

MODERN-DAY SLUMS

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Abstract. *In this paper the author wishes to point out the socio-demographical and geographical causes and consequences of the occurrence and growth of slums in the modern world. He draws attention to the problem of slums in the modern rich capitalist world and at the same time focuses on the problems and features of these housing areas in the United States of America and Europe, and then sheds light on the socio-demographical features of these housing areas in Asia, Africa and South America. Slums are analyzed as a chain of consequences of class and ethnic differentiations not only within a single state, but also as a chain of consequences of international differentiations, segregations and expulsions.*

Key words: *poverty, slums, extremely impoverished countries, highly developed countries, segregation and differentiation.*

Slums are a dynamic social and cultural phenomenon. They are city-specific occurrences with a tendency of becoming a typical city phenomenon in the next few years. Within them we find numerous widespread social diseases and see them as a reflection of the many unsolved problems of urban life. They are a consequence of economic and social inequalities. Today their profile mainly stems from the dominant capitalist urban character of civilization. Since they are a separate side of the urban way of life in each of the countries they occur in, they trigger numerous questions of a historic, cultural and socio-psychological nature. Their residents today are many of the world's dissatisfied and unhappy people, making them a very eloquent comment on how countries do not serve the wellbeing of all their citizens. They are a cultural phenomenon, since their inhabitants usually have their own systems of values and norms, rules of conduct, and specific way of life. As large, densely populated and permanent housing areas, they shape the social contents of cities, bringing disintegration and disorganization into their very core. These housing areas are the product of residential segregation, the grouping of those who have been deprived of many things. In today's cities, grouping of the population usually occurs

on the basis of common racial, ethnic or class distinctions. In the next few years, the grouping of the population in urban areas will be carried out primarily on the basis of equality in poverty and the impoverished way of life. The people living in these housing areas have very few options when it comes to location. They are tied mainly to a single slum. Within it they find little cause for joy, but remain in it for extended periods of time. Poverty has been a topic of discussion since the time of the industrial revolution. More precisely, there was talk of poor working class quarters and poverty as the outcome of a rural exodus. Today poverty is spoken of as a very complex and widespread occurrence, and slums are studied and observed in a wide variety of theoretical frameworks and from a variety of perspectives. These housing areas are merely the spatial manifestation of poverty as a phenomenon. They are, along with poverty, a product not only of class and ethnic differentiation within an individual state, but are also a product of international differentiations, segregations and expulsions. Thus, they are, on the one hand, a product of inner state and, on the other, very complex international circumstances and relations. This is why a distinction should be made about poverty in an international framework, and it should be studied in highly developed industrial states, in moderately developed and underdeveloped and extremely impoverished states. One of the consequences of uneven economic and social development is that the world is made up of a small number of countries which are economically relatively stable and a great number of countries which display permanent or occasional economic instability. In countries which are economically relatively stable, which are usually at the same time highly developed industrial (not to mention the wealthiest) countries, the population generally enjoys a higher degree of social security, while in countries which are economically unstable, the population usually does not have the privilege of social security. The number of economically unstable countries increased at the end of the 20th century, and during the first decade of the 21st century, the division between the richer countries and the poor ones continued to widen. The process of segregation between the rich and poor populations, on the other hand, deepened within economically relatively stable countries and within those which were economically unstable in the long run. This is an obvious long-term consequence of great world-wide processes which encompass not only the economies of the industrially undeveloped world but also, especially during the past couple of years, the economies of the developed world. Highly developed countries in the 20th century went through a period of strengthening of various types of industry and today they are characterized by high productivity, extensive foreign trade exchange with the world, while the great majority of their population is characterized by a very high level of education accompanied by a very high standard of living. The development of the market and production, industrial prosperity, an increase in agricultural production, the development of transport and systems of communication, as well as the development of an educational system (along with the development and expansion of the healthcare system) have led to certain demographic changes which have had long-term consequences on the quality of life in these countries. Today the birthrate in developed countries is far below the 30th percentile, while in underdeveloped countries, it exceeds this percentile by far. Once it entered the demographic transitional phase to a lower birthrate, the population of highly developed countries experienced a continuous growth in the average human lifespan, but also a decrease in the birthrate. The times of high birthrates had passed and the time of the continuous decrease in the birthrate ensued. At the same time, due to the expansive development of trade and

transport, technological changes in agricultural production (an increase in the extent of domestic agricultural production), constant employment outside the domain of agriculture (not to mention other, numerous reasons) the gross national product increased in the already developed industrial nations. The second half of the 20th century was a period during which already wealthy countries accumulated even more wealth. This was a period of the most extensive increase in poverty in the world. Due to all the aforementioned reasons, highly developed and wealthy countries, during the second half of the 20th century, and even today, had a relatively stable economic growth and development which also conditioned and led to a satisfactory planned and continuous development of education, healthcare and children's services. Education, healthcare and child care are all factors of work productivity, so the investments paid off many times over and still enabled the strengthening of economic stability and the national economic growth of already wealthy states. The countries of the developed capitalist world were able to achieve their economic and social goals in a relatively simple manner and had significant success in this area up to 1970. Following the 1973-74 crisis, their economic development began to take a much rigorous view of the overall planning and realization of social goals. Public spending in the "countries of abundance" and "countries of wellbeing" (labels which theoreticians from highly developed countries gladly used) slowly began to shift towards conditioned and limited, balanced spending within the realm of the real, and thus towards planned and synchronized spending within strictly defined limits.

Capitalist countries with developed industries knew no limits in their economic development up until the first oil crisis in 1973, and after the year 2000, they came face-to-face for the first time with threat of the galloping increase in the price of energy sources on the world market, which in the case of these resources is surprisingly unstable. The economic problems that stemmed from a lack of energy resources brought about visible changes in the behavior and planning in industrially developed countries. From a nation of abundance, people found themselves moving towards a "society of abundance", and from an improvement in living conditions for the majority, the trend was reduced to caring about improvement of the work in non-governmental organizations, religious and humanitarian organizations, non-profit organizations with social programs. The governments of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Regan were the first to dismiss the concept of a "country of abundance" as expensive, outdated and cumbersome. With its rejection and the introduction of more restrictive politics in many areas of aid and work for the socially underprivileged, it was necessary to provide the means for the development of capitalist economies. Highly developed industrial countries have shown a slight improvement in the quality of life of the poor since 1970, but at the same time, the unusually rapid increase in wealth of some of its minorities. Even today they show a relatively balanced and stable economic and social growth, mainly without any major or strong social tension and unrest, without any damage to the planned growth, but the bankruptcies that occurred in the period following the golden nineties of the 20th century have shown that the times when wealth could be acquired easily and quickly are ending. At the end of the 20th century these countries realized an enviable rate of employment and the predicted social security. In the past few decades, they have also been developing special social programs, especially programs that encompassed poverty, employment programs, healthcare of at-risk groups and the like.

A number of decades ago, highly developed industrial countries faced the burning and growing issues of poverty in their own countries, and then the problems became even more complex and deepened as a consequence of the migrations of poor people all over the world, who were headed directly towards prosperous and economically stable countries. The number of newly arrived poor immigrants (refugees and economical migrants) was added to the existing number of poor, which to a great extent complicated the issue of poverty in these countries.

Underdeveloped countries are often characterized by an extensive reliance on their own agriculture, an underdeveloped and dependent industry, a lack of participation of the population in the service industry, weaker work productivity in relation to developed countries, weaker foreign trade exchange (cases when imports usually far exceed exports), being in debt abroad and the constant need to rely on the import of technology which is already outdated. Their gross national product is less than 2.500 US dollars per citizen. Irrespective of the fact that they are often in great debt abroad, which is a chronic characteristic of a certain number of these countries, in the decades towards the end of the 20th century, they did make some effort to reduce poverty, illiteracy and to improve the healthcare available to their citizens. These countries often had problems primarily in the area of education and healthcare and child protection, which come as a consequence of inappropriate economic growth and development. These processes are accompanied by an increasing number of unemployed citizens, in addition to a lack of many of the prerequisites necessary for getting their economy moving in a direction which will lead them to a quality of life already realized in the industrially developed world. What they primarily lack are funds, engineering and technology. In many of the countries in Asia and Africa, which belong to the group of extremely impoverished countries, and where the gross national product is less than 500 US dollars per citizen, we can note a whole group of problems that people face that people face merely trying to survive, while the global solutions for their development and the meeting of their most pressing needs are not even in the planning stage.

The basic conclusions regarding the process of impoverishment and the relationship between the rich and the poor in the modern world do not give cause for optimism. They are quite bleak and boil down to two basic predictions: 1. In the following few decades, the economic instability of the already economically unstable countries and areas will deepen; 2. By means of various mechanisms and methods, highly developed countries will try to provide and ensure their own economic growth and development. For this reason, poverty and impoverishment will surface as a relatively lasting consequence of inter-state differentiation, segregation and inter-state expulsion. Highly developed industrial countries have more and more highly diversified mechanisms and means with which to impose almost all their demands on the less developed and underdeveloped countries. The resolution about the development of international economic cooperation, adopted in 1975, made provisions for the complete autonomy of each country over its natural resources; the industrialization of developing countries; stable prices on the world market and a higher transfer of industrial technology. Since 1975, little has been done of what was expected and proclaimed. Today mankind is facing a whole string of severe and acute problems. A number of scientists, and quite a few at that, predict lesser or greater economic disasters in the near future. These prognoses are based on the expansion plans of the world population. A rapid demographic growth in economically unstable, ex-

tremely poor and underdeveloped countries ties in with the problems related to the lack of necessary raw materials. The more optimistic prognoses cite 2025, and the more pessimistic ones cite 2016 as the year when the profitable exploitation of oil will finally end. This will bring with it the risk of great economic collapses and downfalls, which will occur as early as today, as a precursor and herald of the weakening of some of the currently powerful economic systems.

Three fifths of the world's population live in abject poverty, most of which can be found in slums. With the incessant growth of the global and average world income in the previous century, came a constant increase in the number of poor people. In the last decade of the 20th century, the world's population increased by 80 million every year. The most notable increase in the number of people can be seen in the countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia. Asia has 3.800 million people living in it today, or 61% of the world's population. Africa had 220 million in the mid 20th century and in 2000 had 850 million inhabitants. South America had around 111 million in 1950, and in 2004 had 365 million people living in it. The trend of growth in the population will continue to increase over the next decades, but not only in the underdeveloped and extremely impoverished countries of Asia, South America and Africa. The number and size of slums will also increase in some of the mid-developed and some highly developed countries.

Highly developed countries differ to a great extent amongst themselves, especially when it comes to poverty. In the USA, Canada and Britain we find a special model at work: these countries are characterized by high employment rates (around 70% of their populations is employed), but also by high poverty rates as well. For example, in the USA in 1993, there were 54 million poor people (in relation to the circumstances in this country), while in the countries of the European Union there were 52 million poor people (Lakićević, M. 1995: 36). The USA are even today characterized by relative economic stability, influence on international relations, military and political superiority, extensive natural wealth, a highly developed and diversified industry, highly developed agriculture and a significant food surplus. On the other hand, this country is continuously importing goods, so its import rate is twice as high as its export rate, has a huge deficit in their foreign trade relations with many countries, and an enormous debt abroad which is an indication of the fact that the currently relative economic stability is headed in the direction of a long-term, if not permanent instability. This instability will in the future only increase due to an ever greater demand for power sources which this country does not have. It is precisely in the northern part of the USA, where most of its cities are located, that the problems of poverty can be seen at their worst. The north of the USA is the most densely populated, most urbanized, and industrially developed area in the country. This is where the great megalopolises can be found, such as Boston-Washington or Buffalo-Chicago, but many of the slums as well. The problems related to poverty can sometimes be that great that they can paralyze normal life.

Slums in the USA came about as a consequence of the lasting division between the rich and the poor. They are an extreme social phenomenon in this country, where the poor increase in number every day in the cities of this densely populated and most urbanized country in the world. Living in them today we find people who are spatially and socially separated from the privileged population living in the cities. Great concentrations of slums can be found in all of the American agglomerations and conurbations. For this country they are a symbol (confirmation) of the racial, religious, ethnic, cultural and

other maladjusted nature of its cities. Social inequality defines life in the slums, not crime or any other type of behavior, although crime is what Americans are quick to notice first. These housing areas are a material and spiritual mirror of American society, a stage for social segregation, a stage different from any other type of American settlement, since the people in them live without social prestige and economic power. Since they are a part of the spatial and social structure of the city, a consequence of social segregation and social differentiation, they speak of the dark side of abundance and the easy life of America (Pušić, Lj 1995: 271 and on).

The United States of America are an example of the historical truths related to the development of slums. The drive for economic prosperity has set in motion a rural exodus the likes of which have not been seen in the 20th century, so the slums have become more and more widespread in the suburbs. The poor have always been, and continue to be, eternally integrated into American city life, only with a very bad starting point for the climb up the stratified social ladder. In space, the poor were a socially compact unit. As conspicuous units in space, they received their share of names (China town, the Jewish quarters, the Puerto Rican quarter, Mexican quarter, Cuban quarter, the Ghetto and the like) (Pušić, Lj 1995: 329 and on). In these settlements crime is widespread, as is hopelessness and constant insecurity. Seeing how poverty has always been centered around the innermost parts of almost all the great cities, this has bred the fear of an invasion of the poor.

Today, the metropolitan areas are growing, and with them grow the series of anomias and social conflicts. The segment of the population that is barely surviving encompasses vast numbers of people, and since the urban poor, due to social discrimination, have created homogenous societies, fear of the sprouting of urban-pathological occurrences has emerged. Vagrancy, juvenile and street gangs, and an increase in every type of crime follow unemployment just as they do social, class and ethnic segregation. In the USA, slums are a spatial and social reality and specificity, but their development suggests that they will continue to be so in the future as well. The general laws of American agglomerates and conurbations will enable the incessant development of slums. These housing areas will be even more numerous in the future. They will achieve their own all-American significance.

Overpopulation, neglect, and unemployment of one part of the population influences many of the processes which lead to the decline of cities. New York is an example often cited in discussions about city budget crises. In New York, the blacks, the Koreans, the Dominicans, and the Puerto Ricans all have their own ghettos. South Bronx, Harlem, Brooklyn, Queens all stand opposite from the magnificent center of the city. These housing areas are an image of the "suburban" misery which very few Americans are familiar with. During the seventies, New York gave great financial aid to the unemployed, due to which the economic ruin of the city ensued, that is, the city budget crisis. The city had to go into debt in order to function and to help the poor. This city will continue to be an example of how the poor are a city's greatest problem into the 21st century. In this century, the poor will become the most significant (and in some places solely) a problem of the cities. Slums will be an important feature of civilization in the 21st century (Supek, R 1987: 47 and on). Highly developed countries met with poverty in their own back yards in the second half of the 20th century. The poor make up 18 to 20% of the population of the USA and have done so for decades. Poverty in highly developed countries is continu-

ously evolving and along with it come new theories, new takes on the phenomenon, and of course, a new rhetoric and new methodologies for the study and possible solutions for this problem. Today there is talk of a new type of poverty, of social isolation, the impoverishment of the middle class, both in highly developed and in other countries in the world. Some of the most developed countries have incessantly been improving and promoting programs for the fight against poverty. In Australia in the last decade of the 20th century, 16% of the population was poor, in Canada 14%, in Great Britain 13%, in France 9%, Holland and Germany 8% (Lakićević, M. 1995: 36).

The population of South America increased a total of nine times during the 20th century, so this continent, along with, Africa had the quickest demographic growth (Bertić, I., Šehić, D & Šehić, D. 2007: 54 and on). The demographic explosion and technological dependence on the industrially developed world aggravated the situation of the poor on the continent. Migrations from the rural to the urban regions led to an increase in the number of poor in the cities, while the country remained even poorer. Due to these migrations, the population growth in the cities of this continent is the fastest in the world. Today, four fifths of the world's population live in the cities on this continent, a fact which speaks of a very turbulent exodus. The sudden increase in the number of the poor, the high birth rate of the population living in the slums on the outskirts of the cities and even within the cities themselves has changed the image of urban life in Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, and Venezuela. In these countries, nine tenths of the population live in cities, so it is not surprising that the numerous slums are simply attached to the affluent and sophisticated quarters. Life on the very edge of survival and life in affluence meet at every corner. The slums are usually densely populated and numerous urban regions. Due to a high birth rate, they are continuously increasing in number. Irrespective of their spreading and their rapid increase in number, they usually fail to provide the basic conditions for a normal life. In the favelas, there is usually no water or sewer system to be found, the housing conditions are degraded, there is no security, or adequate healthcare. The residents of the favelas are mainly characterized by a low level of education or cultural life, and the housing areas are characterized by a high rate of child and infant mortality. Seeing how in some of the countries of this continent the basis of their economies is agriculture, or monoculture and plantation production, they have very limited abilities for employing the poor and uneducated population. The problem of poverty is deepened even further by frequent political unrest. Periodic economic or political crises make life more complicated and difficult for the poor, since the occasional wars that marked the previous century, during which one set of countries seized the territory of other countries, only brought even more impoverishment. A demographic explosion represents a problem even for countries that are not poor. In 1950, Brasil had a population of 52 million, and in 2004 a total of 182 million. Around 70 million of these people live in poverty.¹

The most underdeveloped continent, Africa, at the same time has the greatest number of countries marked by abject poverty and the greatest population of the extremely im-

¹ In South America, the poorest country is Paraguay with 930 US dollars per citizen, which is more than what Haiti as the most underdeveloped country of North America has (510 US dollars per citizen) or Central American Nicaragua (480 US dollars) or the poor countries of Oceania Papuan New Guiney (580 US dollars) and the Solomon Islands (800 US dollars per citizen). See: Bertić, I., Šehić, D. & Šehić, D. (2007) *The Atlas of America, Australia, and Oceania*. Beograd: Monde Neuf.

poverty. Africa produces only 1.7% of the world's gross social product and participates in world trade with only 3%. Its population increased seven times during the 20th century, so its percentage in the world population increased to 13.5%. Africa's underdevelopment is most obvious when it comes to traffic infrastructure, the educational and healthcare system. In 2001, one billion people in the world were on the brink of starvation, or were living in abject poverty, and as we all know, African countries topped the list of the poorest countries in the world. West Africa, which is the most densely populated area of the continent, was also the poorest region in the world. In Nigeria, Mali, Niger, Chad, Ghana, and Guinea the main branches of the economy are agriculture and cattle-breeding, while the unemployment rate and the lack of organized education is great. A total of 40% of illiterate children 15 and younger live in Africa. In Equatorial Africa, the most densely populated African region, the population lives along the river beds and is mainly involved in agriculture. The poorest countries in the world are located there – Ethiopia, and the Congo (Zaire). Some South African states are characterized by enormous debt, a monoculture and underdeveloped form of agriculture, and a low rate of industrial production (Kicošev, S. & Golubović, P. 2002). Here, as in many other places in Africa, industry is in its infancy, and in the cities, which sometimes resemble the modern cities of Europe, there are entire clusters of slums very close to the somewhat fashionable "Europeanized" shopping malls. The slums generally lack basic sanitary-hygienic conditions, and in the smaller housing areas in the provinces, the poor most often live without the very basic necessities for a normal life. They primarily lack drinking water, along with everything else necessary for a normal life. The slums have no electricity, no water, or sewer system. The greatest problem in the slums is drinking water. At the end of the 20th century, a total of 1.200 million people the world over did not have good drinking water (Lakićević, M. 1995: 39). Many places in Africa do not even have unsanitary drinking water. The deserts are unceasingly spreading from the west to the east of the country. The slums in this area are densely populated, literally overcrowded. Bad housing conditions are obvious in these areas. Slums without any of the benefits of proper housing are marked by high rates of infant and child mortality, and frequent child diseases. The healthcare of children is virtually non-existent.² It was during period between 1980 and 1990 that around 25 million people died of hunger in these poorest countries in the world. Some of these countries have very large populations, such as Niger which has over 124.5 million people, 40% of which are poor. The poor in these countries are even nowadays doomed to mere survival. For a long time yet to come, the African population will not satisfy its basic needs for shelter, food, clothing, education, healthcare and social insurance. For a long time yet to come, many African countries will be in a state of technological dependence on the developed world and will have limited access to the world

² The extremely poor African states include: Burundi (90 US dollars per citizen), the Congo with 120 US dollars; Eritrea 170 US dollars; Gambia 190 US dollars; Guinea Bissau and Ruanda 190 US dollars per state, Ethiopia with 100 US dollars, Sierra Leone with 180 US dollars and Somalia with 130 US dollars gross national product per citizen. A somewhat larger income, but still less than 500 US dollars per citizen can be found in the following countries: the Central African Republic (350); Ghana (380); Guinea (380); Kenya (480); Komori (490); Madagascar (310); Mali (330); Mozambique (250); Niger (230); Nigeria (320); Tanzania (280); Togo (340); Uganda (240); Zambia (330); Zimbabwe (400). For more details see: Bertić, I., Šehić, D. & Šehić, D. (2007), *The Atlas of Africa*. Beograd: Monde Neuf and Kicošev, S. & Golubović, P. (2002), *The regional geography of Africa*. Niš: Prirodno-matematički fakultet.

market. The occasional military-political conflicts or political and economic crises dating from the previous century have crossed over into the 21st century.

Poverty will continue to be one of Africa's greatest problems, since 62% of the continent's population is still involved in agriculture. (In Egypt, for example, 42.7% of the active population is involved in agriculture, while in the Sudan, 63.5% of the population is involved in agriculture, in the Central African Republic 65.8%, in Ethiopia 86.1%, in Djibouti 76.9%, Somalia 75.8%, and in Mozambique 83.8% of the active population). Many countries suffer from a lack of arable land, since only 19% of the total area of the continent is suitable for agriculture, and 47% is made up of arid land due to a lack of water. The traditional manner of plowing the land by hand is still practiced by 77.4% of the population. Illiteracy spreads with the spreading of the slums. In Egypt, for example, only 51% of the population is literate, in the Sudan only 46%, in Somalia only 24% of the population. The passive character of their foreign trade, outdated technology, debt abroad and general insecurity, along with the constant increase of the population in addition to a lack of foreign reserves will prove to be greatest problems of the African states. According to the predictions of the United Nations, Egypt will, in 2010, have a population of 77.6 million, Sudan 43, Nigeria 197.4, Ethiopia 89 million and so on. In 2025, Egypt will, according to the same calculations have 93.5 million inhabitants, the Sudan 60.6, Nigeria 285.8, and Ethiopia 130.7 inhabitants (Kicošev, S & Golubović, P. 2002). This will occur as a result of the fact that nowadays in Egypt one woman gives birth to four children on average, in the Sudan 6.3, in Nigeria 6, in Ethiopia 7.5, in Kenya 6.5, Uganda 7.3 children and in Ruanda 8.3 children.

African slums will increase in number in the future. Today they are also marked by disease. In Uganda, 21% of the population is infected with the HIV virus. AIDS has the form of an epidemic in Ruanda, and the disease is wiping out the population in Burundi, where we also find tuberculosis, typhus, dysentery and other infectious diseases. In Ethiopia, in addition to malnutrition, AIDS, cholera, meningitis and yellow fever represent the greatest health hazards which accompany poverty. Erosion of the soil, very little precipitation and other adversities are the cause of malnutrition of the Ethiopian population. Africa, which is generally poor in terms of resources, also has problems with desertification (expansion of the desert). It would seem that even today, due to a lack of funds, a lack of mechanization and the lack of agricultural measures even the existence of self-sufficient family farms have been brought into question in many areas of the continent. Slums will, for a long time yet to come, be the future of the continent. Settlements with wooden ramparts, houses made of wood and leather, plastered with mud and with only a single room covered with grass and sticks will continue to be the image of the poor and underdeveloped African village.

Traditional forms of economy (nomadic cattle herding, trade and ancient crafts, agriculture on erosive land) are characteristic of the countries of Western Asia even today (the Near and Middle East). One part of the population of West Asia lives in abject poverty, in houses made of mud and earth, or in derelict stone houses where people and livestock live under the same roof. The diet of the population living in remote villages is meager. The Indian subcontinent is characterized by a high birth rate, dense population and frequent migrations due to wars and natural disasters. The lack of economic development and an agriculture based solely on the production of rice have led to malnutrition among much of the population of the subcontinent. Various epidemics are also frequent

(dysentery, the measles, and the flu), which in addition to inadequate housing, are also the greatest problem that the poor face in settlements which consist of unstable houses made of raw clay. In many villages there are village wells so the poor do have water, which is not the case with settlements near the big cities. Some village settlements have water reservoirs. Unlike the village, the greatest problem of the cities is that they are overcrowded. In the areas of Bombay, Madras, Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, the valley of the Gang and Punjab, the overpopulation has led to millions of people sleeping on city sidewalks. The unplanned and uncontrolled gathering of the village population has resulted in unbearable living conditions in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Karachi, Dhaka, Madura and Ahmadabad. The inner cities are especially overcrowded. In the workers' quarters, where the poor live in barracks made of scrap metal found on dumps, life is no better. A number of the poor who live on the outskirts of the larger Indian towns spend the greater part of their day rummaging through the city dumps.

The poor population of China devises many ways to improve its quality of life. The slums, just like in Vietnam and other neighboring states, spring up along the river, and on the very rivers themselves, since many people live on rafts. The lack of arable land has forced the poorer Chinese to cultivate the land on rafts which sail along the steady flow of the Yangtze River. In poor Chinese households, people live in houses made of mixed clay and straw. In these houses, located in the flood plains, we can find up to 15 or 20 families. The villages which are below the river level frequently fall prey to floods, but their houses, which made of light material, can be rebuilt quickly and easily. The average agrarian population density is one of the greatest in the world, since over 1500 agrarian inhabitants live on an area of 100 acres of arable land. The mass reliance on physical labor in agriculture will be a characteristic of the Chinese village in the years to come.

Overpopulated and poor countries in Asia (Bangladesh, Pakistan, Vietnam and others) are characterized by a high birthrate, underdeveloped agricultural production and a low level of industrial production without any transfer of modern technology. At the same time, these countries are characterized by high unemployment rates. Afghanistan and Vietnam, in addition to Iraq, are war-torn countries suffering from military clashes, but also long-term tense political situations in their surroundings, due to which much of their money was spent on arms during the 20th century. The most densely populated agrarian regions of the world are South and Southeast Asia. Most of the Asian poor population lives in that region. The population relies heavily on agriculture, and the main food culture in this region is rice. Poor traffic and road connections significantly limit any economic development as well as the recovery of South and Southeast Asia. The densely populated countries also have a great many poor people living on their territories. The most densely populated country in the world – China, in the last decade of the 20th century had around 150 million poor people, India around 400, and Bangladesh around 93 million (Lakićević, M. 1995: 38).

Underdeveloped agriculture and a low rate of industrial production,³ a lack of funds for the import of modern technology, in addition to many other reasons keep some of the Asian countries chained to poverty. Considering the high population density and the mo-

³ The gross national product in 2004 in Afghanistan was 200 US dollars per citizen, in Bangladesh was 390; India 560; Iraq 600; East Timor 410; Yemen 450; Cambodia 290; Kirgizstan 370; Laos 390; Myanmar 180; Mongolia 510; Nepal 240; Pakistan 520; Tadzshikistan 200; Uzbekistan 390 and in Vietnam 480 US dollars per citizen.

mentum of the rural exodus in the underdeveloped Asian countries, the number of people living in slums ranges from several thousand to several hundred thousand. Slums can usually be found around larger cities, but the poor (who are quite numerous) also live in city quarters, not rarely inhabiting parts of the city's very center.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, poverty has become a mass occurrence in the so-called transition countries. Social regression in transition countries is more and more obvious. Towards the end of the 20th century in Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, 37 to 47% of the population were unemployed. Unemployment is not only the basis of poverty, but of social stratification, asocial phenomena, crime, prostitution and other forms of city pathology. For this reason, many of the countries which had left the Soviet Union, after being swept into an economic and political transition, are facing an ever-increasing divide in terms of social inequality, the impoverishment of the middle classes and the sudden wealth accumulation of the nouveaux riches politicians and the self-proclaimed economic "elite". The increase in unemployment is especially evident in Russia, but also in Hungary, Poland, Macedonia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and the Czech Republic. The weakening of the middle class in the former socialist countries did not lead to its downfall into poverty, but led to a chain of events which affected all spheres of life and paved the way for the occurrence of a new kind of poverty. This new kind of poverty can be found in the Balkans as well. It involves the impoverishment of the state and of the people. This new form of impoverishment takes place through the selling of factories, of the natural resources of a country, and the selling of land. The newly-formed political parties have usurped the right to participate in the selling of factories, natural resources (mines, water, land, and the like). Irregularities in the sales processes have surfaces, in addition to corruption, theft and seizing the likes of which could not even have been imagined up till now. The political elite have numerous times on many occasions and carried out the "privatization" process (popularly known as "the search for strategic partners" for factories which have been purposely ruined and whose value has been allowed to decrease), which have ruined their country and their people. Corruption at the highest political levels has become a "democratic process", and the people are left to live through this state of social pessimism, apathy and a personal sense of impoverishment. To make matters worse, an extreme regionalization of the inequality in the impoverished post-socialist countries has taken place. The poor regions have become even poorer and politically even more insignificant. The metropolises have continued to increase their economic power. A new kind of poverty along with new forms of inequality have marked the first years of the 21st century.

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SAVREMENA SIROMAŠNA NASELJA

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U ovom radu autor želi da istakne socio-demografske i geografske uzroke i posledice pojave i porasta broja naselja u savremenom svetu. On naglašava problem predgradja u savremenom bogatom kapitalističkom svetu i u isto vreme se koncentriše na probleme i karakteristike ovih naselja u Sjedinjenim američkim državama i Evropi, a onda se bavi i socio-demografskim karakteristikama ovakvih naselja u Aziji, Africi i Južnoj Americi. Predgradja se analiziraju kao niz posledica klasnih i etničkih razlika ne samo u okviru jedne države, već i kao niz posledica međunarodnih razlika, segregacija i isključivanja.

Ključne reči: *siromaštvo, predgradja, izuzetno osiromašene zemlje, visoko razvijene zemlje, segregacija i diferencijacija.*