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## **POST-VACATION DIVORCE SYNDROME: ARE HOLIDAYS LEADING TO DIVORCES?**

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### **Resumen**

La siguiente presentación encarna una investigación sobre un tema poco investigado, pero muy presente en la vida cotidiana, el síndrome postvacacional. En forma reciente observa como muchas personas caen en casos de depression y adquieren otros síntomas que alertan a familiares. Se ha observado una correlación entre la tasa de divorcios y las vacaciones que merece ser estudiada. Según los estudiosos de este syndrome, las expectativas de las vacaciones son tan grandes que, al retorno es difícil compaginarlas con la vida cotidiana. Según esta teoría, los divorcios serían resultado de la convergencia entre expectativas muy altas sobre el destino soñado, con desequilibrios de naturaleza interna.

Key Words. Síndrome post vacacional, Psicología, Consumo, Paraíso Pérdido.

### **Abstract**

The present investigation is framed under an uncanny social issue, which is present in day to day life, but remained unchecked up to date. It is common to see how many holiday-makers fall in depression or start legal separations once returned to home after dream holidays. It is seen how there is a certain correlation between rate of divorce and the ends of holidays which merits to be explored. Per the preliminary studies, high-expectances correspond with serious glitches to be inserted in daily routine. Following this theory, the rise of divorce would be a result from the marketing role inflating the consumption and the

allegory of lost paradise, though some specialist do not discard problems in the internal nature of peoples.

Key Words. Post Vacation Syndrome, Psychology, Consumption, Lost Paradise.

## **Introduction**

Holidays today serve as mechanisms to revitalize from the frustration experienced during working life (Krippendorf, 1982). The industry of tourism is considered not only one of the most growing resources for the economy, but also the “totem” of societal order (Maccannell 1976). Nonetheless, over recent years we found some pathological syndromes in holiday makers post vocational contexts. This is dubbed as “post vacation syndrome” or “post vacation blues”, definable as a state of character caused by the return to home or the re-routing of life after periods of vacations. Known as *Monday blues* as well, it exhibits insomnia, distress, depression, or a rise of conflict which even leads toward divorces.

## **Conceptual Discussion**

As Korstanje & Busby (2011) put it, holidays represent a sacred-time where peoples not only are revitalized, their burdens are revised, but emulate the quest for the lost-paradise. Most certainly, leisure time gives to subject the possibility to liberate all repressed drives and frustrations. In so doing, the cultural values of society are inscribed in the holiday maker. As a rite of passage, tourism brings the needs of purification proper of religion. Joseph Campbell observed that the term *paradise* comes from Persian terms *Pairi (outskirt)* and *Daeza (damned space)*. Together, the word connotes to a place of prosperity impossible for human beings because of their original sin. The sense of lost-Eden contributed in the West to forge a much deeper needs of re-conquest or return to the exemplary centre (Campbell & Moyers 2011).

To some extent, this syndrome can be explained by the shocking encounter between the leisure and working modes of our brains. To put this bluntly, holiday-makers are so visually-stimulated during their leave that any sudden end entails a state of depression.

Eric Cohen (1982) argues convincingly, this is one of the characteristics of modern tourism from its outset. On one hand, marketing messages of tourist destinations emulate heaven encouraging the logic of abundance and by restricting the entrance of all but the chosen few. The combination of being in and out is one of the relevant aspects that determine “paradise”. Could Adam & Eve live in the paradise forever? A perfect paradise should be defined by perfect exclusivity and the possibility of a permanent stay for anyone clearly violates such exclusivity. This hermeneutic circle is restricted to those who do not deserve to be slaved (Cohen 1982). Other interesting finding can be found in Maccannell (1976), Salazar (2010) and Korstanje & Thirkettle (2013).

American anthropologist Nelson Graburn (1983) confirmed not only displacement causes some types of anxieties, but it wakes up an existential crisis which is regulated by an “allegory” fabricated by society. This allegory tells a story dividing what is right and wrong. By accepting tourism as a social institution, we involuntarily ascribe to the societal values. In this vein, Korstanje in earlier studies reminds that tourism is viewed as a correct behavior always the traveller do not manifest intentions to exceed the borders of hospitality. At time, leisure travellers become in illegal migrants they are pursued, jailed and deported (Korstanje, 2015). However, since tourism is a rite of passage, any glitch in the process may provoke the disintegration of the in-group loyalty (Turner, 1995).

### **Capitalism and Divorces**

One of the first disputes around divorce comes from Henry VIII who parted company with Vatican to reach his divorce. Now it has become in an epidemic primarily because of marital discord, infidelity, or children abuse. In his introduction to one of the best guidebooks on divorce, Robert E Emery, the editor, puts that low-income in families seem to be a key factor for people to divorce in United States and Europe. However, it is not determinant. While some countries like India have lower rates of divorce, the First world faces one of the most exorbitant growths of divorce-related rates. Secondly, divorce affects not only the mental health of parents and their children but also changes radically the economic structure of society (Emery, 2013). C. Lasch established a more than interesting thesis that relates divorce (social ties decline) to the surface of a new narcissism where people avoid Other-commitment (Lasch, 1991). Following this working hypothesis, Ming Cui (2013) defines “commitment” as the intention to

keep stable relationships in a long-term. As a result of the combination of personal dedication with external or situational constraints, Cui adds, satisfaction plays a crucial role in the configuration of marital attachments. However, there are forces who determine the degree of commitment with the couple, no matter than the personal intentions. Most likely, some personalities may experience fear if commitment which leads to pour parental experiences.

Though sociology has exerted considerable criticism on tourism in view of alienatory nature or the trend to commoditize landscapes, cultures and peoples (Debord 1967, Maccannell 1976; Urry, 1992), no less true is that travels engender liminal spaces of tension and conflict not always is correctly resolved. Indeed, what is more than interesting to discuss is to what an extent, holidays play a crucial role in precipitating marital tensions to consolidate divorces. Ronald Inglehart says that divorces as a clear sign of social decomposition, enrooted in the core of post-industrial life. The advance of leisure and service industries weakened the social relationships of workers, accelerating the stage of secularization. The sense of autonomy, self-independence and achievement placed men in competition of women, creating serious conflicts for couples (Inglehart, 1997).

Some recent statistics show the rise of divorce rates worldwide. Not only, families are placed in the context of change by the rise of informal civil unions but 50% of American families have a second marriage. Following this, the average impact of marriage/union interruption is almost 3/7 years<sup>1</sup>. This social fragmentation produces negative consequences for children who spend less time with their parents or even inside the couple by the increase of intra-marital violence. Some ciphers show that in Argentina one of three divorces is encouraged by women. From 2001 to 2010, in Argentina were almost 564396 legal divorces. Whether in 80s decade almost 114 couples divorced in a daily basis, this decreased to 87. However, something changed from 2001 to 2010,

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<sup>1</sup> Source. Las Alarmantes estadísticas del divorcio. Nos Divorciamos.com.

<http://www.nosdivorciamos.com/?quien=bW9kdWxvPWludGVybmEmdGFibGE9YXJ0aWN1bG8mb3BjaW9uPTE3>.

where statistics reveal almost 172 divorces per day. One from 3 cases turns in divorces forced in post-holiday environments (Himitian, 2012).

Far from finding a solution for this, the present commentary piece is aimed at introducing the problem into tourism and hospitality fields. In the coming years, further empirical background should be necessary. Hypothetically, divorces and post vocational syndrome would be inextricably intertwined.

The involving statistical information was obtained from the official department of Statistics of Buenos Aires, Government and Information managed by Dirección General de Estadística y Censos (Ministerio de Hacienda GCBA). Estadísticas Vitales (General Direction of statistics and Census, Ministry of Economy, GCBA. It is important to remind that outcomes of this research are not based on samples which are statistically representative Argentina all; for that reason, extrapolations beyond the present unit of analysis are not recommendable. The information discussed below applies only for Buenos Aires City, Buenos Aires Distrito Capital.

**Table 1- Rate of divorces (per 1.000 inhabitants)**

	Rate- Divorce.
1990	2,78
1995	2
2000	2
2005	2,3
2010	2,2
2012	1,9

**Source: Office of statistics, Buenos Aires Government**

As per statistics of Buenos Aires city (Argentina), divorce rates have not varied significantly from 1990 to 2012, however, if further attention to the relation marriage-divorce is drawn in table 2, interesting outcome are found.

**Table 2- Relation Divorces / Marriages**

	Divorces	Marriages	Index
1990	7993	21966	36,4
1995	6005	16966	35,4
2000	6007	16766	35,8

2005	7045	14713	47,9
2010	6594	13390	49,2
2012	5866	12667	46,3

**Source: Office of statistics, Buenos Aires Government**

Table 2 evinces the rise of the index from 36.4 in 1990 to 46.3 in 2012. This index measures the number of divorces respecting to marriages. This means that the increase of divorce rates is correlative with the decrease of marriages. Starting from this premise, it is necessary to discuss to what extent holidays are determinant in the divorce rates.

Table 3 – Divorce per Season, 2012.

	<b>Month</b>	<b>Index</b>
January	216	3,68
February	359	6,12
March	609	10,38
April	477	8,13
May	552	9,41
June	572	9,75
July	402	6,85
August	527	8,98
Septembre	488	8,32
October	604	10,30
Novembre	536	9,14
Dicembre	524	8,93
<b>Total</b>	<b>5866</b>	

**Source: Office of statistics, Buenos Aires Government**

The information above (table 3) reports the index of divorces disaggregated by month (from January to December of 2012). Unlike the Northern hemisphere, summer-seasons are registered in the months of January, February and March. At a first glance, in the year January is the month with fewer divorces (206) followed by February 359. In this vein, holidays seem not to correlate to divorces unless by the fact that March escalated to 609 cases of divorces. It is interesting to not lose the sight that per this index we pass from 3.68 in January to 10.38 in March. Not surprisingly, legal separations are submitted time earlier or later from vacations. This poses a serious challenge to our insight because we have not accurate points of departure about when the rupture was. Anyway, we may accomplish alternative advances with the same information. Distributed the

information by trimester (tiers), we find that the first tier, which range from January to March, gathers 1.184 cases of divorces while the last tier (encompassing October, November and December) contains 1.664 cases. In view of that, it can be thought holidays are not the real cause of divorce, as originally thought, but affects the social bonds in some way (it is not possible to determine unless by qualitative methods). As Victor Turner puts it, social disaggregation is marked by the presence of key dates which can potentiate the conflict if it exists. Celebrations and Feasts as Christmas or New Year are disorganizing events for familiar unit. Based on the idea that emotional rupture is accelerated by the advance of New Year (instead of summer-season), we understand why March has reached the peak of divorce rates than other months. Although the information is not determinant and cannot be extrapolated to another sources and scenarios, two relevant aspects are clear. Firstly, divorces are accelerated by the Christmas and New Year. In conflict-latent contexts, holidays and vocational post syndrome would play a crucial role in triggering the decision of divorce in the couple. What would be more important to debate is to what extent, the illusion or fictionality of dream-world holidays contribute to the observed divorce rates. The post-vocational syndrome offers a fertile ground to continue empirical investigation in next approaches.

## **Conclusion**

The evidence provided by us gives some new insights into the post-vacation distress syndrome, timidly explored by experimental psychology. Neither leisure-travel nor holidays alone produce the crisis that led couples towards legal separations; yet, these create “crisis of vital cycles”. Turner argues that cultures elaborate rites of passage in order for the Gods to be thanked or absolved for the prosperity achieved or the material deprivation suffered.

Whenever social ties are not strong enough, as the case for modern social life, the involving group faces discrepancies and conflicts, which if not dully regulated may lead to decomposition. The global tendency of increased divorces not only seems to be unquestionable, but also advocates for the concern of the founding parents of sociology that ties in social contracts are being weakened.

Limitations of this research should be mentioned. The sample has been drawn on the divorces data of 2012 in the Buenos Aires city (Registro Civil de la Ciudad de

Buenos Aires). Also, since the method employed by the local government gets changed often, it is almost impossible to compare information year by year.

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