishist has attributed sexual powers to it. Marx stressed that the fetish solves a political economic problem—namely, the problem of how to get the masses of people to accept the predominant social order, despite what their senses tell them. In this way Marx's fetish functions the same as Freud's. Despite what his eyes tell him, the fetishist solves the problem of castration fear and yearning for forbidden desires. The effect of both kinds of fetish results in continued domination; the sexual fetish by the law of the primal father who threatens castration, and political fetish by laws of the society.

Famously, Marx wrote about commodity fetishism, whereby products of human labor assume supernatural powers over people's minds and their relationships with each other.

A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labor appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of their labor; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labor is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labor. This is the reason why products of their labor become commodities. (Marx 1867:77)

Two burning questions remain. First, how did this happen, and second, for what purpose? In answer to the first question, Marx developed an historical dialectic that remains outside the main import of this essay. Marx's answer to second question, nevertheless, is brief. Mystification of the social relations and products of people's labor serves owners, because, of course, their own status of ownership depends on the very same mystification. That is, elites in a social order use all their advantages to defend against the producing classes from realizing that their subordinate position is neither equitable nor natural. Although brief, his answer needs explication.

The key to the transformation of things people produce into commodities lies in the fact that people do not produce commodities for each other or even for themselves. They produce commodities for a market. Under the tutelage of capital the market becomes an impersonal institution in which things find their trading equivalence through other things, most commonly mediated by money. In the twenty-first century, the character of this capitalist market assumes a clear form when securities exchange for other securities untouched by human hands as computerized, online trading takes over more and more of capital markets. Consequently, the social institution of the market appears to order economic relations among people, and at the same time it obscures two facts. First, people in interaction with each other created and continually create the market. Second, ownership and therefore the possibility of exchange itself is a social creation. As

Sean Sayers put it, “Social relations are thus not established directly between people, but indirectly via a relation between things, or rather the economic value bestowed on things within the economic system” (2011:59-60). Finally, and this point is crucial to Marxian analysis, human labor is not individualized work, but social from beginning to end. To clarify, Marx distinguished between human labor and the subsistence activities of non-human animals.

The practical creation of an *objective world*, the *fashioning* of inorganic nature, is proof that man is a conscious species-being, i.e. a being which treats the species as its own essential being or itself as a species-being. It is true that animals also produce. . . . But they produce only their own immediate needs or those of their young; they produce one-sidedly, while man produces universally . . . they [animals] produce only themselves, while man reproduces the whole of nature . . . hence man also produces in accordance with the laws of beauty. . . . Such production is his active species-life. Through it nature appears as *his* work and reality . . . he can therefore contemplate himself in a world he himself has created. . . . Consciousness, which man has from his species, is transformed through estrangement so that species-life becomes a means for him. . . . (3) Estranged labor therefore turns *man’s species-being*—both nature and his intellectual species-powers—into a being *alien* to him and a *means* of his *individual existence*. (Marx 1844:328-9)

The preceding is Marx’s version of the observation that culture provides humanity’s primary ecological niche. Humans live in a world they themselves create, and they attain consciousness through their own creations, most noticeably that of language. This last is also something Freud observed (1923). People labor to make language. Language is necessarily a social product; there is no such thing as an idiosyncratic language. Moreover, language is not a once and for all kind of thing, but people make it *continually* through their linguistic interactions, and they continually

change it, as historical linguistics shows. The English written by Geoffrey Chaucer, for instance, appears foreign to present day Anglophones: as language so all of human productive activity.

Except in the case of certain writings for sale, musical and other performances, and so on, most people do not think of language, their talk and writing, as a commodity. Nonetheless, as soon as it is turned into a commodity, it takes on the fantastical character of the fetish. Consider a best-selling novel or song. It becomes private property. The creator's labor becomes estranged, alienated, as it becomes the property not only of the author, but also various business enterprises, publishing houses and the like. This begins to appear natural, but it is most unnatural. It is unnatural because the author was not the sole creator of the linguistic work. S/he used the materials fashioned by all humanity throughout human history. The work becomes alienated by turning into a commodity. In time, however, the commodity can revert to a form that is less alienated. It can become a classic. Therefore, for example, the writings of Plato, Shakespeare, or Confucius begin to reassert their social character. That is, they become public property, part of humanity's cultural heritage. Although this negation of the alienation, to use a Hegelian turn of phrase, provides food for thought, the immediate purpose of this essay focuses attention on the alienation through commodification.

The fetish of the commodity conceals the process of alienation. It puts in place of shared ownership, a common cultural heritage, a market value. That market value is liable to appropriation. Various actors appropriate it in the form of profit, which they claim to own, and subsequently convert into capital. In the *Grundrisse* (1973), Marx's outline for what became *Capital*, he described the process of alienation.

The social character of activity, as well as the social form of the product, and the share of individuals in production here appear as something alien and objective, confronting the individuals not as their relation to one another, but as their subordination to relations which subsist independently of them and

which arise out of collisions between mutually indifferent individuals. (Marx 1973:157)

Commodity fetishism goes hand in hand with the totemism of the market. The market is treated as a sui generis kind of thing as if early trade relations among tribal peoples or the markets of medieval Europe differed only by technological advances from the markets of Wall Street, the City of London, and others. Everyone must worship the totem of the market else they starve. Marx was clear about it, rejecting this natural market in favor of an historical particular change, which he called primitive accumulation. He was not referring to the accumulation of wealth in ancient societies, and even less so in non-state societies, in which some individuals gain wealth while others persist in poverty. He defined primitive accumulation as the starting point for the production of commodities and expropriation of profit through the wage system. He likened it to original sin in theology (1867:713). It occurs in primal times, but primal times in capitalism, not primal times in human history. It is the time of primary alienation in which occurs "the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. It appears primitive, because it forms the pre-historic stage of capital . . ." (714-5). It is the stage where appropriation from the earth is made into a crime, whilst capital absorbs the earth altogether, or in the words of an anonymous rhyme,

*"They hang the man, and flog the woman,
That steals the goose from off the common;
But let the greater villain loose,
That steals the common from the goose."*

The crucial factor that creates alienated labour with the coming of capitalism is the predominance of commodity production and wage labour (Sayers 2011:90). This is the original sin, or in Freud's imaginative reconstruction of the primal family, the displacement of the primal father by a band of brothers who then erect a totem both to commemorate their triumph and prevent the primal father's reinstatement. In Freud's case, the totem is erected to ward off anxiety about

castration and deflect guilt for the imagined crime of killing the father. In the Marxian scenario, the totem of the market obscures a different crime. “The starting-point that gave rise to the wage-labourer as well as to the capitalist was the servitude of the labourer” (Marx 1867:715). The crime is theft of the earth, the commons, and subordination of the workers from whom the capitalist extracts surplus value—the value they produce over and above that needed for their own subsistence and reproduction. Precapitalist societies may have stratification, a class hierarchy, actual slavery, and other forms of inequality and inequity, but they do not mystify extraction of surplus value as a result of workers’ servitude. The servitude is quite open and clear to view by everyone involved.

In precapitalist societies work is an autonomous activity which for the most part directly meets the needs of the household and locality. With the coming of capitalism, work itself becomes a commodity, undertaken for wages. People no longer work for themselves, but for another, and their activities are owned and controlled by that other, *by capital* [emphasis added]. (Sayers 2011:91)

Note that what Sayers says is not that in precapitalist societies no one worked for another, because, of course, slaves worked for their masters and serfs worked for their lords. The one for whom workers labor under capitalism is not a person, but a thing—capital. Capital is the master fetish where the chief totem is the market.

Towards to the economy of risk

A diverse studies have been focused on the risk from many perspectives, however few has explained its economical nature. Certainly, Beck reminds that we live in a context where the hierarchal order has set the pace to a reflexively logic. The classical institutions that characterized the life in earlier centuries such as family, Church and State have been emptied. What today remains as the stepping stone of social bondage is the risk (Beck, 2006). The sense of community is

determined not only by the perception of risk but also a new way of making politics (Beck, 1998). The concept of bio-politics is of paramount importance to understand how the risk is enrooted in late-capitalism. Certainly, criminals engender the notion of legality while enemies (terrorist) are lacked of any rights. This assumption has created a climate of insecurity where the vulnerability of citizens is subject to the right of stronger (Soyinka, 2007).

To what extent societies have been worked and what factors influence on social bondages were questions that concerned almost all thinkers. From Hobbes to Spinoza, philosophy revealed how the competence and fear converges in sentiments of preservations. Since people are fright to experience the war of all against all, the legitimacy of violence is conferred in a third party, the state. Following this explanation, this stance illustrated E. Durkheim to develop a theory of solidarity which explains the labour division defined previously not only the economies but also other important institutions. Durkheim argues convincingly that two logics depend upon the assignation of roles, organic and mechanic. Totems play a pivotal role in creating a bondage that allows the society to be together. Durkheim divides the world in a dichotomy, primate mind and industrial spirit. Whereas the primitive tribes distinguish from industrial ones because of a scarce specialization of labour and a higher trust, Durkheim envisaged how the advance of modernity will progressively create a decline of social bondage (Durkheim, 1982). Even though the French philosopher was widely criticized by ethnologists and anthropologists, his thesis inspired to S. Freud, B. Malinowski and M. Sahlins in the construction of taboo. B. Malinowski inferred that primitive cultures in Oceania based their legitimacy in view of the circulation of goods. Some goods were moved in one direction while others circulated in the opposite side. From this view, the circulation of goods explained not only the economy in a community but also its forms of politics. Malinowski's outcomes will be reassumed by A. Weiner and M. Sahlins. These scholars agree that the interchange of goods defined the type of solidarity. Besides, the ways of understanding strangeness are founded in the system of trade. Undoubtedly, Weiner is not wrong when affirmed that those object fabricated by women become in alienable possession which configure the power of man. While

some objects are commoditized and circulated elsewhere with a high mobility others are kept in few hands to gain further strength. The males have monopolized their hegemony of public life while females have been pushed to intimacy of home. For that, the material asymmetries seen in the public life are legitimated by those goods elaborated by females. Rather, for S. Freud (1997) the mystery of social bondage was associated to the role played by taboo, as a mechanism oriented to protect the life in one sense. Generally, Freud considered the phobia as a mechanism that prevented the ambiguity and personality fragmentation. In this token, the circularity of economies was circumscribed to the presence of taboos. His main thesis is that taboo bans the practices in one sense while promote other practices in other. These prohibitions are expressed whenever a subject avoids the contact with the taboo-object. Based on the idea that taboo means “sacred-fear”, Freud contends that these restrictions are more than important for society since taboos preserve what must be protected. The function of taboos is to protect the society of the surfacing glitches that threaten the economy. Similarly, M. Douglas said that people is facing a multiple situations of dangers in their life which should be selected for reducing the degree of anxiety. The sacred-spaces not only evoke protection and isolation but also danger. The world of rules makes the life more stable and facilitates the understanding of ambiguity. By means of the taxonomic classifications, societies poses in circulation myths, legends and stories that exemplifies the danger. As a disciplinary mechanism, taboo and risk operate in protecting those species, objects or resources which cannot be used. In M. Foucault, risks should be understood as a controlled threat that makes possible the social life. In homology to a vaccine, which denoted an inoculated virus, the risk is linked to the crisis. Whether the discipline draws the strategy, the security regulates the legal scaffolding to exert control on social interaction (disciplinary normalcy). The risk, in this vein, reduces and mitigates the impacts of dangers to the extent to condition the circularization of goods. In doing so, societies accept and adapt to the presence of certain threats and incorporate them to their habits. Also, Foucault’s contributions are more than important because reveals that we live with risks in our daily life.

To date, the risk perception studies have emphasized too much in a quantitative perspective combining complex mathematical algorithms very difficult to catch. In other circumstances, these studies are conceptual with high abstraction without a clear methodology. From A. Giddens to N. Luhmann, the risk has been conceived as a construal of culture but its connection with economy has been trivialized. Risk not only varied from culture to culture, but alludes to a narrative. Following Malinowski theory, we strongly believe that societies can be studied by their construction of risk because it precedes a discourse to legitimate the hierarchal order. Historically, the sense of risk was created to denote the prices of merchandises carried by the transports. Inherently linked to the trade, risk augments whenever the capital rises. The benefits of certain acts, advantages or disadvantages are marked by the risk which confers to some groups some goods while others are strongly restricted. In perspective, also the discourse of risk connotes the trade in other direction banning the circulation in another. Risks are not questions of probability or objectified dangers, but mere narratives that modify the human behaviour. The causes of risk are not important unless by their impacts of societies. In the following lines we will explain what has been discussed to here in clear examples to expand the reader understanding.

Terrorism as a narrative allows certain practices at time it prohibits others. After 9/11, many consumers recurred to insurance officers to expand their current policies but this reduced notable the circulation of weapons in USA. Since the demand of these taboo-objects was reduced, their value arisen. As a result of this, the aristocracies that have higher purchasing power, monopolizes the possession of these inalienable possessions. The sense of safety in America is functional to the consumption of certain services or goods, while the State reserve in its own the monopoly of others. To put this in brutally, the discourse of risk cuts the circulation of inalienable possessions rechanneling the consumption in specific circuits. The social agents, as Foucault put it, are disciplined by risk in order for the society to keep and increase her production. Those goods that found the trade are protected by the discourse of risk. Like taboo, it protects those scarce resources. Another example will help understand these remarks.

Cars industry and climate change have been themes that concerns the public opinion of the planet but at some extent, the gases emitted to atmospheres are being increased annually. There is a clear dissociation between what people say and do. Unless otherwise resolved, this dichotomy has been explained by the combination of diverse models. Almost all they fall under the idea of a paradox. From our model, we will see this is not a dilemma. The cars productive forces & chains rest on the fordist legacy and cultural values associated to competence, speed and mobilities. Given this, one might find in the market countless models of cars, in diverse colours, prices and years. Starting from the premise that price not only determines the consumer status but also its role under the societal order. Most certainly, each car in street denotes a risk for State in terms of contamination. Modern cars uses fuel based on hydrocarbons that affect seriously the atmosphere accelerating the climate change. One might think that the advance of technology made the life safer but at the same time contributed to generate new risk. This assumption characterized the literature of risk-related research. However, we see how the green house effects, supposedly produced by cars, and are created to protect the existent and exhausting reserves of oils. The discourse of global warming facilitates the aristocracies to monopolize the control over the oil reserves. The danger produced by the masification of cars elevates the prices of oil which falls under the control of status quo. When the situation of oil in Middle East is more critical, the system places more cars in street. This policy apparently irrational is aimed to legitimate the existent forms of productions based on hydrocarbons. There is no paradox unless if we assume risk is a question of perception. Risk does not entail a social shift but replicates the present ways of production of certain society. The privileged groups make from risk a disciplinary mechanism to legitimate their practices. Here the ecological discourse engenders a pervasive message, for one hand, it encourages the usage of cars and consumption of oils, non removable resources, to monopolize the control of reserves, but at the same time alludes to ecological risk to promote a change that never occurs. The risk, from our thesis, promotes the circulation of some massive goods (cars following our examples) while prohibits others which give to keepers more power (oil). Mass objects are of easy accessibility and cheaper because precisely they justify the circulation of inalienable objects. For that reason,

sociology denounced that the climate change is not generating the sufficient change in industrial societies. We are rushed also to speak of an economy of risk.

Similar observation can be extrapolated to the connection between local crime, patrimony and gentrification theory. The south of Buenos Aires city has gradually changed in the last 15 years, neighborhoods and squares as Barracas, San Telmo and La Boca have been altered and the importance of tourism in the process of urban-refurbishment seems to be unquestionable and, of course, for better or worse irreversible. To some extent, there were broader socio-economic, geographic and environmental conditions that certainly determined the failure or success of this process of touristification. This book not only synthesizes years of investigation but also it provides 10 well-written chapters combining fine qualitative research with sociological insight investigating the role played by tourism and hospitality in the transformation of urban space during the last 9 years (Herzer, 2008).

The discourse of development which emphasises private investment and access to financial loans as a form of enhancement for stakeholders is not always successful. The financial crisis which whipped Argentina in 2001 and the latter abandonment of the currency parity system by the government of Eduardo Duhalde, triggered new alternatives and challenges for the economy where tourism played a significant role. The patrimony (or heritage) engenders policies of exclusion. Through processes of valorization, touristification encourages a set of speculative policies where the poorest sectors are often relegated to peripheral zones by reinforcing the previous and profound material asymmetries. In the introductory chapter, the editor notes how gentrification creates a rise of the average income and material benefits because of increased rents, government taxes and house values, while at the same time creating more negative effects such as exclusion, conflict and emotional resentment among those involved, and that this is often underestimated. Although some scholars suggest that gentrification can help residents to boost the well-being of their community, the fact is that it represents a symbol of social inequality rooted in the core of late-capitalism. This happens simply because the financial loans are not affordable for low-qualified workers. Basically,

some places rich in tradition are fertile sources to be patrimonialized and of course subject to gentrification. This process has been widely described by many scholars in last decades but the following points illustrate better how this complex dynamic operates. First, a borough or neighbourhood situated downtown, which is occupied by middle class families, experiences a decrease of inhabitants since many people move to other areas in the quest for work and opportunities. Second, this space is gradually occupied by temporal workers or migrants (less-qualified) who pay rent and have lower salaries. At this time, the owners do not invest in infrastructure and the borough slowly starts to decline. Social pathologies as drug abuses, prostitution or crime may emerge during this phase (Herzer, 2008).

Third, expatriates who had success in other cities return home with their new families deciding to revitalize the borough by means of heavy investment. And fourth, as a final outcome, the low-skilled workers are pushed to migrate towards other destinations. Sometimes, the mobility can be forced, whenever the government exerts violence over certain “undesired groups” or ethnic minorities or indirect, which is orchestrated by means of taxes and other financial instruments. The gentrification is often difficult to study in field-work unless undertaken over a broad period of time. To what extent the low-qualified workers voluntarily migrate or are pushed is almost impossible to determine. Perhaps, the fear of crime and the process of victimization, a widely-studied issue in urban sociology, wherein some inhabitants live in isolation of the rest of residents can be an interesting indicator of this phenomenon. This question of course opens the door for a new channel for research in tourism and hospitality that contrasts notably with the current conceptualization of how heritage and patrimony are being defined. This book provides a good reason to re-examine the concept of patrimony in this light.

Over more than 10 years, the boroughs situated to the south of Buenos Aires have witnessed a process of renovation and patrimonial restoration that originally encouraged by government rescued many historical sites. In so doing, social identity played an important role because it provided the involved stakeholders not only an economic resource but also a symbolic

element to enable a sentiment of belonging to a broader nationhood. This process has been accelerated whenever Argentina experiences fiscal crisis and uses tourism as one of their primary options to generate stable jobs. These policies not only allow protecting a zone supposedly threatened by globalization but also placing Buenos Aires as a brand-product worldwide. One realizes how studies focusing on tourism and hospitality as primary concerns have multiplied in recent decades and while the goals and aims of tourism as a discipline seem not to be clear, in many cases ecological and development issues have been prioritized over other themes, whereas tourism is also an efficient mechanism for the revitalization of heritage and sustainable development. It is important not to lose sight the risk waken up by crime is functional to real state and gentrification process because allows the accessibility to lands with easier prices and the selling to the tripe of the original value.

Risks: Terrorism, Crime, and Automobiles

Korstanje (2011; 2012) mentions three examples of risk in the modern world: terrorism, crime, and automobiles. Before examining each, the notion of risk needs definition. In early capitalism, sometimes identified as mercantile capitalism, trade served as the main way to accumulate capital. Trade, especially long distance trade in the early modern period, the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, involved great risks and concomitantly, even greater profits when successful. Banking and insurance arose to cover both possibilities, with the merchants of Venice acting as models. Recently, two social theorists have proposed a different concept of risk, and they do so in two slightly different ways. Nonetheless, both agree that risk, at least the way they conceive it, is a recent phenomenon, dating from the advent of late modernity, sometime in the latter part of the twentieth century. Ulrich Beck (1986) and Anthony Giddens (1990, 1991, 1999) both say risk is a product of late modernity in which human made hazards replace natural hazards as the main threat to well being. The hazards of environmental degradation—for example, nuclear disasters, global warming, and contamination of water and air—come from human activity and pose greater threats than non-human induced dangers. The difference between the two lies in the different importance

they attach to social status. Beck says that modern risk has replaced class stratification, whereas Giddens recognizes that degrees of risk differ according to people's status in the prevailing social hierarchy. For present purposes, these differences are minor. Neither focuses on the three sources of risk identified by Korstanje (2012).

What with the US declaration of a war on terror, terrorism has assumed the publicly touted cynosure of risks and anxiety. Crime has run a close second, sometimes with little to distinguish them, since the US government has criminalized individuals deemed as terrorists because they oppose US policies, such as invasions of various strategic countries around the world, Iraq and Afghanistan most notably. Interpersonal crime assumed the mantle of a major risk in late modernity largely through the efforts of various reactionary politicians in the United States and Great Britain along with certain other strategic political ploys in other countries. Richard Nixon ran on and won the presidency of the United States in 1968 by relying on a platform devoted to curbing crime in the streets, by coded reference to which he meant racial minorities and those who opposed the US invasion of Vietnam. He won the presidency by saddling his opponent with being soft on crime. George H. W. Bush successfully used the same tactic in 1988. Both Nixon and Bush relied on a racial code in which they associated crime with racial minorities, especially Black Americans. Using terrorists as scapegoats remains less obviously racial as the terrorism label attaches mainly to a religion—Islam. In the United States, however, most adherents are Black Americans, and their co-religionists tend to be connected with people hailing from Asia and especially the Middle East where US military and economic strategic interests abide.

The totem connected with this kind of political culture is security. US policy has increasingly advanced a national and international policy of a national security state. The advantage of the national security state for the ruling class involves both diversion of public attention, and policies aimed at cementing the position of the ruling class while enriching them further at the same time. Automobiles present themselves as a remarkably clear example as the commodity as fetish. Especially in the United States, cars have long been associated with masculine sexuality. A common

cultural assumption is that having a fast and sleek car attracts women. Cars also hold the promise to men, and to women albeit usually to a lesser extent, of control of great power (hundreds of horse power) as a sexual stimulant.

Risks of terrorism and beget counter-terrorism. Risks of interpersonal crime, or at any rate, individual crime such as stealing the goose from the commons, beget domestic security apparatuses—increased policing, surveillance, and a brisk industry in home and business protection services, not to mention a growing private prison industry. Terrorism and interpersonal crime represent quintessences of alienation. In both, people attack each other as means to ends. Terrorists attack to gain some political advantage. Criminals attack their victims for economic advantage or revenge. Both types of attackers may also pursue terror and crime for other purposes, but politics economic gain, and revenge figure prominently for both types. Automobile culture represents social alienation in a different fashion. It secludes people within steel armor as they speed along their way. Individuals do not greet each other by waves or tips of the hat, calling out greetings, smiling, or giving social acknowledgement in other ways. Contrast travel by automobile with that of various forms of public transportation—trains, planes, or buses. Recently, the emergence of SUVs as the personal vehicle of choice, show the marketability of security in transport, regardless of how actuarially inaccurate the claim might be. In fact, public transport is far safer than any kind of automobile.

Marx and Freud offer counter-narratives. Freud told the story of the primal horde as a way to account for religion and subordination of masses to a fetishized object, the totem. Marx told the story of the emergence of alienated labor subordinated to another fetishized object, capital. Both these counter-narrative provide models for a lucid and critical analysis of predominant narratives of terrorism, crime, and automobile culture. The counter-narratives reveal the underlying aim to main social hierarchies by ensuring that the masses displace fears onto objects that present few dangers, while at the same time ignoring their own subordination. People yearn for the commodities they themselves produce, but no matter how many commodities they acquire, they can never fulfill their

desires, just as the fetishist cannot achieve full satisfaction of sexual desire. The effect is the same as a thirsty person drinking salt water. The masses thereby become complicit in their own servitude.

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