

Technology and Psychology: a Mechanism of Anthropogenic Crises

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After investigating numerous episodes of man-made local, regional and global crises at different historical epochs, we revealed a systemic relationship between three variables of social existence: a society's technological power, the quality of its regulatory mechanisms, and its internal viability. Thus, a persistent pattern, which we named *the law of techno-humanitarian balance* [1-3], states that *the higher up a society's technologies, both producing and military, the more refined the regulatory means required for its self-preservation.*

For the formal apparatus, we distinguish between *external* and *internal* sustainability. The former, i.e. a society's ability to withstand natural and/or geopolitical fluctuations increases in proportion to its technological potential. The latter – its ability to avoid endogenous catastrophes – is a more delicate parameter. It declines if technological growth is not complemented by improving means of cultural regulation, including Law&Order, values and norms. The imbalanced society becomes more vulnerable to popular mental mood shifts, the whims of influential leaders, and other unpredictable factors.

As technological power outstrips the quality of cultural regulation, a specific *Homo prae-crisimos syndrome* develops: mass euphoria, a sense of omnipotence and permissiveness, higher needs and ambitions, etc. Sooner or later, this development conflicts with the scarcity of resources, and the society falls a victim to its own imbalanced might.

We suggest that this law has served as a selective mechanism all over the human history and prehistory: imbalanced societies were successively discarded by self-destroying their natural or political habitats. If, instead, a particular society found a radical way out of an evolutionary deadlock, this marked a turning point of history, and complex social, psychological and cultural transformations ensued. From the Lower Paleolithic up to our days, we describe at least seven such revolutions. Each involved new technologies with higher specific productivity, more effective information processing, more diversified and flexible social structures, and more refined value systems.

Non-trivial corollaries of the hypothesis were used for verifying it. One is that, while technological power of destruction along with population densities have been growing for millennia, the ratio of violence victims to the overall population has not. To test this, we introduced a special comparative index, *Bloodshed Ratio (BR)* – the ratio of average deliberate *killings* for certain period ($k(\Delta t)$) to the *population* number ($p(\Delta t)$). Calculating this index for different epochs and societies (using available data and special formulas), we found an irregular downward trend in the long run [3-4].

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