Chapter 4
The Social Dimensions of the Crisis

We cannot accurately examine either the ecological or demographic situation on the planet separately from the social crisis, though until recently that was exactly what most people did. They imagined nature as merely the backdrop for the stage on which the social drama played itself out. But today we hardly need to prove the deep connection between the social and natural environments, even if it doesn't always make itself plain. Thus, there are firm grounds for calling the present ecological crisis a socio-ecological one, which we will here attempt to demonstrate.

The various regions of the world each experience this crisis in their own peculiar ways, and the most vital problems of one country may not even be a blip on the radar of others. Take, for example, the most serious social problem of developing countries, *poverty*. We can examine the various degrees of poverty in either relative or absolute terms. Relative poverty is a more relevant question for economically developed countries, which we can define in comparison to the accepted, "normal" standard of living for a given society. The criteria of absolute poverty are primarily connected to physiological factors, the need for the vital resources which preserve the biological life of a person. Based on the criteria of per-person income, the UN and World Bank have established a critical threshold of poverty equal to $1.25 a day in the purchasing power of constant international US dollars. Around the world, 1.2 billion people live in this condition of *extreme poverty*.

At the UN Millennium Summit in New York in 2000, participants set "Millennium Development Goals" for the next 15 years that included battling poverty, hunger, and disease as well as mother and child mortality. The most impressive gains were made in East Asia, where poverty levels fell from 60% in 1990 to 16% in 2005 and continued downward to 12% by 2010. China alone reduced the number of its people living on under $1.25 a day by 600 million people. Worldwide, the proportion of the population fell by half, from 52% in 1981 to 26% (World Bank Group 2011) (Fig. 4.1).

Unfortunately, this process more weakly affected South Asia. Although the proportion of those living in poverty fell from 50 to 30% (1990–2010), the overall number of impoverished remained the same due to population growth. In Sub-Saharan Africa, attempts to relieve poverty went practically unrewarded. Half

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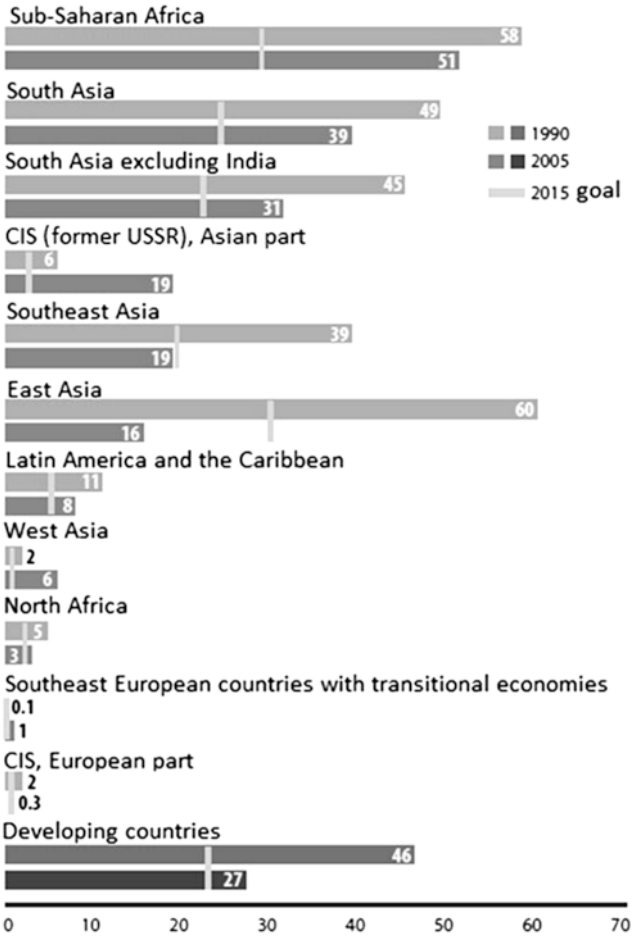

Fig. 4.1 Proportion of people living below the poverty threshold (less than $1.25 per day) in 1990 and 2005 (light and dark bars, respectively). The vertical stripe represents the goal for 2015. Source: Alkire and Santos (2010)

of the population still lives in poverty, and, alone among all regions of the world, the absolute number of the poor rose—from 290 million in 1990 to 414 million in 2010. Here the difficult economic situation suffers further under the weight of ethnic warfare, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and a merry-go-round of coups d'état (Millennium Development Goals… 2013). These countries in particular—The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Niger, etc.—with average incomes of less than $1000 a year, head up the list of poorest countries in the world. Meanwhile, the distance between the poorest countries and the richest has only increased over the past 40 years.

In 1970, the average income in countries belonging to the richest quartile in global ratings was 23 times higher than those in the poorest quartile. By 2010, the difference had grown to 29 times. Residents of the 13 poorest countries are receiving a lower income on average today than they were in 1970. In Zimbabwe, the poorest of the poor, they make 25% less. As the UN Human Development Report 2010 acknowledges, "The distance between the richest and poorest countries has widened to a gulf." Thus, a person born in Niger, for example, lives an average of 26 years less than one born in Denmark, and consumes 55 times fewer goods (Human Development… 2010).

Poverty tells especially hard upon children, and, as a rule, the damage suffered at a young age is irreversible. We must, therefore, consider the tale of Oliver Twist, composed by jolly old Dickens for lovers of happy endings, a fairy tale having little in common with a decidedly merciless and cynical reality. The statistics brought forth in the Human Development Report 2014 speak for themselves. One in five children in the developing world, where 92% of the world's children are, lives in a condition of absolute poverty according to family income and is especially susceptible to malnutrition. Seven out of a hundred such children never live to age five, and fifty will never have a birth record. Seventeen of them will never go to school, and 30 will suffer stunted growth due to inadequate nutrition. This last factor leads to the fatal outcome in 35% of deadly cases of measles, malaria, inflammatory pneumonia and diarrhea. A lack of plumbing and clean drinking water greatly increases these children's risk of infectious diseases (Human Development… 2014).

The outlook for these children's futures is no less grim. "Lacking basic nutrition, health care and stimulation to promote healthy growth, many poor children enter school unready to learn, and they do poorly in class, repeat grades and are likely to drop out. For children who survive, poverty and undernutrition during preschool years account for a subsequent loss of more than two school grades…When educational attainment is reduced, vulnerabilities are transmitted across generations by limiting children's future learning and employment opportunities" (Human Development… 2014). In this way, by starting a person down a bad road from their first days on Earth, poverty has the ability to self-perpetuate from generation to generation, leaving those caught under its spell little chance of escape.

But how much can we depend upon a purely monetary benchmark like average per-person income? How well does it paint the full picture of a complicated phenomenon like poverty? Poverty and want are multifaceted, expressing themselves in many dimensions. They encompass a lack of opportunity in life, an unfulfilled yearning for knowledge from lack of access to education, a paucity of means to support the health and energy of one's life. Finally, poverty is the absence of conditions to maintain a basic sense of self-respect and human dignity.

All of these considerations prompted scientists to explore new approaches to the problem, resulting in the 2010 proposal of a new integrated benchmark, the *Multidimensional Poverty Index* (MPI). The MPI provides researchers with a more complete "face" of poverty compared with the traditional approach based on income. At present, it is accepted by the majority of countries and most organizations, including the UN, that study issues of poverty and social inequality.

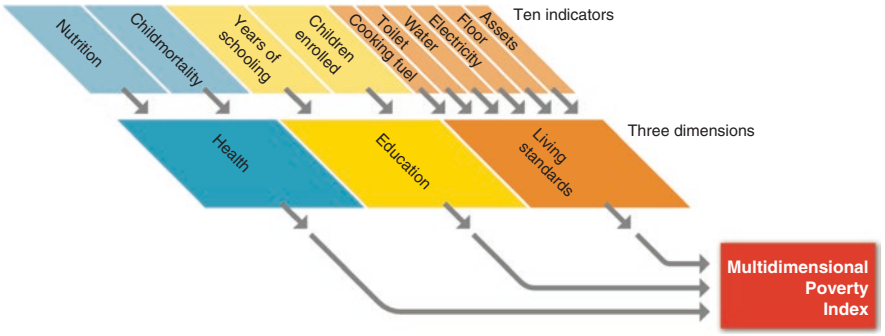

Fig. 4.2 Components of the Multidimensional Poverty Index. Source: Alkire and Santos (2010)

Drawing on three basic data sets concerning health, education and standards of living, the MPI shows how many people at the family or household level (the scale of poverty) are experiencing various forms of want or deprivation, and how many of these forms they are suffering from at once (its depth and intensity). The MPI is used to compare the weight of poverty upon families in various situations, such as one where a 5-year-old child died and the older brothers and sisters don't go to school, or another living in a house without plumbing, water or electricity with an earthen floor and dirty fuel (dung, wood, charcoal) fouling the air inside.

Figure 4.2 shows the three basic measures of the MPI—health, education and standard of living—and ten indicators corresponding to types of deprivation people face. So, the health measurement has two indicators—a lack of food for any member of the household, and the number of children in the family who have died. The education measurement ascertains the number of children who fail to attend school, as well as the number of adults without a fifth grade education. Finally, the standard of living measurement contains six indicators which count earthen floors, the use of dirty fuel for cooking, lack of electrification, lack of plumbing, lack of access to clean drinking water as well as lack of a car or truck and at least one of the following—bicycle, motorcycle, radio, refrigerator, telephone or television.

For a household to be considered multi-dimensionally poor, it should suffer several deprivations at once—at least three of the ten. Scientists then calculate the MPI by multiplying the impoverished share of the population (*H)* by the depth or intensity indicator of Poverty (*A)*, giving them the median number of deprivations people suffer (Human…2010).

As we have already said, income data often fails to paint the full picture of poverty and does not contain information about the health and education of the corresponding population groups. The income of paupers does not always convert to education and health, which depend on local conditions not only at the national level, but also at the state or provincial level. Some poor countries, such as Tanzania, Uzbekistan and Sri Lanka, provide medical care and education free or at a nominal price. In others, like Niger or Ethiopia, such services often prove inaccessible even to the gainfully employed. That is how the MPI supplements financial indicators of

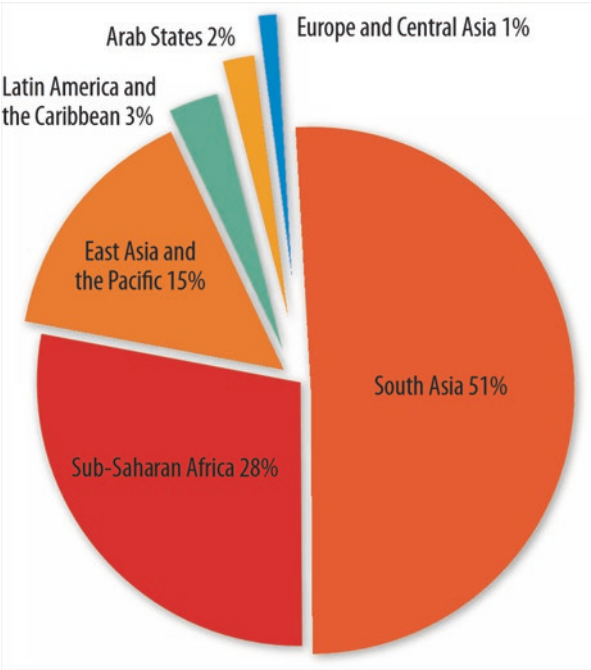

Fig. 4.3 Distribution of the multi-dimensionally poor population in developing countries by region. Sample includes 92% of the populations of 98 countries. Source: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/270/hdr_2010_en_complete_reprint.pdf

poverty and enables governments to form more effective policies in this area. And while we can observe a correlation between assessments of poverty based on the MPI and the $1.25 per day indicator, these two assessments noticeably diverge at both national and worldwide levels. Thus, according to research, from 2001 to 2010 about 1.7 billion people (almost one-fourth of the global population) lived in a condition of multi-dimension poverty, while only 1.3 billion lived on less than $1.25 a day. Both of these numbers come from 109 developing countries with a total population of 5.5 billion. As we can see, this represents a substantial distinction (UN Human Development Index for 2011).

Sub-Saharan African countries suffer the highest percentages of multidimensional poverty. Worst off is Niger, where the number has reached the monstrous proportions of 92%. Not far behind follow Ethiopia at 89% and Mali at 87%, then another twenty-three of the poorest African states. More than half of families have survived the death of a child, and roughly as many lack even a rudimentary education. In absolute numbers, however, the largest populations of the multidimensionally impoverished live in South Asia—Pakistan, Bangladesh and India (See diagram, Fig. 4.3). In just eight of India's 28 states, there live more multidimensionally poor people (421 million) than in all of those 26 poorest African countries combined (410 million). And this is despite obvious progress in India's 30-year war on poverty, which increased spending on social services and reduced poverty from 50% in 1983 to 32.7% in 2010 (Human…2010, 2013).

But, it must be added, the most terrible companion of poverty is *famine* which periodically strikes enormous swathes of populations in poorly-developed countries.

Indeed, the threat of famine has hung over the human race like the sword of Damocles since biblical times, pushing whole tribes and nations to the edge of existence. Whole cities and towns died out in the face of drought, disaster and poor harvests, often exacerbated by social upheaval and war. The 1921–22 famine in the Volga Region that killed five million people, a consequence of the Russian Civil War, comes to mind.

Famine periodically came to Europe's doorstep right up to the end of the nineteenth century. The potato blight and subsequent hunger in Ireland from 1845 to 1849 is the clearest example, when a pathogenic fungus struck the staple crop of the Irish poor. Up to 1.5 million people died, and as many emigrated, many to America, directly resulting in a loss of roughly a quarter of the population. Only in the twentieth century, as new methods of agronomy and selection brought higher-yielding crops to the fields, did the threat of famine retreat from Europe and North America for good. Today, countries inhabited by a mere 18% of the Earth's population provide ¾ of the world's food production, with the largest exporters being the USA, Canada, Australia, France and Argentina.

But, you see a completely different picture in developing countries with their rapidly expanding populations, in most of which harvests cannot keep up. Granted, the Green Revolution of the post-war decades significantly alleviated the problem with its high-tech approaches to cultivation. In the 1950s and '60s, grain production even outpaced population growth. In the long term, however, since the 1980s, the increase of grain production has slowed by about 1% per year, which has primarily affected economically disadvantaged countries where the demographic boom continued but suitable farmland melted away like an overused stick of chalk. And while the number of chronically malnourished has decreased, from 920 million in the early '70s to 850 million today, it remains very high. As nearly all those suffering from a shortage of food are concentrated at equatorial latitudes, we might speak of a famine and malnutrition belt, encircling the globe on either side of 0° and including Central America, the Caribbean nations, South and Southeast Asia and all of tropical Africa. In this last region, the poorest on earth, roughly 200 million people suffer from malnutrition, with numbers reaching 30–40% of the population in countries like Chad, Somalia, Uganda, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Zambia (Maksakovsky 2008, Book 1).

One in eight of the world's inhabitants suffer from chronic malnutrition today, and nine million people a year (25,000/day) die from resultant complications. The war against hunger, therefore, is one of the UN's top priorities. With this in mind, the UN Millennium Development goals, approved by member states in 2000, set the goal of cutting the 1990 number of hungry in half by 2015, along with the number of poor earning under $1 a day (Millenium…report for 2013). A number of gains have certainly been made. Since 1990–92, the share of malnourished in developing countries overall decreased from 23 to 15%. In Southeast Asia, it fell from 30 to 11%. In East Asia, including China, it went from 21 to 12%, so we can consider, at least in some places, this millennium goal reached (See Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Share of people suffering from malnutrition in 1990–92 and 2010–12

Region	Share of people suffering from malnutrition 1990–92, %	Share of people suffering from malnutrition 2010–12, %
Sub-Saharan Africa	32	27
South Asia	27	18
East Asia	21	12
Southeast Asia	30	11
West Asia	7	10
Latin America	15	8
Central Asia	14	7
North Africa	4	3
All developing countries	23	15

Source: Millennium… (2013)

The situation in Latin America was a bit worse. Only in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa did efforts fall well short of the mark. But the hope of halving the army of the famished by 2015 clearly did not come to pass. Not only did the global financial crisis of 2008–2010 take a particularly heavy toll on the economies of poor countries, but ongoing factors, such as exhaustion of natural resources, the dwindling of tillable land and shortages of water for irrigation, made themselves felt. We are clearly approaching a ceiling in our use of the World Ocean's renewable resources. FAO specialists have demonstrated the extent to which they have been overdrawn. Nine of the seventeen main fishing areas are on the edge of collapse. Thus, we cannot count on a material increase in the global fish catch either (Maksakovsky 2008).

And so, the ambitious plans to eliminate hunger in underdeveloped countries remain as yet unfulfilled, with many unknowns regarding their execution. Only time will tell whether or not the problem can be solved. *Demoscope Weekly*, the online periodical of the Higher School of Economics' Institute of Demography, expressed it this way, "Furthermore, there can be no certainty that the introduction of efficient agricultural technology, should it become economically feasible, would lead to an end of food shortages. By now we are well aware that applying these technologies often brings about unforeseen consequences and gives rise to new difficulties…In any case, rapid growth of food production under the conditions of general poverty will result in an increased burden on the planet's natural resources, pushing them to the brink of total exhaustion" (*Demoscope* 2002).

Poverty and environmental degradation are inseparably linked to one another. Three-fourths of the world's poor live in rural areas, practicing traditional forms of agriculture. As a rule, they cultivate ill-suited land—dry, steep terraces, infertile soil from destroyed tropical forests and such. Lacking technological and financial means to support soil fertility or to battle salinization and erosion, this leads to the rapid depletion of cultivated land.

The rest of the impoverished, moving into cities, mainly settle on the edge of town among wastelands and garbage dumps. Neither the inhabitants who live on one-two dollars a day, nor the local government, has funds to clean up the urban environment. As a result, solid refuse builds up on the city streets, polluting soil and air, particularly when burned in open fires which produce many toxic byproducts.

As a rule, the housing is poorly furnished, and wood and brush serve as fuel for heat and cooking. Burnt in primitive stoves, this smokes up and befouls the home. The gathering of this wood from nearby forests serves as one of the main causes of deforestation (along with commercial logging). Take the cutting down of forests near Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, for example, which has led to the complete elimination of valuable tree species for a radius of 200 km around the city. Spreading at a rate of 9 km/year, this wave of degradation has seriously damaged both the biodiversity and the biological productivity of surviving ecosystems. There are now 70% fewer species in remaining nearby forests than in those further from the city, and the compromised lands absorb 90% less carbon. Thus, with increasing demand for construction lumber and without a cheap alternative for firewood and charcoal, African megalopolises are turning into major centers of environmental degradation (WWF Living Planet, 2010).

Developing countries have a serious problem with providing clean water and plumbing to their populations, the lack of which is closely bound to poverty. At present about 1.2 billion people lack access to quality drinking water in developing countries and a number of former Soviet republics. Twice as many do not have plumbing, which increases the risk of intestinal disease, cholera, dysentery, typhoid and hepatitis. World Health Organization (WHO) specialists estimate that about five million people die as a result of using polluted water each year. As former WHO director Halfdan Mahler noted, “The number of water taps per 1000 people is a better indicator of health than the number of hospital beds.” (Danilov-Danil’yan and Losev 2006, p. 100)

But while the number of people without access to safe water is gradually shrinking, the population of those lacking toilets continues to grow, primarily in developing countries. The absence of plumbing leads to worsening fecal contamination of both surface and groundwater and declining drinking water quality, causing the abovementioned five million deaths due to unsanitary conditions (Danilov-Danil’yan and Losev 2006).

Industrial pollution represents another acute problem for developing countries. The arrival of urbanization and industrial development has made clear its harrowing extent, though this evil might have been predictable given the cultural and technological backwardness of the countries involved. Europe and the USA contributed to this in no small part, transferring their “dirty” production to the territory of former colonies without showing appropriate regard for occupational safety of the construction of waste treatment facilities. Furthermore, developing countries often serve as dumping grounds for household and industrial waste brought in from other regions. Thus, for example, electronic garbage is delivered to Vietnam, India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Ghana in exchange for a small fee. One of the largest scrapyards for decommissioned ships makes its home in the Bangladeshi city of

Chittagong. As the vessels are scrapped, toxic lead waste products litter the shoreline, and motor oil diffuses through the coastal waters.

Let's name a few more of the most infamously polluted cities of Asia, Africa and the Americas. In Hazaribagh, Bangladesh, a leather-working center, hexavalent chromium used for tanning spills into the river without any purification. Kabwe, Zambia, is surrounded by lead contamination for miles around as a result of unregulated mining over the course of the entire twentieth century. Accra, the capital of Ghana, hosts one of the world's largest electronic garbage heaps, which is largely burned in open fires. Port Harcourt, Nigeria and the Niger River Delta, polluted with oil drilling and refinery waste. The mining town of La Oroya, Peru, called the Peruvian Chernobyl. Copper, zinc, lead and Sulphur dioxide pollute the surrounding area. Acid rain has burned away nearly all vegetation, and most residents have lead concentrations in their bloodstreams at two to three times acceptable levels.

Finally, we must say a few words about India and China, bearing in mind their special place among developing countries.

The ecological situation in China is one of the most complicated on the planet, both due to demographic overfill and the mass-movement policies of the Great Leap Forward conducted under Mao's dictatorship. During that time, millions of acres of pasture went under the plow to create more farmland, and the upper reaches of the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers were stripped of hundreds of thousands of acres of forest, leading to a massive disruption of the ecological balance, soil degradation, decertification, and wider damage areas from natural disasters, especially floods. Today, over half the population lives under poor environmental conditions, and China is home to ten of the world's twenty most polluted cities (Maksakovsky 2008, book 2). China takes first place in the world for organic pollutants in the water, which has made most of the rivers unsuitable as sources for drinking water or fish. It takes second place to the USA in carbon dioxide emissions. But while motorized transport serves as the main atmosphere polluter in Western countries, in China that role is played by hydrocarbon-based power plants and industrial furnaces that run on coal, a fuel that is also widely used by average households. From this comes the problem of smog in major cities, where you cannot go out without a facemask in inclement weather. Furthermore, the Chinese market uses soap with a high level of sulfur content, which is banned in most countries. This gives rise to regular acid rain, causing great damage to farming and forest ecosystems.

While India, after gaining independence in 1948, chose a democratic path of development, it hardly managed to improve upon the Chinese model in terms of ecological stress. In this we see the effects of both the country's colonial past and the demographic explosion of the twentieth century. The world's second largest country by population, India occupies sixth place in carbon emissions into the atmosphere and third, after China and the US, in the scale of organic pollution to surface waterways. Ninety percent of this pollution comes from industrial and domestic waste of cities, much of it dumped into rivers without any treatment whatsoever (Maksakovsky 2008). As concerns carbon emissions, 35% have their origin in industrial or power plant and about 40%—in motorized transport. Power plants most often use high-ash coal, and cars—low-quality leaded gasoline. We can add to

that the large-scale use of wood as household fuel, for which large swathes of forest are constantly cut down. This has led to deforestation in India at a rate of up to 1.5 mln ha per year.

In light of all this, it should come as no surprise that many developing countries have lost a significant part of their natural ecosystems. The process of destroying tropical forests continues in the Amazon, Central America, equatorial Africa, South and Southeast Asia. In some countries, such as El Salvador, Jamaica and Haiti, they are practically all cut down already. The Philippines has left a mere 30% of its original forests. That country comes in second in the total area of forest removed each year at 10.8 thousand km^2, following only Brazil with its 25 thousand km^2 per year. In relative terms, the fastest deforesters are Bangladesh, which destroys 4.1% of its forests each year, followed by Pakistan and Thailand at 3.5% each (Maksakovsky 2008, book 1). The situation with forest ecosystems rests a bit better in Africa, though in some countries there they have been destroyed almost entirely. That includes Rwanda and Burundi, thoroughly farmed countries with quickly growing populations.

Impoverishment, unemployment and widespread vulnerability to natural disaster or military conflict have all served as causes bringing denizens of the world's poorer regions to search out better lives in the more prosperous countries of Europe and North America. Huge masses of people from developing countries are taking part in this migration process. But it was not always so.

Until the mid-twentieth century, it was Europe itself that served as the hotbed of outward migration. The Age of Discovery provided the first jolt, creating a precedent for the Old World's surplus population to flow into the unconquered expanses of Siberia, Australia and the Americas. This process reached its fullest extent only in the late nineteenth century. From 1820 to 1920, over 50 million people emigrated to the United States. At various times, this was brought about by hunger (as with the Irish in the 1840s), the tyranny of monarchical and totalitarian regimes, pogroms against Jews in Russia, genocide against Armenians in the Ottomon Empire and other assorted miseries.

But now the flow of migration has gone in the opposite direction. Just as in previous centuries, it is most often a flight from overpopulation, hunger, poverty, internecine warfare and ethnic strife. As the UN Human Development Report for 2004 said, the stream of people from poor countries has provided almost all immigration to Western Europe, Australia and North America in recent decades. Today, almost one in ten residents of these prosperous regions was born outside them. Refugees make up about 9% of immigrants, having fled political repression or war (Human development…2014). In 2013 the number of migrants was 247 million, a full 3.2% of the Earth's population (*Demoscope* 2015). And the number has only risen since.

Of course, such an enormous influx of cheap labor cannot help but tell upon the economies of the countries that accept it, especially as demand increases for workers to fill the job openings sometimes referred to as "3D" (dirty, dangerous and degrading). These jobs go first and foremost to immigrants from poor countries who, lacking union representation and social protections, are willing to accept low

wages. This allows employers to save money on labor costs, providing a competitive advantage for their businesses.

Particularly advantageous to employers is the hiring of illegal immigrants who make up 10–20% of labor migrants worldwide according to estimates by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Lacking lawful residency in their country of work or any labor contract, illegal immigrants are prepared to accept low wages and difficult conditions, becoming targets for the most shameless forms of exploitation (Taran 2010, p. 70–71).

Even under these conditions, the migrants' earnings throw a meaningful lifeline to their families left at home. Considering the scale of modern migration, these various rivulets of cash, on coming together, form a mighty tributary to the economies of developing countries, second in importance only to direct foreign investment as a financial stream and doubling in amount official channels of foreign aid (Glushcenko 2005). Furthermore, emigrants working abroad acquire valuable skills, training and experience, which forms a positive influence on their return, encouraging increased effectiveness and a raised level of culture.

Granted, not all emigrants return to their countries willingly. The contrast in standard of living between Europe, Australia or North America and countries of the third world is too great. If there is even the slightest chance to gain a foothold in the new country, most migrants will use it. As demographer P. Taran notes, labor immigrants from developing countries suffered first in the recent economic crisis due to terminations, lost wages and worsening labor conditions, but nonetheless a majority preferred not to return home unless threatened with forced deportation. "Even when financial rewards were offered for voluntary departure, they preferred to stay… Because the situation at home was still worse." (Taran 2010, p. 85)

This glaring contrast between economically developed and backward countries represents a major problem of world order. While strict caste boundaries divided rich and poor as a fact of life in antiquity and the middle ages, such divisions in our own time, particularly applied to entire peoples, look like social injustice in light of the ideal of full equality under the law. Why should the people of one nationality live in happiness and plenty, even in clear excess, when others must permanently suffer hunger and want?

This economic inequality gives rise to social tension and instability worldwide, and, therefore, serves as a serious roadblock in the path to sustainable development, as most politicians understand. In order to help underdeveloped countries escape the clutches of poverty, 34 of the world's most developed states now provide official development aid under the auspices of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In 2012, this aid added up to 125.6 billion dollars, corresponding to 0.29% of the total GNP of donor countries. The US, England, Germany, France and Japan led in donations (Millennium… 2013).

Another tool of economic aid to poor countries is writing down sovereign debt. In the period from 2000 to 2010, the share of receipts from exports spent on servicing sovereign debt in developing countries fell from 11.9 to 3%. Under the IMF's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, 35 states were totally liberated from the yoke of debt (Millennium… 2013).

But financial aid is only one of the global strategies being implemented for closing the gap between developed and underdeveloped countries. Forming such strategies would be impossible without a system of objective criteria for properly judging the social and economic condition of various countries and the *quality of life* of their populations.

This familiar term emerged into wider usage among scientists internationally in the last quarter century along with proposals to give it quantitative value. For this purpose, researchers have primarily adopted the Human Development Index (HDI), developed in 1990 by a group of economists led by Pakistani Mahbub ul Haq as part of the UN Development Programme. After all, human potential is the most important economic resource a nation can have, and one of the conditions of its functioning. So, for a postindustrial society, the worker as a harmoniously developed person represents a specific value, and the costs of education, training and healthcare are considered among their most gainful investments.

While the Multidimensional Poverty Index applies mainly to evaluating the situation in developing countries, the HDI carries a more universal meaning. It provides the opportunity to evaluate the quality of life in any country through a complex points system and to rank and compare different countries and regions. If the HDI-based rating of a country stands higher than its GDP rating, that means it is efficiently converting achievements in economic development into prosperity and living standards for its population. An inverse relationship testifies to a weak link between the economic progress of a country and the interests of most of its citizens.

The Human Development Index is calculated based on three components: life expectancy, average and expected years of schooling and real per capita income—GDP per person adjusted for buying power. These three measurements are then standardized on a scale of 0 to 1, the maximum being the highest rating that any country has achieved in each area since 1980. Thus, in 2010 the highest life expectancy was 83 years, the longest expected period of schooling was 20.6 years, and the highest yearly income per capita was $108 thousand. As the minimum, imagine a "natural zero" corresponding to the lowest figures necessary for survival: A life expectancy of 20 years, no years of schooling and $163 per person. Those are the lowest figures any country has reached in recorded history.

The HDI represents a geometric average of all three indexes within the range of 0–1, calculated through a special formula. Further, based on this synthesized indicator, the countries are ranked into three or four groups: Countries with a low HDI (lower than 0.55), countries with a medium HDI (0.55–0.7), and countries with a high or very high HDI (above 0.8) (Human Development…2010). The UN Human Development report, released yearly, contains a summary with each publication. Below we have presented selected data on HDI ratings of countries for 2013 (Table 4.2).

Norway traditionally heads up the list of countries with a very high level of human development with a life expectancy of 81.3 years and an average yearly income of $65,000 per person. Rounding out the top five are Australia, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the USA. Nearly all European states belong to the 0.8+ HDI group, including the Baltic nations, along with the most advanced countries in Asia

Table 4.2 Groups of countries with different HDI levels

Place	Country	HDI
Countries with a very high level of human development		
1	Norway	0.944
2	Australia	0.933
3	Switzerland	0.917
5	USA	0.914
6	Germany	0.911
8	Canada	0.902
14	United Kingdom	0.892
17	Japan	0.890
19	Israel	0.888
20	France	0.884
49	Argentina	0.808
Countries with a high level of human development		
53	Belarus	0.786
57	Russia	0.778
69	Turkey	0.759
70	Kazakhstan	0.757
71	Mexico	0.756
75	Iran	0.749
79	Brazil	0.744
80	Georgia	0.744
83	Ukraine	0.734
91	China	0.719
Countries with a medium level of human development		
103	Turkmenistan	0.698
108	Indonesia	0.684
110	Egypt	0.682
116	Uzbekistan	0.661
117	Philippines	0.660
118	South Africa	0.658
135	India	0.586
142	Bangladesh	0.558
Countries with a low level of human development		
146	Pakistan	0.537
152	Nigeria	0.504
156	Zimbabwe	0.492
168	Haiti	0.471
169	Afghanistan	0.468
173	Ethiopia	0.435
185	Central African Republic	0.341
186	Democratic Republic of Congo	0.338
187	Niger	0.337

Source: Human Development Report (2014)

and Latin America (Japan, Israel, South Korea, Argentina, Chile, etc.) and some of the leading petro-states (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates).

Along with the BRICS States of Russia, Brazil and China, the high-HDI group includes the Post-Soviet countries of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and the three Caucasian republics. But the bulk of developing states in Asia, Latin America and Africa's periphery show themselves typical of the medium-level HDI, represented by the major examples of Indonesia, Egypt, the Philippines, South Africa, India and Bangladesh, which should give a concrete idea of what "medium" means. These are poor countries with low per-capita incomes. South Africa leads the group at $13,225 per year. The average Indonesian makes $11,612, the average Indian—$6572, and the average Bangladeshi—$3580 (The World Bank Group 2017).

Countries with a low HDI, the poorest of the poor, round out the table. Nearly all are in Sub-Saharan Africa, though the Asian countries of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nepal also fall into this group, along with the unfortunate Caribbean nation of Haiti. Even within this group, there are outliers of extreme poverty—the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Niger. In order to imagine the reigning destitution of such places, it is enough to compare them with any of the leading countries ranked. The life expectancy here is extremely low—45–50 years. These countries have the most disadvantageous social climates. Less than 30% of the population can read and write, and the per-capita GDP is lower than $1000 per year. Worse, the impoverished condition of the poorest African countries is often exacerbated by destructive and frequent armed conflicts.

Thus, the efforts of the global community to reduce the distance between rich and poor, between the flowering prosperity of some countries and the hopeless backwardness of others, have failed to make practically any impact on the poorest nations of Africa. The same cannot be said of developing nations as a whole. From 1990 to 2010, the average HDI indicator rose from 0.57 to 0.68, which means the gap between developed and developing countries closed by 1/5 over that period. If you go back to 1970, the gap closed by a quarter. As the 2010 Human Development Report puts it, "On average then, living in a developing country today is more similar—at least for these basic health and education indicators— to living in a developed country than was the case 40 or even 20 years ago." (Human Development…. 2010).

Nonetheless, despite this overall positive swing, the global polarization of wealth continues. Have a look at the following numbers. In 1960, the income gap between the richest 20% and poorest 20% of the world's population stood at roughly 30:10. By 1995, this ratio had climbed to 82:1 (Fig. 4.4). Or, taking Brazil as a prime example, in 1960 the richest tenth of that country's population received 54% of the national income, while in 1995 they were making 63% (Meadows et al. 2006).

Geographer Vladimir Maksakovsky brought forth some no less profound data to similar effect. In 2008, 360 billionaires possessed an amount of wealth equal to half of all humanity's yearly income. The 15 wealthiest individuals had more money at their disposal than all African countries south of the Sahara. This divergence of economic power is now occurring with particular intensity in the former Soviet

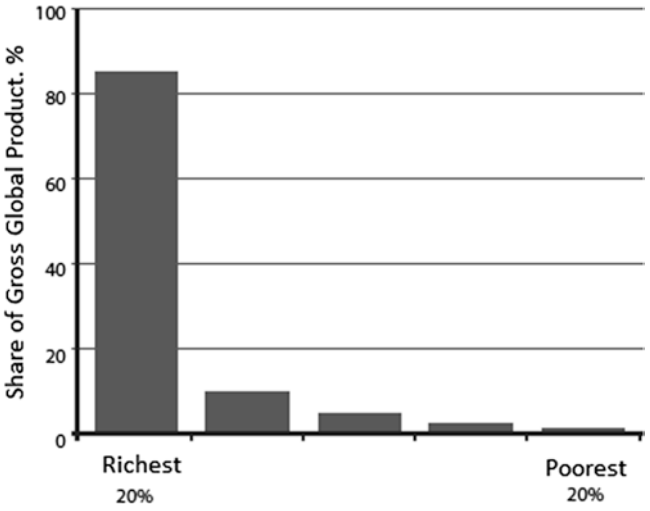

Fig. 4.4 Unequal distribution of incomes worldwide. The richest 20% of the world's population controls more than 80% of the Gross Global Product and uses 60% of energy produced worldwide. Source: Meadows et al. (2006)

republics. In Russia, for example, the number of billionaires rose from eight individuals in 2001 to 101 in 2008 (Maksakovsky 2008, book 1). That particular statistic demands no further commentary.

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Don't think, however, that the global social crisis has bypassed economically successful states, or that a high per-capita GDP provides a guarantee against any and all social problems. Chief among such problems is the constantly smoldering tension between the native-born citizens of these countries and the "new proletariat," the migrants who have flooded many European countries since the Second World War.

On the one hand, the populations of these countries are rapidly aging, creating a sharp need for a fresh stream of labor. On the other, this process generates social tension, particularly concerning the Muslim diaspora. In France, this includes primarily Arab North Africans. In Germany, the largest Muslim immigrant group is Turks. In the UK, Pakistanis are the largest Muslim minority.

There are different approaches to fitting immigrant populations into the social structure of the host country. France uses the assimilationist model, according to which a person born on French territory, loyal to French political institutions and sharing French cultural values automatically becomes a French citizen. This is sometimes called "soil right." At its heart, this is a drive to Europeanize Islam, relegating it to the private sphere and neutralizing the distinction between the native-born citizenry and the immigrant diaspora, which loses its religious and cultural identity.

Unlike France, Germany has built its immigration model on an ethnic rather than civil principle, "blood right." According to this principle, it is not enough to be born on German territory if one plans to become a full citizen. Until recently, it was practically impossible to do so without German heritage. In 1999, the country passed a law allowing a person to become a citizen if they had been born on German territory to at least one parent who had lived there no less than 8 years. This policy of segregation and Germany's stubborn refusal to recognize itself as a nation of immigrants has led to the formation of immigrant communities isolated from the native population.

Finally, there is the pluralist model of the UK, oriented towards multiculturalism. Under such a system, the government recognizes the existence of numerous communities which have the right, within the common national society, to live in their own groupings and keep the culture and habits of their ancestral homeland. The British Nationality Act 1948 formed the basis for this, along with establishing the right of people to move freely between the Home Islands and (former) colonies as Commonwealth citizens. As a result, ethnic communities hold strong influence under the law. However, this also leads to lumping everyone with immigrant roots into separate ethnic groups with which the descendants of immigrants have little in common. Native-born British subjects have come to be viewed not as individuals of a common nationality, but as members of one ethnic community or another (Sapego 2006).

To make a long story short, let us say that despite all the differences between these three strategies, the result has turned out much the same. Whether the government sought to give immigrants full equality or made no attempt at all, there arose parallel, ethnicity-based immigrant communities. One consequence of which is Islamic radicalism, a flower of evil taken root, it seems, on alien soil.

As we know, the Kouachi brothers who committed the world-shaking terrorist attacks in Paris on January 7, 2015, were second-generation Algerian immigrants. They had been born in France. They had gone to French schools. They spoke French without an accent and made use of all the benefits of European civilization. And yet, they were not a part of this civilization. Could there have been objective, and not merely personal, causes for this break?

Let's begin with the fact that any society, no matter how advanced, is subject to social stratification. Some achieve success by birth, ability or connections, while others are doomed to occupy the lower rungs of the social ladder. First-generation immigrants, on coming to Western Europe, eagerly accepted the inglorious and low-paying jobs that corresponded to their own limited education and qualifications. Given the contrast in living standards, even these modest conditions were taken as a boon of civilization. Their children's generation, however, which took its parents adoptive country as a homeland and themselves as fully equal citizens, was psychologically unprepared to repeat their fate. But breaking the cycle of poverty is no easy task. Low social status and income, living in the worst neighborhoods as immigrants often do, constricts the opportunities to obtain good work and a quality education, sharply reducing the chances of climbing the social ladder.

Then radical Islamism comes into play, one of the political bad seeds that grow in any community. Making use of rebellious attitudes among Muslim youth who

view themselves as second-class citizens, Islamists bring this social conflict into the cultural sphere. Appealing to moderate and accommodating second- and third-generation Muslim immigrants who are typically not excessively devout, they preach for walling the community off from the indigenous population and leading an insular, strictly observant life. As a result of social segregation, discrimination and high youth unemployment among French of North African descent, Turkish-Germans and Pakistani-Britons, there arises in their midst a new Islamic identity. As the Russian newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* put it, "Islam comes to dominate their consciousness, preparing them to accept any idea in Islamic guise, even the most radical" (Syukiyanen 2005).

From there, all you need is a spark. For example, in October 2005, two teenagers of Tunisian and Mauritanian descent were accidently killed when they hid from police in an electrical transformer substation, causing riots that spread from suburban Paris to Lyon, Strasburg and Toulouse over the course of two months. Rioters torched thousands of cars, looted stores, set fire to a Catholic church and caused injury to hundreds of police. The government was forced to declare a state of emergency. And this is just one of a number of similar incidents that still rock French society from time to time.

In September of the same year, 10 years before the attack on the office of *Charlie Hebdo*, caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* served as a different pretext for widespread unrest. From Denmark the protests spread to neighboring countries. However, it doesn't look like Western Europeans learned the right lessons from such events. After all, they were already hearing about how "At this time, most EU member countries do not have coherent policies dealing with this dimension of international migration" at the 2nd Stockholm Workshop on Global Mobility Regimes (Holzmann and Munz 2004). Unfortunately, such warnings were not listened to in time.

But repairing relations with the Muslim diaspora is a two-way street, and both immigrant communities and society at large would seem to benefit from a strategically sound approach. Several sectors of the European economy, including health care, agriculture and construction, are already structurally dependent on foreign labor. Meanwhile, the non-indigenous population of Europe, including Muslims, reached nearly 10% in 2013 and continues to grow due to both ongoing immigration from Africa and Asia and a high rate of natural growth. Some corners have even begun to speak of an "immigrant occupation." But for the Muslim diaspora to organically integrate into European society, that society must address it directly as is done in traditional immigrant countries like the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In Australia, one in four people was born overseas. The US takes in an average of a million immigrants each year (*Demoscope* 2013). In neither case is immigration a source of permanent tension, because it is viewed as an unending process that can and should be properly focused. These countries have adopted an active immigration policy, based on service to economic interests as well as certain base principles such as family reunification, state humanitarian obligations to political refugees, etc.

In any case, the accelerating process of global migration is one of the main components of globalization, and we should accept it as a given. There is no way back, though that understanding in no sense means that its flow cannot be regulated. As a rule, the flow runs from regions at some stage of demographic explosion into countries experiencing demographic crisis or depopulation, i.e. from economically backward countries suffering an overabundance of hungry mouths and unused labor into places in need of human capital. In this way, migration eases the situation of source countries and reduces the economic, demographic and political gap between the world's regions. So, for all its shortcomings, this circulation of people ultimately serves to fortify overall stability and level the uneven playing field of global development.

As we know, lead 9/11 hijacker Mohammed Atta spent his last and somehow decisive 8 years in Hamburg, Germany's second largest city. This detail cannot be thought a coincidence. Modern megalopolises, these engines of scientific and technological progress, not only bring all the advantages and convenience of civilized life, but form or deform the psyche of those who live in them.

While a few decades ago megalopolises and heavily urbanized industrial regions like the Ruhr Valley, Donets Basin or Greater Moscow were the unique province of economically advanced countries, today the population centers of the developing world are quickly overtaking them (in population, though not in amenities). In a number of countries in the Middle East (Kuwait, Qatar, Lebanon) and Latin America (Venezuela, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile), urbanization is near or above 90% (World Urbanization Prospects 2014), which until recently was characteristic only of the most urbanized countries of Europe, Japan and some US States. However, while enabling progress in these countries and granting millions of people access to information and cultural resources, urbanization exacerbates in the extreme those social problems caused by catch-up modernization. We could then say without exaggeration that in the last 30–40 years our planet has transformed from a "big village" to a "big city," and the issue of urbanization has moved into the forefront of the ongoing global crisis.

Experts are of different minds concerning the role of major cities in the life of modern man. Some primarily see the advantages, since high population density and developed infrastructure streamlines production, concentrates the flow of information and speeds the process of innovation. Others, while not denying the drawbacks of urbanization, view it as an inevitable step in human progress. We must, therefore, in the words of Russian academic Nikita Moiseyev, "accept this reality and learn to build megalopolises in such a way we can live in them without becoming warped. And most importantly—to learn to live in these monsters" (Moiseyev 1998, pp. 50–51).

This lesson is difficult to learn, however, and for all the temptations of creature comforts, the entertainment industry or a developed healthcare system, life in a megalopolis often breaks a person on the rack in both the physical and psychological sense.

The very environment of large cities, with its high level of industrial and transport pollution and nearly non-existent facility for self-cleaning, adversely affects a person's health. If you consider that most of the territory of developed countries is located in one of the environmental destabilization centers, that these countries consume most raw materials and produce two-thirds of the world's waste, then it's not hard to imagine the role megalopolises play as epicenters of powerful disruption of the environment, which even the most advanced green technologies are powerless to stop.

In these cities, the concentration of dust particles rises to 5–15 times that of the surrounding territory, and solar exposure has fallen 10–15% over the last century. Fog or the infamous smog appears more often here, and there are 10% more cloudy days than in the countryside (Europe's Environment… 1995; Maksakovsky 2008, book 1). But most importantly, the high level of pollution in urban environments gives them many qualities harmful to the human body, which we can term their *aggressiveness.*

First of all, this concerns chemical pollution, which gives rise to 25–50% of illness in industrial centers. After all, the atmospheric emissions, runoff and solid waste from industrial cities contain thousands of tons of lead, zinc, copper, chromium and other metals. Building up in the soil and percolating into the water, here they form their own geochemical territory. Lead represents a particular danger among heavy metals. Beyond damage to the endocrine and immune systems, it also retards physical and mental development in children. A wide range of aromatic carbons possess carcinogenic and mutagenic qualities, and oxidized compounds of nitrogen and sulfur cause respiratory and bronchial illness, including bronchial asthma (Krasilov 1992). On the whole, city-dwellers suffer allergic, cardiovascular, lung and oncological disease 1.5 to 2 times more often than rural residents.

Unfortunately, aggressiveness in the urban environment does not end at chemical agents, though there has been much less discussion of other forms of physical pollution, and not a great deal of study into their effects on the human body. These include noise from transportation, which is estimated to cause $9 billion a year in damages in US cities alone, along with vibrations caused by railed transport, construction equipment, or sometimes factories. They include all kinds of electromagnetic fields ("electrosmog"), as well as ionizing radiation and any number of other physical factors significant to one's health, in which the modern citizen lives surrounded as though on a military testing ground.

Electrosmog is insidious because, like other forms of radiation, it lies beyond the human senses and its negative influence upon the body only shows itself with time. Thus, only in the relatively recent past did scientists discover the connection between electromagnetic anomalies near power lines and incidence of cancer in children. Medical researchers confirmed through study of the homes of children dead of leukemia that living in close proximity to the lines raised the chance of such illnesses two to three times (Gun 2003).

Many thousands of years ago, our distant ancestors first raised their eyes to the stars and stood spellbound to discover the immensity of the universe. Ever since, the starry heavens have never released us from their cold and silent grasp. Philosopher

Immanuel Kant said, "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me." But, now it has been a full century since the residents of large cities have seen the Milky Way or the rest of the true starry heavens.

But that's the aesthetic side of the question. Artificial light pollution also strikes at a person's health, disrupting the biological rhythms of sleep and wakefulness and leaving a negative stamp upon the psyche. Night shifts at work, the glowing signboards and store fronts, night clubs and late-hour venues—all this crowds into the night and conflicts with biological human nature, devolving into mass insomnia and daytime drowsiness, along with today's "fashionable" maladies, such as depression and chronic fatigue syndrome.

While on the topic of pollutants, we must not overlook a type connected to neither chemical nor physical agents, but which has taken on ever more threatening forms in recent decades. This is *information pollution*. Modern means of communication, from personal audio players and mobile phones to television, not only raise the ambient level of sound and electro-magnetism, but are also a source of hyper-information, the flow of which surpasses the physiological human ability to handle it by six times (Arsky et al. 1997). Lev Tolstoy, who once said that a house where songbirds are kept has no room for literary creation, could not have written *War and Peace* in our day. Worse still, in the hands of self-seeking operators, this whole information and entertainment industry is banefully deforming the minds and spirits of children, if not the consciousness of adults. Medical researchers have coined the terms computer and internet addiction. Having passed through many of the virtual battles that abound in video games, such children start to feel like supermen, and their behavior and psyche change as the distinction between real and computerized life diminishes (Gun 2003).

As concerns obnoxious television advertising, a number of psychologists and psychiatrists think that it is responsible for up to half of all growth in crime and substance addiction. "Advertising engages in psychological extortion," according to psychologist Vladimir Levi. "It puts the subconscious into junkie mode: It suggests, it implants itself, it propagates the cult of ecstasy, the ideology of getting your fix no matter what" (Levi 2002, p. 375). And here is how Vladimir Nabokov described the engrossing and hypnotic effect of advertising on a young mind in his *Lolita*:

"If a roadside sign read: Visit Our Gift Shop—we *had* to visit it, *had* to buy its Indian curios, dolls, copper jewelry, cactus candy. The words "novelties and souvenirs" simply entranced her by their trochaic lilt. If some café sign proclaimed Icecold Drinks, she was automatically stirred, although all drinks everywhere were ice-cold. She it was to whom ads were dedicated: the ideal consumer, subject and object of every foul poster" (Nabokov 1991 p. 148).

In the end, this person, spoon-fed on mass culture and psychologically dependent on invisible spirit-guides, turns into an ideal candidate, almost specially prepared for manipulation by social and political processing and the oft-referred to zombification. But this is only the backdrop, only the stage upon which big city dwellers play out their human comedy. The action in this setting, as a rule, is densely

packed in the extreme, and the overwrought and nearly out of control actors squeeze in so tight as to step on each other's toes. Some authors have theorized that information about the optimal population density is stored in the human genome, and in all likelihood that code has not been overwritten (Severtsov 1992). Therefore, the constant if not always recognized discomfort of being densely surrounded which accompanies us from preschool to the grave (and often in the grave as well, as writer Aleksandr Tvardovsky remarked, "I managed to secure a tight nook in a communal apartment for eternity") cannot fail to leave its mark upon the human psyche, for all its flexibility.

Psychologists call this the crowd or group effect, when overcrowding itself becomes the cause of chronic stress and related mental problems. So everyday aggression, crime and addiction, the traditional problems of major cities, may also have a biosocial origin.

Finally, the high concentration of technological objects and means of transportation, multiplied by the extreme density of population, makes city dwellers particularly vulnerable to epidemics, accidents and natural disasters. Thus, in London in 1952, four thousand people died at once and twenty thousand more suffered injuries due to heavy smog, the worst ecological catastrophe of its kind (The World Environment 1992). Earthquakes, too, sometimes take tens of thousands of lives in cities.

The defining aspect of urbanization is the ripping away of people from their natural and cultural roots, and their frustration before the alien power of the state bureaucratic apparatus which gradually distances them from the remaining mass of citizens through administrative structures of inexorably increasing complexity.

As a result, a new structure of political power becomes the norm. Officials govern through back channels. Various breeds of image-maker and spin doctor manipulate the social consciousness. The national security state grows further and further beyond the control of the legislative and judicial powers, not to speak of society itself. As Russian philosopher and social critic Aleksandr Panarin said, "The elected 'Republic of deputies' begins to be set against the secret power of experts, and the dilettantism of public politicians—against the esoteric knowledge of professionals hiding behind the scenes, concerning the secret strings to be pulled in a dark side of politics which, on principle, shall never be disclosed" (Panarin 2000).

Under those conditions, those referred to as "plain folks" seek shelter and defense among various religious sects and other shadowy countercultural gatherings, where they try to obtain the psychological comfort they are otherwise denied. With time, however, such groups often organize themselves into authoritarian hierarchies, and, depending on the ideology and ambition of their leaders, into criminal and extremist syndicates.

Thus, to draw some conclusions, let us say that although developed countries have managed to solve many age-old social problems associated with famine, crop failure, plague and poverty that have tormented mankind for thousands of years, this was done by creating an energy-guzzling semi-artificial habitat for most of the population. Granted, this habitat provides people with a relatively safe and comfortable life, but only the most deep-seated urbanist would dare to call it healthy. Many

famed psychologists from Freud on have pointed to its relative corruption and inadequacy. And it is no exaggeration to say that nearly all notable psychological prose in the twentieth century, from Kafka to Salinger and from Trifonov to Petrushevskaya, could serve as a vivid illustration to that thesis.

But there is another, more important, point. More importantly, supporting these kinds of semi-artificial conditions of existence requires developed countries to constantly expand their use of energy, which means increasing pressure on the environment that provides every last one of our kilowatt hours. Even that most tireless point of pride for the developed world, a long life expectancy, bears witness not as much to the blooming health of the nation as to added megawatts of electricity and trillion-dollar outlays to medical and pharmaceutical industries. Behind the façade of this well-being lie well-cultivated surgical and endoscopic methods, complex electronic diagnostic equipment, mountains of psychotropic and cardiovascular medication, hormones and antibiotics without which, like a junkie without heroin, the modern European, Japanese or American could never get along in their "extended" life. And, therefore, such prosperity and health, along with everything else, also comes at an ecological cost. And we must keep that in mind when we speak of the success of modern civilization.

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