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OVERDEVELOPMENT AND ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF LIFE  
IN HIGH INCOME COUNTRIES

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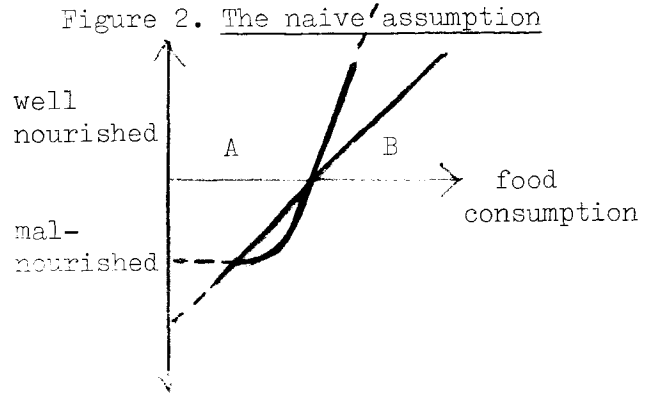
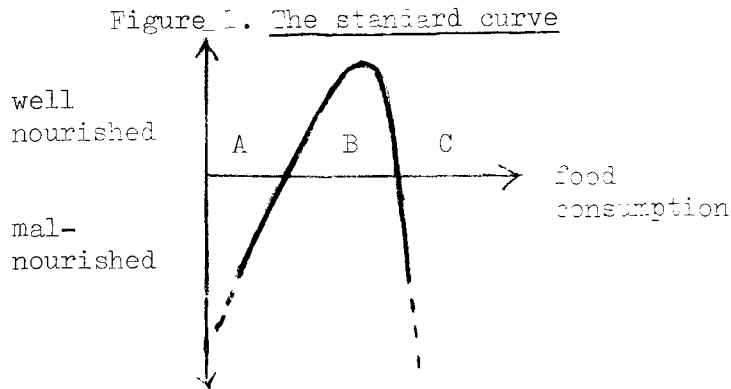


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possibility of blind actionism, whether elite or basis generated, as efforts to do something guided by neither theory nor data, only by good values.  
And this is where the concept of overdevelopment enters, together with under- and maldevelopment.

## 2. Overdevelopment : Concept, Rationale and some Propositions

The idea of overdevelopment can perhaps best be approached through a much simpler concept, that of overconsumption. As an example consider the case of food consumption, for instance as measured in terms of calories per caput per day. Our basic assumption is that the following curve makes sense although one might argue about details :



In other words, we assume that one can say about a person whether he/she is mal-nourished or well nourished, although the border line is not so sharp as in the Figure. Moreover, we do not assume any lower limit for mal-nutrition nor any upper limit for adequate nutrition, nor that this only depends on food consumption - but food consumption is definitely related to it. And as to that relation we assume that food consumption serves to overcome the state of being mal-nourished and gradually increasing a state as well nourished with increasing consumption, up to a certain point. Then there are "diminishing returns", and then "negative" returns" after an optimum point has been reached, in other words a change from utility to disutility. With increasing food consumption beyond this point something like the same process in reverse might take place, from a state of adequate nutrition into increasing mal-nutrition - for instance referred to as obesity with its concomitants.

What, then, has happened ? On the one hand there is a desired state of affairs to be brought about, adequate nutrition ; on the other hand there is a way to go, a method, a process of consumption. Why could they not simply be related in a linear or even in a exponential manner, as in Figure 2 above ? In other words, there would be only two phases, one of underconsumption (phase A in the figures) evidenced by the circumstance that there is still mal-nutrition, and an other of adequacy (phase B in the figures), as evidenced by the circumstance that nutrition is adequate. Why should there also be a phase C of overconsumption, introduced by a process of diminishing returns and then increasing

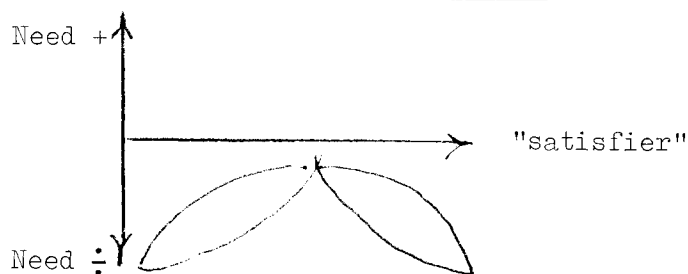
disutility even though one still is in the phase of adequacy ?

There are probably many ways of expressing this. One way would be to say that "systems have limited absorption capacities". Another formula would be to talk in terms of "saturation points". Still another would be to draw the attention to a possible difference between "mechanical" and "dialectical" systems : the former might behave according to the principle "the more input, the more output", the latter according to a principle of saturation, or even a transition from quantity to quality. First there is a quantitative change with increasing input or consumption ; then there is a turning point, the system changes character, there is a change in quality so that increasing consumption has a very different, even opposite effect of what it used to have. Whether such a distinction between mechanical and dialectical systems is a fruitful one can perhaps be discussed ; it is not central to our reasoning. Our point is that human actors are not mechanical.

Let us now change the metaphors or the language somewhat. Instead of input/output or consumption/production (of a desirable state of affairs) let us simply talk in terms of satisfiers and needs. As a general convention let us put the level of needs satisfaction on the vertical axis and the level of satisfier-consumption on the horizontal axis. If we do so the meaning of figure 1 is as follows : satisfiers will tend to be "productive" up to a certain point in terms of satisfying needs ; after that they will tend to be "counter-productive". This might sound like a tautology ; it has a ring of the obvious. But, as will be pointed out below, what may be obvious at the common sense level is certainly not necessarily obvious at the general societal level in terms of what all kinds of people, leaders and followers, do. People may know the first part of the curve of figure 1 and assume that the rest of the curve is as in figure 2. And they may act accordingly : if some clothing is good to protect the baby from the cold twice as much, three times as much must be at least twice as good or three times as good - until the baby gets totally overheated (which, if the baby should happen to be slightly ill with a fever, might even be quite dangerous) - the baby not being in a position to articulate well enough his/her analysis of the situation. Or, from the experience that some detergent makes sense in a washing machine one might draw the conclusion that twice as much and three times as much would make the dirty linen at least twice or three times cleaner - an assumption that might be difficult to disprove as excess detergent might disappear down the sewer and cause major pollution problems elsewhere.

That the posited relationship between satisfier and need is not trivial can be seen by using the curve as a heuristic device to explore possible relations between other needs and their assumed satisfiers. Thus, take the need for "togetherness", and assume that the satisfier is "meeting with people". Obviously there is a point beyond which meeting more people will only introduce superficiality, a strain on the capacity to differentiate and have empathy with others, an inability both to send and to receive human thoughts and sentiments. In other words, there is a saturation point. Correspondingly, take a need for freedom of choice, for instance of consumer goods, or of thoughts, ideas ; and assume that the satisfier is a supermarket for the former and a library for the latter. Since we are not concerned with the actual or potential variety in the supermarket or the library, only with the consumed variety, variety absorbed by the person concerned, there is obviously saturation points in either case. Beyond that point variety stops making sense, there is an "information overload", it becomes difficult to discern, to choose, to pick. The mind will only start wandering restlessly from one alternative to the other unable to get the distance from the things needed to make a conscious choice.

In other words, the relationship posited might give some insights not only for material needs but also for non-material needs : one shall not assume that the human psyche has an unlimited absorption capacity, only the human body does not. There is also an other point hidden in this reasoning. In a sense we assume that all needs are inside the person, that the satisfiers come from the outside or at least at some point have come from the outside (material goods, "services", structural arrangements, cultural ideas) and that inside the person some process of comparison between needs and satisfiers takes place. What then is being said can be reformulated as follows : there is never a perfect monotone relationship between the outside and the inside ; what comes from the outside can be too little but it can also be too much. And it is certainly not assumed that the "window" between too little and too much is positive : there may be no range of adequacy at all as in the figure below : Figure 3. The non-satisfier



Other curve shapes are certainly possible.



The terms used above for the declining slope of the curve, negative utility, disutility, counter-productive, all point in the same direction : increased input/consumption, or "more of the satisfier" to use that terminology, will be at the expense of something. More concretely, in the example used it will be at the expense of nutrition (the cost will be mal-nutrition) for the person concerned. Clearly we are now very close to the theory of development, if we assume that in the definition of "development" there are at least two components that have to enter :

- (1) Development has to do with satisfaction of needs ;
- (2) Development should not take place at the expense of "something".

We could now spell out either component and get into the theory of development, but not much of that will be needed in this connection.

Thus, we would definitely include under "needs" both material and non-material needs however this is defined - whether in terms of the needs or in terms of the satisfiers. We would include security needs, wellbeing needs, identity needs and freedom needs. Moreover, we would certainly include the idea that people themselves, in dialogue, decide what their needs are. And as to development strategy: the idea that priority should be given to those most in need.

And this is where the concept of "not at the expense of something" enters the picture. Concretely this would mean not at the expense of satisfaction of needs, be that the same need or other needs, the needs of oneself or of others (and in that case others living today or future generations) and the needs of nature. Thus, we get six (or eight) "at the expense of something" combinations, as in the Table below :

Table 4. Possible interpretations of "at the expense of something"

	Self	Now	Others Later	Nature
same need			!	
other needs			!	

Some comments on these possibilities.

First, the examples used above all relate to the same person and the same need : they merely serve to indicate that there is a quantum satis for any satisfier-need relation (if the satisfier does not even bring

the person into the category of satisfaction for any quantity of the satisfier then it should not be referred to as a "satisfier"). But the example of the detergent may have some implication for all the other cells in the table : it may affect hygienic needs of other people now and later, of nature, and perhaps also other needs such as esthetic needs for oneself, for others and for nature. The last idea will perhaps imply more personification of nature than many people would be willing to subscribe to. Here this possibility is kept open, maybe we know very little about nature's relation to itself, so why not postulate needs of nature beyond the obvious that if the "outer limits" of nature are transgressed then this may have implications for the needs satisfaction of others later, in other words for future generations.

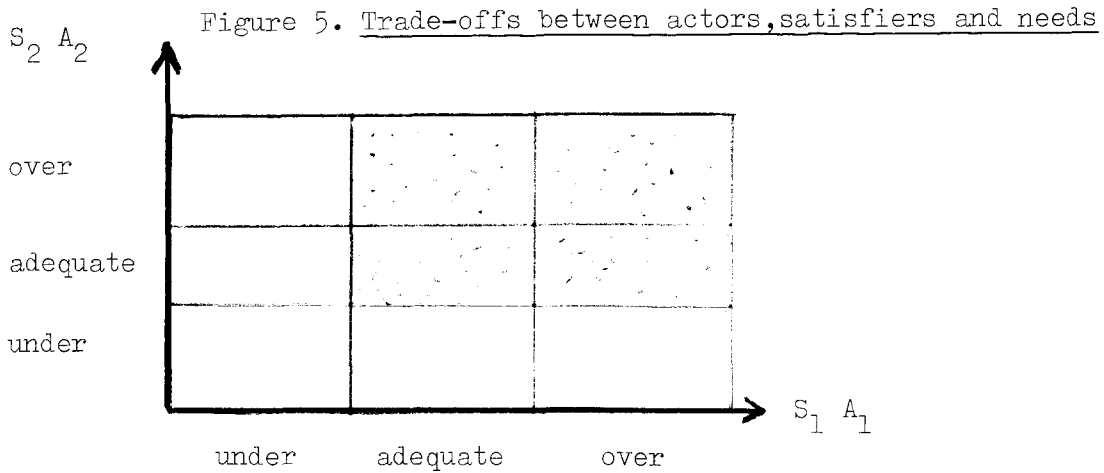
This calls to mind other ways of referring to "at the expense of something" : the 3 categories of

- . exploitation of self
- . exploitation of others
- exploitation of nature.

Of these "exploitation of others" is the best known in the literature : it may be divided into exploitation of the internal proletariat and exploitation of the external proletariat using national border lines as one criterion, adding exploitation of future generations, particularly by depriving them of their natural base for their livelihood. And having used those terms parallel formulations in the opposite direction come easily : solidarity or compassion with oneself, with others now (synchronic solidarity), with others later (diachronic solidarity) and with nature. Compassion is a sentiment, solidarity may also be seen as one but could perhaps better be interpreted as a structure : together they constitute the basis for alternative ways of life. But we are not quite there yet.

Let us now return to the problem of overconsumption. It was easily conceptualized as a question of too much of a satisfier for the same person and the same need ; the relation becomes more complex when the table above is given full play.

To illustrate this situation diagrams of the type used in the first figures are not sufficient, instead the diagram below might be used (see next page).



There are two actors,  $A_1$  and  $A_2$  in pursuit of some needs satisfaction ; for this they require satisfiers,  $S_1$  and  $S_2$ . In either case there may be underconsumption, adequacy or overconsumption ; the problem is how the level of consumption for  $A_1$  of  $S_1$  relates to the level of consumption for  $A_2$  of  $S_2$ . More particularly, do they stand in the way of each other ? Thus, it may be argued that if overconsumption for  $A_1$  forces  $A_2$  into adequacy this is a problem for  $A_1$  alone; but if it forces  $A_2$  into underconsumption the situation changes dramatically. If we assume that  $A_1$  is wise enough to stay away from overconsumption adequacy for him may still force  $A_2$  into underconsumption. In general, if the real world is such that the four dotted cells in the diagram are eliminated because of the impact consumption by  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  have on each other either or both of  $A_1$  and  $A_2$  will be forced into underconsumption. At this point we do not talk about anybody being forced into overconsumption ; we assume that  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  can abstain from overconsumption if they want. But this may clearly be a wrong assumption. It could also be that if  $S_1$  overconsumes  $S_2$  will follow (perhaps not so much because  $S_1$  does it as because everybody else in that social system overconsumes) and the result will be multiple overconsumption. (In this case the four cells combining overconsumption of one with underconsumption or adequacy of the other would have to be eliminated from the diagram).

Living in an increasingly interdependent world we would assume in general that  $A_1$  and  $A_2$  will have some impact on each other. The space in Figure 5 is not open. But that changes the problématique from the very simple one considered so far of one person having problems with the satisfaction of one need, or class of needs, to the general problem of trade-offs between actors, between satisfiers and between needs. That is still not our concern, our concern is to explore the concept of overconsumption. Overconsumption relative

to what ? Answer : relative to anybody's satisfaction of needs same or different, self or for others, here or there, now or later, and even including the needs of nature. To discuss overconsumption the individual's own yardsticks, even if it is extended to cover a broad range of his/her own needs is insufficient : the impact on others and on nature will have to be considered.

Strictly speaking this means that the preceding diagram is wrong because the definition of under/adequate/overconsumption is relative to the actor in isolation. According to what has just been said there is no such thing as adequate consumption for  $A_1$  if  $A_2$  thereby is forced into underconsumption : in that case  $A_2$  is overconsuming. In other words, it is not the content of the diagram or the axes in physical terms that change, but the division into regions of under/adequate/overconsumption. Thus, as the diagram is given above for "adequate" read "over" : for both  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  there is a direct transition from underconsumption to overconsumption.

But this is to a large extent the world in which we live ! For the world as a whole adequacy for all in terms of food may be possible, but as the structure operates there may be regions in the world where adequacy for one immediately would put somebody else into the region of underconsumption - thereby putting the first one into the region of overconsumption ! It is all a question of how the coupling between actors is carried out, in other words a question of structure and process.

And at this point views about structure and process may differ considerably. Thus, if I live off a kitchen garden, basing myself in addition to that on a very tiny plot of land equipped with a solar energy collector, a biogas converter and an algae pond I might argue that I am totally self-sufficient, autonomous in the sense that I can fix my own consumption level relative to my own absorption capacity, at the expense of nobody else, possibly not even nature. But it might, possibly, also be argued that this is privatization both of production and consumption, that the incorporation of my plot under collective ownership, be it small-scale or large-scale, would make it possible to push more people from the region of underconsumption into the region of adequacy and consequently that my retention of the plot under private ownership links my adequacy to the underconsumption of others. The difficulty with the argument, of course, would be that what we know about the productivity of small versus large plots at least would not seem to favour large-scale collectivization but rather small-scale self-reliance. What might be argued, however, would be

that privatization might lead to underutilization of resources, only up to the point of consumption adequacy for the owners.

In short, we shall not assume that the criteria posed by Self, by Others (now or later) or the criteria posed by Nature would lead to the same division of consumption of satisfiers into the three regions. The world is not that simple. And this is precisely the starting point for such disparate yet very related disciplines as economics and ethics : will my knowledge that the impact my consumption might have on that of others now, and even more on that of others later, not to mention of nature, make me limit my consumption ? Or, will I rather deny that this is the fact and see these limits as more, rather than less, generous ? As long as I see myself and the other actors together on the main diagonal of Figure 5 there is no problem: we are underconsumers together, adequately consuming together and overconsumers together - and as mentioned the structure and culture may be such that we are forced into the same pattern, regardless of level. But the moment we push each other into different positions problems arise. It may be a matter of taste what is worse, that my adequate/overconsumption is the cause of your underconsumption or vice versa, but neither case leads to good social relations. If you are an underconsumer there are too few satisfiers or too little of the satisfier around for you to become adequately satisfied ; this in itself is nothing exceptional. But if I am consuming the satisfiers that might have been available for you, and not only that : if this in addition makes me an overconsumer so that it also is harmful for me the situation can only be described as a triple pathology : for you, for me and for the structure.

This is where the step from overconsumption to overdevelopment enters the picture. If it were only a question of overconsumption the individual who indulges too much in something might pull himself or herself together and respect the maxima, the ceilings. But there is a pattern, a total social formation that drives people towards overconsumption in one way or the other so that only the very convinced, and among them the very ego-strong, can resist the pull and go in for a way of life that is an alternative to the dominant way of life in high income countries, characterized by many forms of overconsumption side by side with underconsumption. This pattern, or social formation, is what could be referred to as overdevelopment, just like underdevelopment is a pattern that enforces underconsumption upon people. It is obvious from what has been said that the two are two sides of the same coin, that they are dialectically related.

Let us now focus again on a society as a collection of individuals. Each individual has a number of needs, and access to some satisfiers. Each one has his/her own strategy, definitions of needs and priorities, preferences among satisfiers, perceptions of how they fit together and so on. It is certainly not to be expected that everybody will have access to satisfiers so as to be adequately satisfied for all needs ; it is not even clear that this should be desirable as it might lead to an extremely static, possibly very vulnerable society. There will be overconsumption for some needs and underconsumption for others. What is important, however, is whether there are patterns of overconsumption and underconsumption, in other words whether overdevelopment and/or underdevelopment are structurally built into the social formation. And this is the point where the basic proposition - not very original today - about high income, industrialized societies may be formulated : there is a pattern of maldevelopment consisting of a combination of overdevelopment where material needs are concerned and underdevelopment where non-material needs are concerned, grosso modo.

This is not necessarily statistically true for the majority of the population. Serious cases of material underconsumption exist in high income societies, and there may be cases of non-material overconsumption, not to mention adequacy in many fields. The picture is a complex one, nobody has so far come up with any description or diagnosis that is at the same time simple and empirically satisfying. The metaphor "overdeveloped countries" is too superficial : it disregards class differences and it also disregards the serious underdevelopment in non-material terms. Correspondingly the description of the Third world as "underdeveloped countries" is also unsatisfactory from the point of view taken in this paper : again, it disregards class differences (there are materially even overdeveloped pockets of considerable size in many of these countries), and it disregards non-material adequacy, perhaps even overconsumption in segments of the society. Both metaphors in addition suffer from the same danger because of an implicit intellectual trap : one might be lead to the conclusion that all high income countries have to do is to de-develop materially, and all that low income countries have to do is to develop materially. This not only disregards non-material aspects of development, it also disregards the complex relationship between material and non-material development - certainly not fully understood within any existing theory of development.

Hence, we are confronted with a very complex situation in any country and our conceptual apparatus should be rich enough to reflect that complexity. It is precisely this double imbalance, on the one hand over/underconsumption and on the other hand overdevelopment in one field and underdevelopment in another that would constitute types of maldevelopment. And it is when this maldevelopment starts taking extreme forms that one might talk about social pathology. In the low income countries the major social pathology would be widespread misery, whether in terms of lack of food and other nutrients, lack of shelter and clothing, lack of medical services or educational facilities. In high income countries it can be discussed where the maldevelopment shows up most clearly, but some candidates would certainly be in terms of "civilization diseases" (mental disorder, cardio-vascular diseases and cancer), violent crime, general alienation and disengagement and ecological breakdown. The precise link between the components of maldevelopment - overconsumption here and underconsumption there - and the social pathologies should be a subject of major inquiry as it has been in the social sciences for a long time.

To attack research problems of that magnitude it will not be sufficient to try to relate the social pathologies to one particular aspect of maldevelopment. It might be more fruitful to try to come deeper towards the roots of the phenomenon by noticing that so much of underdevelopment is caused by overdevelopment.

Figure 2

in

and transnational corporations

when not counteracted,

"de-develop"



### 3. The consequences of overdevelopment

The consequences of overdevelopment being manifold both on the human and natural environment, they may be usefully discussed, more systematically, under the three separate headings referred to above, reflecting the order in which issues of overdevelopment have become debated with increasing intensity during the last years: first, the ecological awareness and the escalating intensity in the debate. Second, the discussion of the social break-down of industrial life, and third the discussion on individual health problems in our parts of the world. In short, the consequences for nature, for others and for self.

#### (a) Ecological consequences of overdevelopment

What are the ecological consequences maintaining a high level of resource use ? In order to get a general overview, the following diagram might help.

Figure 6 : Ecological impact of overdevelopment

		Space dimension	
		Local consequences	Global consequences
Time-horizon	Long-term	1) Mining pits	2) The plutonium economy
	Short-term	3) Landscape littering	4) The petroleum economy

It is true that ecological problems have been severe ever since the beginning of the industrial revolution; but because the problems mostly were of a strictly local character, the power elites could easily remove themselves from the polluted areas, while the industrial workers continued to live in the midst of it all. Only once the ecological problems started to become a problem also for the middle and upper classes, great concern about ecology began to be expressed. Today, the focus is to a large extent on the long-term ecological consequences of industrial society in a global context, (cell 2.). However, with the increasing awareness of ecological problems in the industrialized part of the world, workers also have started to make demands for a better milieu inside the factories and at the places they work. Accordingly it is becoming less and less easy to "buy off" the workers so that they may continue to endure intolerable work conditions, a trend which is likely to be reinforced with the increasing material affluence of the working class people.

Looking at Figure 2 a few comments should be added. Firstly, even if much of the current debate is centered around the long-term global problems of resource use, present policies of the industrialized countries serve only to aggravate these very problems. Policies have not changed, given that most industrialized countries foresee a continuation of past growth in energy use and industrial production well beyond the next decade. It is true that the percentage growth rate has been somewhat reduced in the most recent forecasts, but this reduction is not due to ecological concerns, but rather in an appraisal of what is possible to achieve. So instead of doing something about cell 2 and 4, power elites are mostly concentrating on cell 1 and 3.

Cell 3-type actions in Norway, for instance, are the yearly "Keep the fiord clean" campaign, where boy scouts and school children, together with charitable institutions and local municipalities, take the initiative to pick up all the paper and plastic litter which has accumulated during the winter. Cell 1-type actions are for instance initiatives by the Norwegian Hydro-Electric Board to level out gravel mounds and seed them with grass in order to make hydro-electric power plants less evident in the landscape. Much the same philosophy lies behind industrial workers' demands for a better work environment: they demand cleaner air to breathe in, but are less concerned with the global and long-term effects of industrial operations.

Overdevelopment does not only give rise to a discussion of a time and space dimension, but also to different types of ecological effects. We shall discuss several of these types below:

Overdevelopment leads to resource depletion. For some resources, resource depletion may be a short-term problem if you look at it in a historical perspective. Take the example of oil: Presently, oil is an indispensable source of energy for an industrialized country. As oil reserves dwindle, the process of adapting to alternative sources of energy no doubt will be painful. However, in the history of mankind the use of oil will last only for a short period of time. But the availability of oil today may be crucial for many developing countries if they shall ever be able to cover their populations' basic material needs. Overdevelopment in the use of oil in one part of the world may therefore hamper development in other parts of the world even if the oil era will be of relatively short duration.

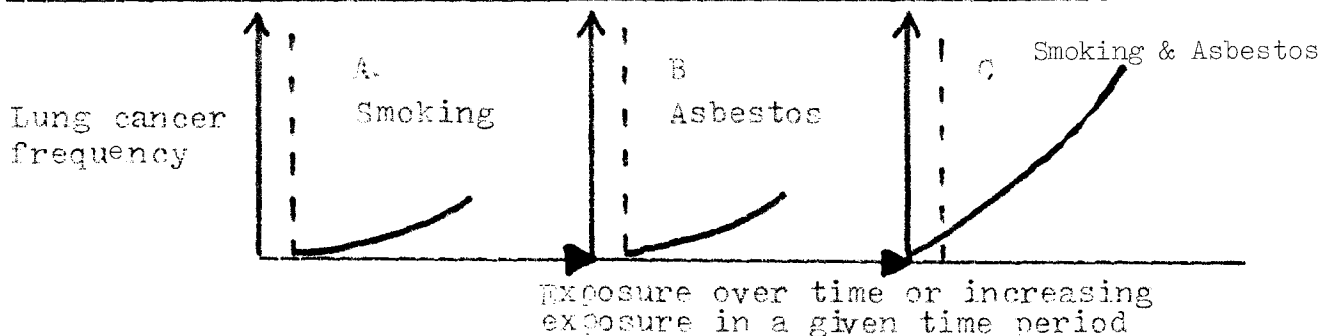
Depletion of other resources may mean long-term problems. A depletion of the world's fish stock or a lasting erosion of agricultural land may forever reduce the world's carrying capacity. For an overdeveloped country covered with concrete, cement,

steel, glass and asphalt there may be no way back in the future unless they can buy their food from other countries or, alternatively, if they are able to secure ample amounts of cheap energy.

Overdevelopment involves pollution of the environment. To the extent that the pollution in some way or another strikes back on man, it is seen as a problem. One may argue that pollution is bad in itself or that pollution which affects any living creature in nature somehow, represents a problem. However, pollution is not likely to be very mobilizing unless it is a problem for many and when those affected in the end, are people. We also would assume that an aesthetic problem is less disturbing than the health effects of pollution. A big smokestack spewing out fumes may not look very pretty, but there probably would be a difference of degree whether the fumes were simply vapor or if they were noxious gases. Therefore, in our view the most serious kind of pollution is that which affects people's mental or physical health.

Incidentally, the consequences of pollution may be felt today or tomorrow. Smoking is a typical example here. To some, pollution from even one cigarette in a room may be bothersome, but it is hardly important for one's long-term health. Regular exposure to cigarette smoking, however, inevitably leads to cases of lung cancer, heart diseases, etc., the frequency of which increases with increasing exposure. The same is the case with for instance noise pollution. Infrequent exposure to noise may be coped with, but continuous exposure to noise may be a very serious problem for mental and physical well-being. Moreover, several pollutants may act at the same time, giving what is called a synergistic effect\*. A classical example is the combination of smoking and asbestos exposure, as illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 1: Synergism between smoking and asbestos exposure.



\* Mutually reinforcing

In graph A, the frequency of lung cancer in a given population is correlated with the effect of smoking for instance 20 cigarettes per day over one's life span. For several years, no cancer cases will be detected, but after that, an increasing number of people will get cancer. Graph B shows a non-smoking group of asbestos workers, who after a certain number of years start developing lung cancer with increasing frequency. In graph C, we imagine a group of asbestos workers who also are smoking. Here the lung cancer cases start showing up even below the expected number of years where it was possible to measure any effect from either smoking or asbestos alone, and the total effect is a lot larger than the sum of the two effects over time. This effect is called synergistic and may be very important for many materials currently used in the industrial nations. It is further typical of modern industrial states that the pollution problems have increasingly become a problem of toxicity.

Figure 8: A typology for pollution.

		Non-toxic	Acutely toxic
Time dimension	Non-degradable (no enzyme-systems available)	1) Rock formations, many metals	2) Chlorinated hydrocarbons (DDT, PCB, etc.), chlorinated fluoride carbons (freon), etc.
	Degradable (enzyme-systems available)	3) organic wastes from plant/animal origin	4) Several petroleum fractions
		Geographic extension	

Thus, the recyclability of raw materials showing in cells 2) and 4) is becoming increasingly difficult, whereas short-lived, non-toxic wastes are, on the contrary, easy to recycle with beneficial effects. Such wastes are normally the products of activities which are necessary to carry out in order to cover people's basic material needs. In other words, the more we produce things with increasing sophistication and decreasing relevance for human needs, the more difficult it becomes to integrate and recycle the waste products in the economic cycle. Thus, the

ability to maintain ecological balance decreases with increasing technological sophistication.

Overdevelopment leads to loss of variety in nature. In the long run this might affect mankind's ability to maintain world population at a high level: If pollutants kill plants and animal life, ecosystems become less stable, and food production potentials may decrease. But it is not only pollution which threatens plant and animal life. Too intensive harvesting of the oceans' fish, overgrazing of pastures, monocultures and genetic selection in agriculture, poaching and trophy hunting, intensive use of artificial fertilizers and insect "eradication" programs are all practices which reduce the variability in nature so vital to assure ecological balance. Loss of variety may also influence our psyche. Little is known about the psychological effects on man of making the physical environment more monotonous, for instance what happens to people if you remove mountain-tops or relocate mountain-people in the flat-lands. What appears clearly, however, is that creativity and mental life in the monotonous suburbs and "dead" cities of the industrial world is hardly conducive to creativity and mental health among its populations.

Finally, there are the micro-ecological consequences of overdevelopment. We are here thinking of several things: First, we have the problem of insects becoming resistant to insecticides. Because insects multiply so fast, the selection process produces new generations of insects which are resistant to almost any insecticide after a prolonged period of use. In practice, "eradication" of particular insects has not proven possible. Therefore, in order to be able to kill insects in the long run, there must be a continuous development of ever more toxic insecticides. The problem here, of course, is that the insecticides also become toxic to animal life at higher stages of development and eventually to man. Second, not only do insects become resistant, but even new types of insects due to mutations may develop. We do not have any basis for judging the seriousness of this problem, which at the insect level may mean more variety and not less. The same problem arises at the level of fungis, molds, bacteria and viruses, an even less explored area, but of great potential significance in the future. Generally speaking, the trend in overdeveloped societies has been to use more

and more exterior controls on diseases instead of letting nature build up its own resistance. A "modern" cow, for instance, gets regular shots of growth hormones and anti-biotics in order to maintain its high productivity, just as many people in the industrialized world are medicated on daily in order to "function". What the long-term consequences of this may be, is hard to tell. But a likely prediction is that it will become increasingly difficult to cope with immunization problems and that quite new breeds of bacteria and virus may develop in the future. Only then may we realize that the modern industrial state not only turns people into clients, but also his inner micro-life.

(b) Social consequences of overdevelopment.

The social and ecological consequences of overdevelopment are closely interrelated. In order to be able to maintain a high level of energy and resource use, there is a need for a high degree of specialization, for instance in schooling, but also an efficient bureaucracy, accumulation of capital, research and development and advanced technology. This does not mean that we deny the usefulness of a certain degree of specialization, and a minimum bureaucracy may be necessary to assure a minimum level of equality in society. But above a certain level of specialization, for instance, the specialist (be it a person or a country) starts losing track of reality outside his specialty. Let us illustrate this by an example: Say that we have a very small picture, too small for us to discern the details, and that we wish to magnify it in order to reveal the picture's true nature. If we visualize progressively larger pictures, we soon will get to a point where a further enlargement stops providing us any new information, and if we continue to make it bigger, eventually we will end up with only one small dot, making it impossible to interpret that information at all. In this case one might say that there was too much focus on a dot, too little holistic insight. In another case there might be too little equity, equality, autonomy, solidarity or participation. An overdeveloped society, consequently, is characterized by rising alienation among its members. As overdevelopment progresses more and more people become affected by it;

fewer and fewer people are able to escape its nefarious consequences. The only people who still may find purpose and meaning in life - at least for some time - are those in the "productive age" without any significant mental, physical or social disabilities. Those who are too young, too old, too slow or too different find themselves placed on the sidelines of active life. They are the first to become clients, objects, cases or numbers in an expanding effort at dispensing specialized treatment to social misfits, whatever their handicap. The following are typical examples of how a modern welfare state copes with the social problems:

Old people are surveilled by electronics so that their corpses do not lie around for weeks after they have passed away in solitude. Flouride tablets are administered from infant age as the solution to dental decay. When the school system fails to interest the children, children "with problems" are given "special education". When "development" comes to rural Norway in the form of automating the telephone centrals, the laying off of 5000 (mostly) women operators is not the problem of the State Telegraph Company.

The answer to rising crime rates consists in hiring more policemen. The solution to health problems are more hospital beds, doctors and nurses. In "activity centers" youth specialists teach the young how to overcome their boredom. Overactive youth, on the other hand, are stamped "juvenile delinquents" and sent to "pacification centers" such as prisons or camps. The many who are unable or too busy to cook their food, make their clothes or repair their houses, are offered ready-made meals, labor-saving appliances, mass-produced clothing and special repair agencies of all kind. Such problem-solving, it must be remarked, is typical of all countries entering the post-industrial stage, characterized by a rapid expansion of the service sector, emphasis on formal schooling, great personal mobility, revolutionary communications technology and electronics, and parallely, high energy use.

Which are the prospects for such societies? Not too good, when looking at the industrial world as it is today. As its countries overshoot the limits of healthy material growth, their people

become increasingly dependent on the things produced by the system. In the process, vital human values such as equality, autonomy and self-esteem will tend to get lost.

To begin with, as these societies become more and more overdeveloped, they will exhibit signs of increasing inequality among their members. It has been demonstrated that above a certain degree of energy use, inequality in any society will tend to increase. There is a simple explanation for that: in any society there are ecological and social constraints as to how many people can use large amounts of energy. Consequently, there will be larger and larger differences between those at the top and at the bottom of society. To take the example of transport, it has been found that the maximum speed which can be considered democratic, is that obtained by a bicycle. In other words, people will still feel "equal" when moving about on either foot or a bike, but not so when pedestrians have to face automobile traffic. Another important point in connection with modern transport is that ever higher speeds are simply impossible, first because there will be ecological constraints (e.g. fuel requirements, lack of ozone), but also because physical and psychological limits of man. Already today, car driving in the rich countries is limited to about 60% of the population - the rest are either too old, too young, or otherwise unfit to drive a car. The requirements for the coming space shuttle passengers, should be even more restricting, especially in terms of fare costs, possibly also in terms of fitness.

Emphasis on schooling also raises the problem of inequality. In our complex societies, not all succeed in following the rat-race to the top. Those who cannot keep pace are counted as "unproductive" and taken "care of" by specialists. In other words, the "clever" ones - that is: clever at adapting to school requirements - are filtered out, while others become the "drop-outs". The increasing importance attached to schooling and specialized knowledge will tend to widen the gap between those who "made it" and those who haven't.

Second, overdevelopment is often concomitant with exploitation. This is perfectly illustrated by world food trade: 25% of our planet's



population eat about 50% of the worlds food, often imported from countries where people are starving to death. Also, in spite of the much publisized food aid to famine-stricken areas, net food trade goes from the poor to the rich world.

Third, an overdeveloped country is one in which people lack autonomy. This is a direct consequence of overspecialization which tends to restrict the number of people having special knowledge in a given field. well known that professional associations, for instance medical or lawyers' associations, everywhere put pressure on the law-makers to prevent people who are not trained in the "proper" way to enter their profession. As discussed above, the school system only serves to reinforce such demands.

Because of their very complexity, highly industrialized states are also compelled to produce all kinds of laws and regulations on what can or cannot be done by oneself. There are rules on how a garage should be equipped in order to fix a car, what kinds of animals one may keep where and how, what kind of repairs are allowed in one's own home, which rooms in your own house one may sleep in or not, etc. Some of these regulations are no doubt useful, but many others are really counterproductive since they lead to increasing apathy and incompetence among people.

Fourth, overdevelopment stifles and ultimately kills human solidarity When people can be murdered on a busy street in New York and the murderer can escape, what solidarity is there left? All industrial countries exhibit the same pattern: the more they turn into a mass society, the more personal contacts diminish. In an anonymous society it becomes easier to commit a crime, because the person you kill will not be close to you, and because nobody knows you anyway. For the same reasons we experience increasing police brutality in our countries. It is rather obvious that the more detached a policeman becomes from the local community, the less sympathy will he feel for people breaking the law such as illegal demonstrators, looters or other petty criminals.

The overall result of the four trends discussed above is that people feel more and more marginalized. Among the common man, there prevails a general feeling that "what ever little I could do, it won't help anyway." Such attitudes are reflected by the very low interest not only in national elections, but also in day-to-day political issues. Overdevelopment causes people to become more and more alienated - towards things, jobs, and ultimately towards themselves.

(c) Individual Health Consequences of Overdevelopment

The fact which strikes perhaps most when looking at individual health problems in the rich world is that several health problems which are common here are practically non-existent elsewhere in the world: this is true for many forms of cancer, various heart diseases, diabetes, obesity, and several types of mental ailments. It is only over the past few decades that these ills have appeared on a large scale in our countries. Parallely, other, formerly frequent diseases have more or less disappeared today, thanks to better nutrition, improved hygiene, and/or more sophisticated health care (for instance, more advanced technology, higher-skilled personnel, more efficient medicines, more frequent checkups). However, there exists a point beyond which is too much nutrition, hygiene and health care becomes counterproductive. And this is exactly what is happening in the industrialized countries. In addition, the many artificial substances introduced in the environment cause new, or aggravate existing health problems. To top it all, increasing numbers of people suffer from too little bodily exercise, as they are moved about by cars, lifts and escalators, saving all physical effort. This inconsiderate recourse to technological gadgets, medical relief and sanitary measures of all kind is responsible for many health problems that are typically shared by all overdeveloped societies.

The problem of too much food. The main problem of overeating is not necessarily that people get too much of things needed for body maintenance or growth, but rather that they get too much of things that are not needed at all: refined sugar, fats and alcohol.

Besides causing overweight or even obesity, these high-caloric food stuffs are detrimental to health in many different ways. First of all, it has been established that a too high intake of fats and sugar leads to an increased incidence of heart ailments. Furthermore, it seems to be linked with several forms of cancer, for instance of the stomach or the breast. Diabetes, the third among the "welfare diseases" is a direct result of the very high sugar consumption in the industrialized countries. So far, overweight problems have been connected with up to 15 different diseases, the most important being increased fat accumulation in the blood and high blood pressure. But eating too much sugar and fats is not only bad in itself. Still worse, it tends to suppress the intake of truly nutritious food. Thus, it is not uncommon to see overweight and vitamin deficiency occurring together! Industrial food, let us add, is deficient in fibers, which leads to constipation, cancer of the colon and, perhaps most disquieting of all, contributes to the tremendous dental decay among our populations, a problem virtually unknown in the third world.

Contrary to what one may think overeating is not solely a "self-inflicted" problem. The organization of our societies is equally, if not more, responsible for it. Our food industries literally promote overeating by supplying cheap and apparently healthy foods in abundance. The common man has neither the time nor the knowledge to critically examine the food he eats. Diet composition, then, becomes also a class problem: the higher educated are more likely to seek advice from doctors or nutritionist. At the same time they can afford to buy good food and to have it prepared and stored properly.

The problem of too much hygiene. Too much washing and sterilization of things and humans in our countries is causing quite unexpected physical and mental problems. Physically, too much washing gradually removes the bacterial flora of the skin, thus making it more sensitive towards allergies or more receptive to infections. Also, our excessive fear of anything "dirty" or "contagious" in our environment and the ensuing protection and pampering of our bodies has finally reduced their ability to produce anti-bodies:

we are thus less able to resist infections and contagions of all sorts.

Our overemphasis on cleanliness, it should be noted, has also lead us to abhor any kind of human smell, however light. Aware of this, the pharmaceutical industries play up human uncertainty by pushing toothpastes, deodorants and anti-perspirants, - now even vaginal sprays! with increasing fervour. In fact, our overdeveloped societies have reached the point where non-human smells which are notoriously dangerous to health, such as cigarette smoke are accepted, while human smells are not.

Health care may become too intensive. There is a growing suspicion that the sophisticated care in the industrialized countries is finally causing more diseases it cures. Medical pampering has not only weakened people's resistance to disease, but also destroyed their ability to heal themselves.

It is quite clear that the overspecialized western medical system has neglected a big bulk of available medical wisdom in other parts of the world, such as acapuncture, some therapy and herbal medicine. Thus, in the name of progress and science self-healing practices, curing by plants and the like have been suppressed and replaced by "advanced" medicines and therapies which are extremely costly in both financial and social terms. In the greater part of the rich world, national health budgets have exploded to dizzying heights, whereas their over-indulgent people need medical advice and treatment for even the slightest ache, unable to cope with pain themselves.

The lack of physical exercise. It is quite obvious that someone who works in the rice paddy 10 hours a day does not worry too much about getting enough exercise. Industrial man, however, has a great deal to worry as he lives in a world where the need for bodily motion has been practically eliminated: Drive-in shopping centers, motels, apartment - and shop elevators, moving sidewalks and escalators help him to spare all physical effort. In fact, part of the overweight problem discussed above is caused by the mass-production of automobiles, and the innumerable effort- and labor-saving devices used in industry, commerce and the home. Thereby, we do

not mean to say that industrial food is good food, only that the problem of overweight and obesity would hardly exist if people lived in a society where physical movement is part of every day life. By the way, the manner in which we try to solve the problem of too little exercise is in itself a sign of overdevelopment. Next to campaigns for slimming pills or special "diet foods" which hardly deserve their name but earn a good profit, one finds a large assortment of so-called health- or fitness centers where people can engage in "scientifically studied" weight-losing programs, monitored by experts - that goes without saying. It is again a sad fact, moreover that it is the best educated, and best off people in our societies who are most able to avoid both the pains and the ridicule that are often attached to fatness. In the field of sports, in particular, our societies offer fewer and fewer possibilities to the people at large. In our cities, there are hardly any facilities for spontaneous and cheap physical exercise. Generally, sport activities in our countries not only require good revenues, but also time and access: Golf, tennis, alpine and water skiing, sailing ... all activities one wouldn't expect in a downtown slum. Incidentally, sport itself has become a victim of overdevelopment: some do too much (the top athletes), while others do too little (the spectators). There is possibly one group of people left who still gets enough regular exercise: the housewives. But even this group is rapidly shrinking - and to be sure, it is not being replaced by househusbands.

The problem of man-made substances. This problem is closely related to that of environmental pollution, with the difference that pollutants are unintended and often inevitable by-products (for instance of industrial production) while man-made substances are produced purposively. The following example may illustrate the difference: the radioactive by-products of the fission process in an atomic reactor are not desired, neither is the extra heat needed to cool the reactor core. What is wanted is electricity. The radioactive wastes and excess heat are unintended, but inevitable pollution linked to nuclear fission. By contrast, a food additive is not a by-product of something else, but is a product in its own right. However, many such man-made substances have proved to have unintended side-effects on health. This is the case not only with

many food additives, but also agricultural chemicals and tobacco smoke, both for the smoker himself and those who can't help breathing the ambient tobacco fumes. As all these items are produced in ever increasing quantities, overdevelopment points to a situation where the alleged or real benefits of these products are outweighed by the damage they cause to physical health. And this is exactly what is happening in the highly industrialized countries today.

Thus, it has been discovered that food additives such as nutrients, flavors, flavor enhancers, preservatives, anti-oxidants, emulsifiers, stabilizers, thickeners, coloring or bleaching agents, etc. may provoke cancer or other, totally unexpected diseases. In other words, what was thought to be healthy or at least inoffensive has turned out to be unhealthy or even life-endangering. A study conducted a few years ago on over 100 pesticides, proved that only 3 of those that had been adequately tested were not carcinogenic. 13 other chemicals were found to cause cancer, 28 others were known to favour malignant tumors, 37 yielded negative results, and the remainder had not been adequately tested. Most man-made substances used in agriculture or added to food, it seems, are detrimental to health in the long run, and 50 to 80% of all cancers could be prevented by avoiding the offending chemical agents.

It is important to stress, in this connexion, that the occurrence of cancer is not random among the population. —————→

A recent survey of cancer deaths in the United States, for instance, showed that death rates from lung, liver and bladder cancer are highest in areas that have a heavy concentration of chemical plants and refineries.

The following table further illustrates the suspected relationship between cancer and our industrial way of life:

Figure 9. Cancer and the environment: Ten top suspects.

<u>Substances</u>	<u>Where found</u>	<u>Cancer they may cause</u>
Arsenic	Mining, smelting ind.	Skin, lung, liver
Asbestos	Brake linings, construction sites, insulations, powerhouses	Lung, pleura, peritoneum
Benzene	Solvents, oil refineries, insecticides	Bone marrow
Benzidine	Rubber making, dyestuffs	Bladder
Coal-combustion products	Steel-mills, petrochemical industry, asphalt, coal tar	Lung, bladder, scrotum
	Metal industry, alloys	Lung, nasal sinuses
Radiation	Ultraviolet rays from the sun, medical therapy, atomic power use*	Bone marrow, skin, thyroid
Synthetic estrogens	Drugs	Vagina, cervix, uterus
Tobacco smoke	Cigarettes, pipes, cigars (active and passive)*	Lung, bladder, mouth, esophagus, pharynx, larynx
Vinyl chloride	Plastics industry	Liver, brain

\* Additions to the table made by the author

Industrial workers, it appears, are particularly exposed to carcinogenic substances. Generally speaking, it appears that people living in cities are more easily cancer-diseased than those living in the countryside, because of the intensified air pollution caused by car traffic or oil-fired heating systems in the center of towns. Thus, although all social classes become increasingly exposed to those substances it is still the least privileged who bear the major burden.

#### 4. Why Alternative Ways of Life in high consumption countries ?

The point of view taken here will be that alternative ways of life is a defense reaction against the pattern of maldevelopment, schematically expressed as material overdevelopment and non-material underdevelopment, found in many parts of the industrialized countries.

It is a defense reaction initiated by people themselves, it goes against the dominant way of life engendered by the structure and very often also against the more or less explicit will of the dominant elites. Again schematically expressed it is an effort at better balance, more adequacy in life by reducing material consumption and increasing non-material consumption. Very much of it is based on intuition, on more or less clearly articulated analysis of the social situation, of visions of desirable societies, of strategies to use. By and large one would assume such movements to be strongest among educated people because they would be longer on analysis and on visions, and among young people because they would be more flexible, less rooted in the dominant way of life. More concretely : when a person is not yet tied to a family, a place to live and a career the external constraints are more moderate. If in addition that person is also psychologically flexible, the pattern of thinking not hardened into a well closed Gestalt both physical and psychological mobility would be conducive to search for AWL. For that reason a wise government of a country would do well to listen to, and watch, its own youth : precisely because of their mobility they may be able to find new ways, for themselves and on behalf of others. To try to reduce the significance of such movements by claiming that they "only" pertain to the educated, and "only" to the young, is to miss the point completely : who would be in a better position to be among the forerunners of something new ? And to go one step further, to prevent them, even prohibit them from experimenting with AWL would be to deprive the society of a major source of new insight through new experience.

It is important now to distinguish between minimum and maximum definitions of AWL. A maximum definition would focus on ways in which almost all aspects of DWL are negated : there would be full solidarity, both with Self in its individual or collective sense, with Others now and later, here and there, and with Nature. The concrete implementation so far most frequently found would probably take the form of a relatively isolated commune both of production and consumption, with the balances just indicated



worked into it. It would be a total society, a small community, and it has both theory and practice in the utopian tradition.

On the other end, then, the minimum definition of AWL one might focus on any way, even along only one dimension and however partial in which some kind of withdrawal from the DWL takes place. It might perhaps be defined less in terms of alternatives actively engaged in as in terms of values, positions, goods and services of DWL no longer pursued. One typical example would be career patterns : people disinterested in, no longer seeking public office, corporate managerial positions or academic fame would be good examples, from the BCI-complex, if we have reasons to believe that under other conditions they would have been pursuing these goals. Another example would be in the field of more or less deliberate underconsumption of material goods relative to what is offered and relative to the economic capacity of the person. The same would apply to services : the person might be less interested in them, not so much because he wants to build up alternatives closer to himself as because he does not want to get entangled in the intricacies of the DWL even when it might look advantageous to him. Still another example might be the person who renounces on income he might easily have earned simply because he is not interested in goods and services that could be acquired for them - not so much because he has a clear vision of wanting more leisure time, more time with his/her family, more togetherness. And then there is the decline of interest in big society, in "Great Society": less concern with the news, reading newspapers less, and so on.

It may be argued that this is not an alternative way of life, only a lack of participation in the dominant way of life, and that is true - unless one accepts it as part of a minimum definition of alternative ways of life as I would be inclined to do, referring to it as a passive AWL. It might even be seen as more threatening to DWL than most active AWLs because it demobilizes, it pacifies and leaves DWL society without real content, like an empty shell, without at the same time building up an alternative that might be more satisfactory. In a sense a passive AWL is the direct expression of the alienation caused by DWL, almost indistinguishable from it. Lack of participation in election might be more threatening to the system than a heavy vote for the opposition : the former is a negation of the whole system, the latter only of the regime.

There are several reasons to be in favour of the minimum definition including passive AWL.

First, it gives a much broader spectrum of ways in which people can defend themselves against the many social pathologies of over-consuming societies. It does not make people feel hopeless in the sense that they feel they have to join a total commune; it opens for more possibilities.

Second, instead of focussing on a small minority of people who go all out for active AWL the broader definition would perhaps rather focus on what might be an equally small minority who really go actively in for DWL. That minority does not coincide with the elites of the country : among the latter there may be many disbelievers, even active traitors to their class and their cause, and outside the elites there may be (very) many who aspire to get into elite positions. And even if they do not have such aspirations they actively believe in and go in for DWL from their niche in society. How many they are would be difficult to estimate, but it should never be assumed that they are 100% minus very active AWL people.

Third, and perhaps most importantly : there is a danger implicit in the maximum AWL, a danger of overconsumption that even may be so patterned that one might talk in terms of overdevelopment. An AWL commune may be built on the twin pillars of reduced material consumption and increased non-material consumption, through patterns of self-reliance and togetherness, love and creativity, and faith. Thus, it may aspire to satisfy a much broader spectrum of needs than DWL. But in so doing it may overdo the satisfiers of non-material needs in a way not too dissimilar from the way DWL overdoes the satisfiers of material needs. It may be so high in satisfiers of these non-material needs, there may be so many loving people around, so much concern, mutual awareness and caring, so many opportunities for creativity because of unsolved problems and non-routines abounding everywhere that it simply becomes too much. Everybody has a limited capacity for absorbing such stimuli, everybody may have a point where one just wishes to retreat and retire, to creep into oneself in privacy, to be surrounded by smooth routines and opportunity for self-reflection, or for doing just simply nothing. A particular case would be a very commonly found satisfier in such milieus referred to as a "meeting" : it is certainly instrumental for collective and autonomous decision-making up to a certain point. Beyond that it may become a routine, a bore and in fact a means of repression in the hands of clever people with particular stamina for meetings. And the same applies

to the communes: they could very well become the opposite of participatory, democratic and egalitarian when run by people with an excess of energy in the direction of loving care of others.

For that reason there is wisdom in the type of AWL that currently seems to be emerging with great frequency but little fan fare in, for instance, Northern European countries : essentially organized as federations of families, appartments, houses. People have their private quarters and their common quarters, they withdraw and they visit each other following the cues in themselves and in others. They certainly exchange services : baby-sitting against baby-sitting rather than monetizing that market (and either paying taxes or becoming tax-dodgers), possibly dentistry against plumbing, and so on. They share concerns, delights and sorrows. But the level of involvement seems to vary much from person to person and family to family, and also for the same person and family through time. The organization is highly informal, there is probably some kind of mutual supervision that nobody exploits others grossly - but this is also the case in DWL, for instance in the pattern for exchanges of gifts, mutual invitation to parties, etc. ("We have invited them twice by now, it is high time they invite us!").

In short, it can perhaps be argued that the softer forms of AWL, although still relatively active, are people's defense reactions against the harder forms just as these forms are defense reactions against DWL. To the extent that this is the case one can only once more conclude that a good society is a society where a wide range of such defense reactions are possible, and particularly where it is possible for people to find their own levels of involvement. And there are certainly structures that would limit that type of freedom, as the freedom of choice of way of life. Controls over housing and jobs could be so rigid, with no flexibility permitted either in changing or modifying jobs, or in changing or modifying houses - leaving along federating habitat units together in some type of loose organization not controlled by authorities. Moreover, the general tendency to monetize all kinds of markets would run counter to the possibility of direct exchange of goods and services : any such direct exchange is implicitly or explicitly a way of withholding taxes from bureaucracies, profits from corporations and research problems from intellectuals. In other words, the quest for alternative ways of life is also a quest for self-reliance.

To the perspective of AWL in high consumption countries as self-defense against such social pathologies as ecological break-downs of various kinds, increasing rates of violent crimes (including terrorism), increasing inequality and exploitation within and between countries (not measurable in terms of income alone), reduced autonomy, decreased solidarity, not to mention all the threats to individual health through over-eating, pollution, stress, lack of exercise, over-dependency on medical care, etc. can now be added another perspective. This perspective does not derive from what goes on inside the high consumption countries, but from their(threatened) position in the world system. The high (material) consumption countries have also become low material production countries, in the sense that a small part of the population's total working time is dedicated to material production - the rest are kept apart as children or retired people; they are at all kinds of schools; they are working in the service industries; they are bureaucrats, corporation managers, intellectuals; in knowledge or leisure industries; they are on welfare or unemployed - - and the working hours are down from 12 to 7 hours a day, from seven to five days a week, from 12 to 11, maybe 10 months a year - and all that within a decreasing interval between completing schooling and starting retirement. Nonetheless, the societies have kept going, simply because the productivity is so high (due to science and technology); and the exploitation of workers inside the countries, the Third world outside and the nature everywhere has provided enough surplus.

Historically, that is. But recently these countries are up against severe problems. Effective trade unionism has reduced the surplus that can be extracted from workers inside the countries, making capital look for other places where reasonably disciplined and badly paid workers can be found. Effective trade unionism among Third world countries is moving in the same direction although with some ambiguity: the Third world masses are probably exploited more than ever before, so is Third world nature, but Third world manufacturing starts competing effectively with that of the industrialized countries, and raw materials get ever more expensive. And at the same time it is as if Nature were unionized; Nature protests more than before, and via others, the whole movement for the environmental protection protests on its behalf. As a consequence the high consumption countries are thrown back on increasing their productivity through ever more capital- and research intensive production, thereby reinforcing precisely those aspects of these countries that tend to lead to the social pathologies mentioned. With increased productivity higher consumption will almost inevitably become the dominant way of life, and the consequence is patterned overconsumption, ie. overdevelopment, materially speaking.

And the consequence of that, in turn, is that people will have to find ever new ways of defending themselves, along the spectrum given above, from passive withdrawal to active, highly self-sufficient commune building. In all probability this will lead to very strange patterns : a tiny elite of top bureaucrats, corporation people and intellectuals/researchers designing "competitive" means and modes of production (with ever increasing use of computer, robots, and hence unemployment), with another tiny group of active AWL people, and with a vast majority of increasingly disillusioned people who watch and observe what happens, they also make comments on it, but without really participating. Many would say we are there already, in some of the most "advanced" (whatever that may mean) countries. And others would say, in a more moralist vein, that this serves them right, as so much of all that overconsumption is based on a corresponding underconsumption in Third world countries from which the resources - raw materials, soil, water even, capital and labour - have been drained off since Columbus and Vasco de Gama travelled - - too far.

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