

PREVIEW

PARADISE FOUND AT LAST!

JOURNEY TO DISCOVER THE BEST PLACE WHERE TO LIVE



With the facts at your fingertips you will be able to choose the most suitable Country to live according to your needs, expectations and finances

Updated Version 2.0

Description

Do you ever feel overwhelmed by your life? Do you really want to live in a better world? Would you like to know more about the world you are living in? Then, this is the right e-book for you! You will be taken on a captivating tour where you will be shown a wide range of topics which will help you to spot the best place in the world and, therefore, to find out your own Eden.

The book takes into account the geophysical (climatic conditions, areas at greater risk from future earthquakes, hurricane danger zones and so on), economic (cost of living, tax pressure, inflation and so on) and social aspects (criminality index, education level, healthcare quality and so on) of each country in the world (196 of them!).

Each chapter examines its topic in depth and, as pictures speak louder than words, a world map shows, in different colours, the specific conditions of the countries.

The world is full of lies, of half-truths and of statistics as well. This is the reason why the figures of our world maps come from a reliable source. The statistical data are supplied by the leading organisations on the subject (ONU, World Bank, NOAA, etc..).

These figures can be fully relied on.

All you have to do is compare the different countries in the world and you will discover your own Eden, the real place able to meet your unique requirements and needs.



The maps found in this book have been produced using ArcGis geo-spatial software, version 10.4.1, edited by Esri Italia

Roberto Stanzani – Sergio Senesi

Paradise, Found at Last!

Journey to discover the best place where to live.

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Have a nice journey!

You are on the verge of beginning one of the most challenging adventures with our amazing journey, which will lead you, step by step, to discover your personal Eden.

This book can change the course of your life completely; it is up to you. This book can give you the tools and knowledge you have never had before, so that you can get rid of false beliefs and stereotypes. This book can teach you a lot of useful information, whether you use it or not.

Human beings have always been searching for happiness and this is probably your greatest need as well. People find it hard to reach their perfect state of wellness, but the prerequisite, and often the substitute for happiness, is peacefulness, both inner and outer peace. A number of people would like to live in a world without any wars or poverty, or where they do not need to work all day long to live worthily. Everybody is searching for their own “earthly paradise”, though some say it aloud and some just think about it. If you are not lucky enough to be born there, you try to reach it.

Every human being has an inner desire to find out his/her own ideal place to live in, even though everybody has their own personal Eden. Some people could describe it one way, but others could come up with a completely different one. This is the reason why people usually look for it at different periods of their life and in many different ways. Somebody even may get to an imaginary or unreal artificial paradise on earth. Actually, some people use an unreal “self” and make up a sort of “second life” running parallel to the real one. Role-playing is the most innocent and playful way to do that, where people create an alter ego, embodying an imaginary character and performing heroic deeds. Moreover, there are the so-called virtual environments, where people create a virtual extension of their own real life, more precisely the more or less harmless “social

networks”.

It is also important to remember some extreme cases of alcohol and drug abuse, which are much less rare nowadays, with their magic but devastating effects. This is likely to happen as people are looking for a “form of life” they have not reached yet and they think they will never have. It would be wiser to keep on looking for your own “earthly paradise” in the real world of your own experience with life. This is exactly what our book aims at.

There are so many different places around the world and most of them are totally different from the one we live in. Some places are even worse, but others are possibly better. Each part of the world is amazing in itself, even though it may not meet our requirements. Everybody, as inhabitants of this world, should have the right to choose the place to live in.

Do you ever feel your life is drifting away towards a colourless future? Do you have the feeling that you do not belong to the town or country you are living in?

Great majorities of individuals are unsatisfied with the place they live in, and sometimes it really is the worst place to live in the world! This may be due to many reasons: prevailing climate conditions of a region (too cold, too hot, too rainy), increasing levels of air pollution, rising poverty rates, worsening of quality life, crumbling away of human relations and an unsatisfying economy. In addition, the list could go on and on and on. Whatever the reason you dislike the country you are living in, it is always difficult to decide to change the direction of your life and move somewhere else.

Of course, you are attached to the country you live in! It is the country you were born in! You have got used to it and it is the place where your friends, your knowledge, your social relations and routines are! You have always lived there so far, but what about finding out a place where you could have a better life? Many of our forefathers travelled thousands of kilometres away from their country dreaming of a better life. You could do the same! Your life is unique! Do not throw it away!

Many people think it would be nice to point a finger to a place on a world map and say: "I'll leave". A number of people dream of changing their life and moving to another country. Actually, just few are brave enough to do it, and many of them do for a short time, and then they go back to their hometowns, thinking they were wrong, hasty and thoughtless.

You should think carefully before moving to another country!

The problem is that a globe can just tell you the topographic profile of the place you are looking for. You need to know many other basic parameters so that you can be aware of what you will really find in the country you want to move to. You need to judge with a full knowledge of the facts.

Take a world map (like the one shown below) and point your finger to the country you like best. Ask yourself: Am I sure it is the best place for me to live in? Does it live up to my expectations? Do I have an intimate knowledge of this country so that I can really say it meets my requirements? You should not be rash.

The majority of people studied geography when they were at school but have vague memories of it now. Of course, they watch amazing documentaries from around the world on TV, read articles on living abroad in magazines, hear of natural disasters overseas, but they usually judge on the basis of stereotypes or often report what other people say.

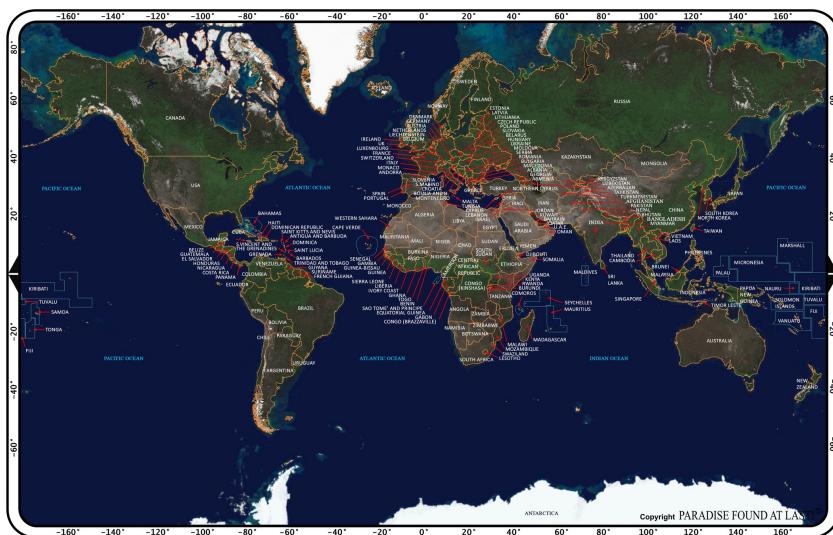
You should not run the risk of choosing a foreign country without an in-depth and adequate knowledge of it. You could choose one of the cities most likely to be destroyed by a natural disaster, with the highest risk of being battered by hurricanes, rocked by earthquakes or burned by a volcano eruption. You could choose a place where citizen rights are trampled on, where you could die of a simple appendicitis, or where the average human lifespan is only 50. You could also choose a place with a high criminality rate or with a poor state education system. There might be many other limiting factors and you would be very disappointed to learn about them when it is too late! Hardly anybody really knows the dynamic, ever changing planet, which is our World!

Each chapter of this book describes its topic in-depth and every single state is dealt with from a geophysical, social and economic point of view, based on real information. Our world is full of lies, half-truths and statistics. Our data, corresponding to the different colours on the map, are based on the most reliable statistics. Therefore, they can be considered as an absolute truth, being supplied by the leading organisation on the subject.

An ancient Chinese proverb says: “One picture is worth ten thousand words” and actually it is easier to learn by looking at pictures. This is the reason why, in each chapter, you will find a world map pointing out, in different colours, the different conditions of each state on a given topic, so that comparisons can be easily made, as all the maps are equal in size and shape. The maps could be printed and virtually superimposed. Then, with a tracing paper and some felt-tip pens, you could highlight the places you are most interested in. This is an easy way to find out your Eden little by little; the real place is waiting for you to come.

Accompanied by the chapters and the maps of this book, you will experience a spectacular journey all around the world and you will enhance your knowledge as well. Afterwards, you will be able to point your finger to the place that really meets your requirements. Nobody will force you to move there for real. What counts is that you will learn that the place meeting your requirements does exist. You could say that dreams are dreams and must stay alive. Of course, you can keep on dreaming. The book has an open ending. Nevertheless remember that, at the end of this tour, you will be able to identify your own “Eden”, not an abstract and unreal place, but a real and tangible one that will bring new light to your future!

WORLD MAP OF INDEPENDENT STATES



Chapter 2

Avoidable risks: Earthquakes, Tsunamis and Volcanoes

Now your journey, searching for your own Eden, invites you to go up mountains ranges to discover the secrets at the core of our dynamic planet. It is absolutely necessary for you to delve into the mysteries behind natural disasters and to learn more about some powerful physical phenomena such as earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes. If you decided to live in a place likely to be destroyed by a violent earthquake, for example, you would put your life at risk. Many people have no choice but to live in potentially dangerous places, which are at high risk for all kinds of natural disasters. On the other hand, you can choose, after careful consideration, the place that could be your ideal home. What about learning what causes earthquakes, tsunamis or volcanic eruptions to happen? You should take into account these factors before choosing your Earthly Paradise!

Unacknowledged genius. In the last few years, geology has provided well-founded answers. Geologists have been studying the causes of earthquakes and have developed tools for understanding new phenomena and improving the reliability of predictions of natural disasters. When Alfred Wegener, a German geologist and meteorologist, proposed his theory of Continental Drift in 1915, he was mocked and criticized for it by the scientific community. Before Wegener's theory, geologists thought that continents and basins were stationary and did not move around. It is no surprise that people thought that way. The scientific community took 30 years after Wegener's death to accept his theory. Wegener's evidence for his theory was that the shape of the coasts of different continents, even though separated from the ocean, fitted perfectly, like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. Moreover, he provided Paleontological, Lithological and Paleo climatic evidence. Firstly, he showed that the same types of fossilised animals and plants, from the same time period, were found in South America and

Western Africa. Secondly, he stressed that South America and Africa appeared to be formed of the same kind of rock. Finally, he studied ancient climates and discovered that in South America and Africa, a massive sheet of ice covered large areas of land at the end of the Paleozoic Era. However, Wegener's theory of Continental Drift was rejected until the advent of the Plate-Tectonic theory. As a matter of fact, in the last few decades, there have been remarkable advances in this field and solid scientific evidence has dramatically changed the scientific understanding of the dynamism of Earth and the approach to the different natural phenomena occurring on it, like earthquakes, tsunamis and volcano eruptions. As Earth's interior is still very hot and active, it continuously emits heat from its surface. This thermal flow is explained by the phenomenon of radioactivity. It can be inferred that radioactive decay of Uranium-238 and Thorium-232 in the Earth's crust and mantle emits particles whose kinetic energy is converted to heat. Therefore, Earth's nucleus gives off heat (the temperature of the nucleus of Earth is above 4,000°C (7,000°F), which gradually cools down as it is transferred to the upper layers (mantle and crust). The mantle is a layer of liquid rock that behaves like a pot of water starting to boil: when the liquid is heated, it rises, when it is cold, it goes down swirling. Similarly, the liquid rock in the mantle is continuously driven by circular convection currents. The liquid and hot rock, which forms lava, tends to rise to the surface while the denser and colder rock of the crust sinks downward into a level in which, owing to high temperatures, melts and changes into magma that then, rises to the surface to create new crust. The circular movement of these convection cells of molten rock acts like giant conveyor belts and it is the most likely cause of plate movement. As you can see in the following map, Earth's lithosphere is divided into tectonic plates. It is easier to think of plates as rigid "rafts" floating on convection cells of *magma* (= molten rock). The study of these structures and of the dynamics of their movement is called "Plate Tectonics" and the phenomena of geological and structural modification related to them is called "Continental Drift". Plate movement is not only influenced by the convection cells of molten rock, but also by Earth's rotation (called the Coriolis Effect) which drives the plates westward in the Northern Hemisphere. The Coriolis Effect is the apparent acceleration of a moving body on or near Earth as a result of Earth's rotation. This is the reason why tectonic plates are continually moving and slowly changing the landscape.

on Earth. They move about 5cm (2 inches) a year, about as fast as your fingernails grow. Despite their movement, which has caused remarkable changes in the length and shape of continents in the different geological eras, the total surface area of Earth remains constant with time, so that the radius of Earth is always 6,378 km (3,963 miles). This presumes that spreading must be balanced by consumption of plates elsewhere.

The movement of tectonic plates. The problem is when plates collide. (Be patient just a little bit as this topic is important!) The interaction between plates at plate boundaries can be broadly divided into three categories: divergent, convergent and transform.

1. Two tectonic plates can pull away from each other.

When two plates are moving away from each other, a divergent plate boundary occurs. Along these boundaries, magma rises from the mantle and, on the torn edges of the plates, crust is created, triggering intense volcanic activity, forming volcanic ridges at the spreading zone (called Dorsal Ridges). The best known of the divergent boundaries is The Mid-Atlantic Ridge, which crosses the Atlantic Ocean in the latitudinal direction. A few of the volcanoes on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge emerge creating famous islands such as Cape Green and Iceland. Divergent plate boundaries can occur in continental and oceanic lithosphere.

2. Two tectonic plates can move toward each other.

When two oceanic plates converge, one subducts beneath the other – the older plate is forced under the younger one. The magma formed at a subduction zone rises up towards Earth's surface, builds up magma chambers and leads to the formation of volcanic islands, known as Island Arc. Examples include the Japanese and the Philippine Archipelagoes. Moreover, this collision can also give rise to tsunamis. When an oceanic plate converges on a continental plate, the denser crust of the oceanic plate sinks beneath the more buoyant continental plate. In this type of convergence, the rapid uplift of mountain ranges along the coastline is common. The collision between the South American plate and the oceanic Nazca plate gave rise to the Andes. A collision between two continental

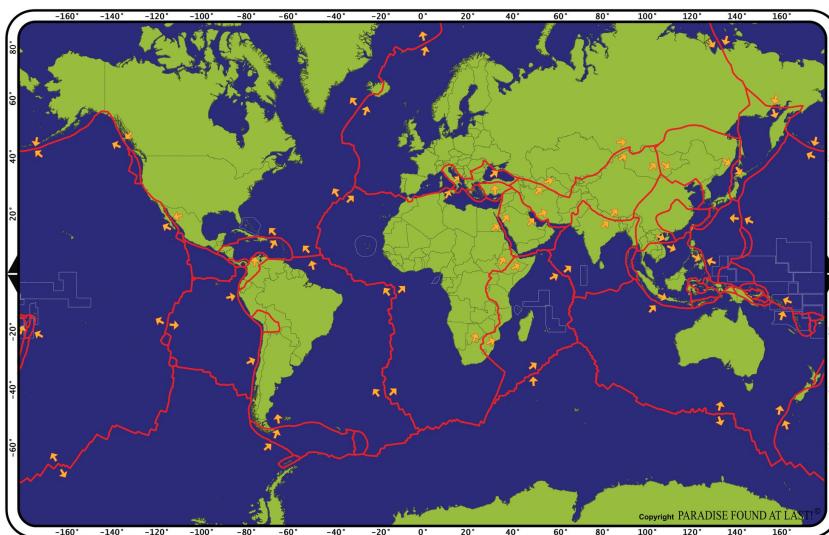
plates crunches and folds the rock at the boundary, lifting it up and leading to the formation of mountains and mountains ranges on the continents. The Himalayan Mountain Range in Southern Asia, stretching from The Pyrenees to the Kamchatka Peninsula was formed by the collision of the Indian and Eurasian Plates.

3. Finally, two tectonic plates can slide past each other.

When two plates slide past each other, they can move in different directions or in the same direction at different speed. In this case, tectonic plates grind past each other in a horizontal direction. This kind of boundary results in a “fault”, a crack in Earth’s crust that is associated with this movement. One of the most famous faults is the San Andreas Fault in California, responsible for the periodic powerful earthquakes occurring in San Francisco. It is located at the boundary between the Pacific and North American Plates.

Here is Earth’s Plate Tectonic jigsaw puzzle. The orange arrows show the direction in which the plates move.

WORLD MAP OF TECTONIC PLATES



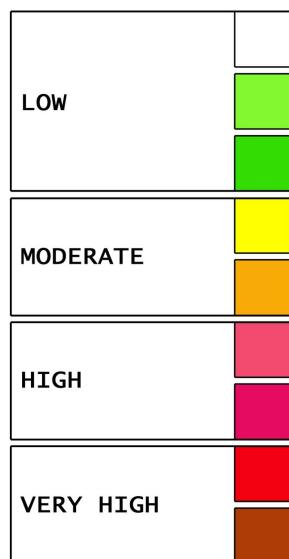
[Open the World map of independent states to see the names of the states](#)

Earthquakes

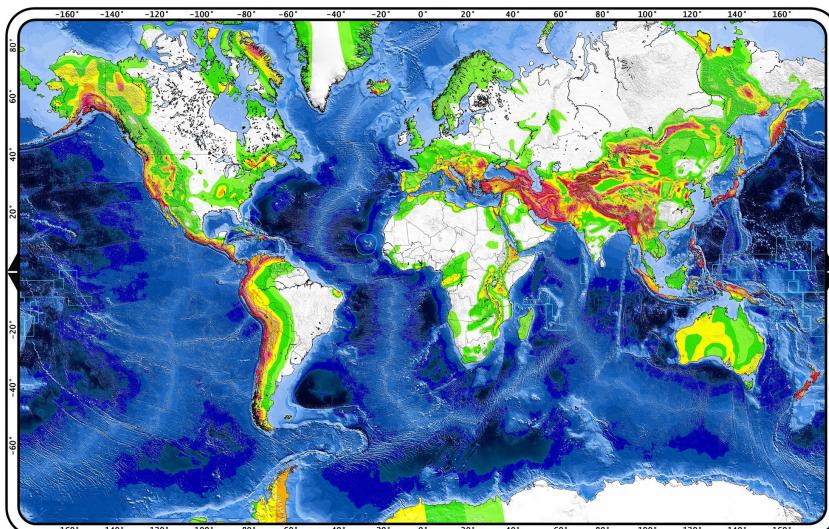
When tectonic plates move around, they can cause earthquakes. Almost all of the world's earthquakes occur along the boundaries of Earth's shifting plates. As already stated, they can collide, diverge or slide past each other. The movement at the edges of tectonic plates releases a huge amount of energy deep within Earth, generating vibrations which propagate to Earth's surface. The focus or Hypocentre of an earthquake is the point on a fault where the slip begins, whereas the Epicentre is the point on Earth's surface vertically above the Hypocentre. The magnitude is a measure of an earthquake in terms of the energy released at the focus. The first widely-used method to measure the magnitude of an earthquake is the Richter scale, developed by Charles Francis Richter, an American physicist and seismologist. It is a base-10 logarithmic scale where small increases in values can correspond to very high amounts of energy released, which may cause confusion if not explained. It goes without saying that when you decide to live in a place at high risk for earthquakes, you do it at your own risk. Think about, for example, the Nepal earthquake, which devastated its capital Kathmandu and tens of villages, where more than 7,000 people died.

The map. Geology has a thorough knowledge of earthquakes at present and it is continually making progress. Even though there is no reliable method available to predict earthquakes, scientists know with a high degree of confidence where earthquakes are more likely to happen. The *world map of seismic hazards* is the result of scientific knowledge on earthquakes elaborated by the GSHAP (which stands for Global Seismic Hazard Assessment Program). The map is essential for those who are searching for their own Earthly Paradise. Seismic hazard is calculated according to ground acceleration in an earthquake and assessed on the basis of a 10% probability of occurrence in 50 years. If you analyse carefully the *world map of seismic hazards*, you can choose with full knowledge of the facts your own Eden, located in an area which may have a low or high risk for earthquakes.

SEISMIC HAZARDS



WORLD MAP OF SEISMIC HAZARDS



Map: Giardini, D., Grünthal, G., Shedlock, K. M. and Zhang, P.: The GSHAP Global Seismic Hazard Map. In: Lee, W., Kanamori, H., Jennings, P. and Kisslinger, C. (eds.): International Handbook of Earthquake & Engineering Seismology, International Geophysics Series 81 B, Academic Press, Amsterdam, 1233-1239, 2003

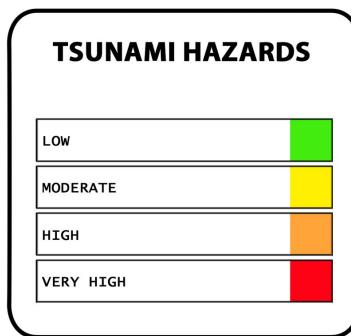
Open the *World map of independent states* to see the names of the states

Tsunamis

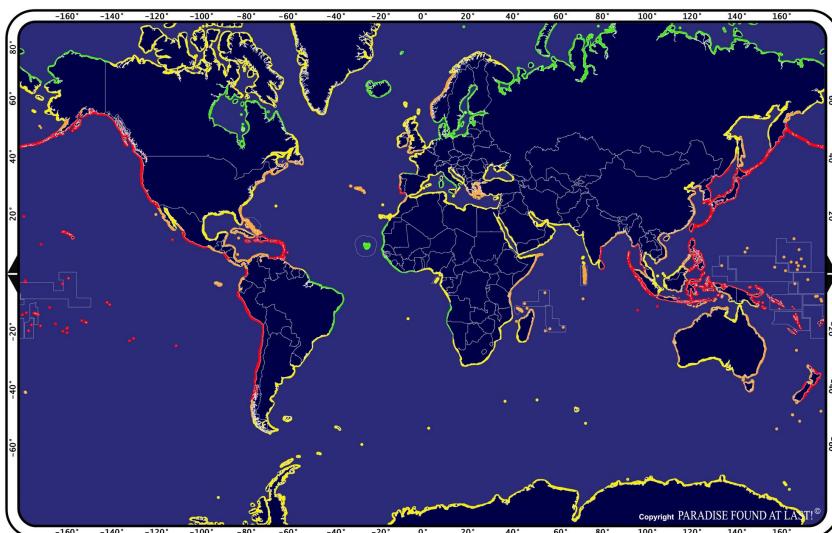
Tsunamis are some of the most devastating natural disasters on Earth and, at first sight, they would seem not to be connected with traditional seismic episodes. On the contrary, they are closely linked to them in most cases. Tsunamis are seismic sea-waves caused by sudden motion under the ocean. Such cases are not infrequent and, as you have just read, they are related to the dynamic and movement of the tectonic plates, much like an earthquake. A tsunami occurs underneath the ocean, often far away from the coastline and therefore it would seem not to be a risk for people. However, the enormous quantity of energy it releases is then transferred to the water column above and sometimes it can generate, even though not always, a huge wave whose height is inversely proportional to the water depth. In the open ocean, this “wave train” can propagate very quickly over large distances, with almost imperceptible heights. The worst characteristic of this kind of waves is that they often reach coast regions still with enough energy to be able to devastate them. “*Tsunami*” is a Japanese word meaning “Harbour wave” as harbours and coastal settlements are most vulnerable to direct impacts and likely to be destroyed by it. Therefore, a Tsunami is the devastating consequence of a seaquake. The seismic sea-wave travels the speed of a jet airplane in very deep water but, as it approaches shore, the depth of water decreases, causing the tsunami to slow down and sometimes coming onshore similar to a rapidly rising tide. On the contrary, sometimes the wave crest refracts (bends) toward the shore and its energy may grow to be several metres or more in height. It is not just one big wave, so you do not have to think that a tsunami event is over after the first wave passes. As a matter of fact, there may be many more waves offshore and it could take up to two hours for the next wave to arrive. They could even be more devastating than the first one. The most powerful tsunamis produced record high waves of about 30-40 metres (100 feet) but most tsunami waves are less than 10 feet high. Elevating your house or living on top of a hill will help reduce damage from most tsunamis.

The map. The NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) has collected all the academic and historical reports of the places where

tsunamis are estimated to have originated and the locations they have hit. There is a database of more than 2400 events, starting from 2000 B.C. up to now, which has allowed them to create a map showing the areas at risk for tsunamis around the world. This map highlights the coasts with the highest risk of this unlucky event.



WORLD MAP OF TSUNAMI HAZARDS



[Open the World map of independent states to see the names of the states](#)

Volcanic activity

It is important to point out that most volcanoes rise at the boundaries of tectonic plates and, as most of them are located near the ocean floor, a number of volcanoes lie underwater. There are about 700 active submarine volcanoes on Earth and the largest concentration (60%) is located along a belt known as the Ring of Fire, which circles the Pacific Ocean.

Hot spot volcanism. It does not occur at the boundaries of Earth's tectonic plates, where all other volcanism occurs. Some volcanic areas are even to be found very far away from the plate boundaries. These are called "Hot Spots", namely regions deep within Earth's mantle from which heat rises, facilitating the melting of rock, which often pushes the crust. These could be thought of as safety valves of the planet. As it is the case with all the types of volcanoes, when magma rises, it produces seismic waves, which cause earthquakes. The Hawaiian Islands, an archipelago of volcanic origin in the Pacific Ocean is a good example. They are located in the middle of the Pacific plate at about 4000 km (2500 miles) from the nearest tectonic plate edge. In the main island, Hawaii, which is the most recent in the archipelago, there are three active volcanoes nowadays. As mentioned before, tectonic plates are able to drift westward owing to Earth's rotation (in the Northern Hemisphere). Therefore, as the Pacific plate moves, the islands located to the west are older and more subject to erosion compared to the ones to the east, which are younger. With time, the volcanoes moving westward with respect to the hot spot, stop erupting.

Volcanic hazards. As already stated, there are two main types of volcanoes: volcanoes located along ocean ridges and hotspot volcanoes. The former are the most hazardous, with explosive eruptions involving large volumes of pyroclastic flows, which may travel distances of several kilometres or more. Therefore, if you decide to live in an area where such a dangerous volcano is situated, your house should be at least 30 km (20 miles) away from it! On the contrary, hotspot volcanoes are generally characterised by non-violent extrusion of very hot, fluid lava which flows downhill, extending

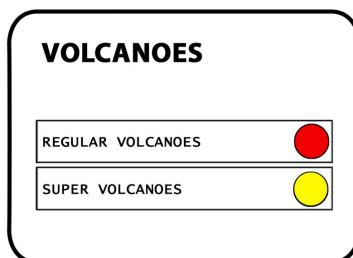
even tens of kilometres under the force of gravity. If you live near this kind of volcano, in case of eruption, you will have more time to run off but it is better to live at not less than 100 km (60 miles) from the vent. This kind of eruption is called “effusion eruption” and also occurs in continental rift settings, namely, as mentioned above, in areas where two tectonic plates are moving away from each other. Finally, you should pay attention to very high and snow-covered volcanoes as, when they erupt, the melting of large quantities of snow may cause a giant mudflow of volcanic materials, which sometimes last several months and could endanger even communities living hundreds of kilometres away.

Absurdity of the human mind. Volcanology is a very solid science. All volcanoes in the world have been mapped and volcanic hazards and risks are well-known nowadays. Then, one wonders: “Why do so many people keep on living at the foot of a volcano? Why are so many important and densely populated cities all over the world built in hazardous areas, where powerful earthquakes often occur, and they are mostly doomed to be destroyed?” Maybe this happens just because people usually think that such devastating events are likely to occur to someone else. Moreover, people think that the human lifespan is always very short compared to geophysical eras. However, it is worth noting that irrationality is a trait of the human mind and any time an eruption causes severe damages to structures or a lot of people are killed, people often say that they have just had back luck or that they have been cursed. Actually, everybody can understand the risks of living in areas that are more exposed to natural hazards nowadays.

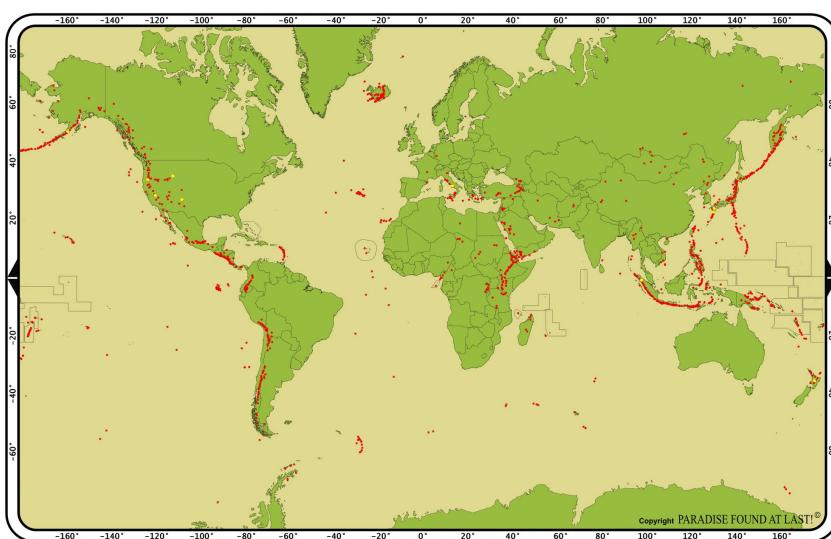
Super volcanoes. There are volcanoes and super volcanoes. These can produce global catastrophic effect and dramatically change the surrounding landscape when they erupt. They can also have a devastating impact on Earth’s climate for many years. Moreover, their eruptions can create damage to the scale of a continent and have cataclysmic effects for life on Earth. As a matter of fact, such an explosive eruption can erase virtually all life in a radius of hundreds of kilometres from the site and entire continental regions can be buried metres deep in ash. “Super volcano” is not a scientific term. Actually, it was popularised in a TV documentary on a British channel just few years ago. Until then, no word could properly

describe these “monsters”. From a scientific point of view, it is thought that a hot spot, which rises from deep within Earth, powers super volcanoes. Unlike regular volcanoes, they do not have the usual cone like structure, rather they are situated in large depressions, called calderas. These can reach sizes of tens of kilometres in diameter, so you could walk on them but you may not realise it. Above calderas, lakes, forests and even towns could be found. The last eruption of a super volcano occurred thousands of years ago and its effects had a significant impact on large areas of our planet for several years. Fortunately, there are not so many calderas of this kind on Earth; they are about ten overall. The most hazardous volcanic areas are located in Alaska (USA), Indonesia, Yellowstone Park (USA) and the Campi Flegrei district (Naples region, Italy). The best strategy to avoid the effects of a super-volcanic eruption is to keep away from that area.

World map of volcanoes. The *world map of volcanoes* aims at showing the location of well-known volcanoes on the Earth’s crust and ocean floor. Secondary volcanic phenomena, such as geysers, fumaroles and hot springs are shown as volcanoes. This is because there could be hidden volcanoes beneath them. Super volcanoes are highlighted in yellow.



WORLD MAP OF VOLCANOES



[Open the World map of independent states to see the names of the states](#)

Chapter 10

Tax Burden

When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Taxes are not an exception. There is no international law fixing the taxes that each citizen has to pay. Each State decides for itself and will collect taxes in one way or another. In some countries, citizens are even forced to work only for six months a year in order to pay taxes imposed by the State. What is the tax rate in every single country? This chapter will supply you with the answer.

Nobody likes paying taxes. The word “tax” is unpleasant, together with the words tariff, levy, excise, duty and taxation. Even though there are some differences in meaning between these words, people usually dislike what they all have in common: you are obliged to give part of your money to your state or its branches. People often feel that they are treated unfairly. Sometimes they do not understand why they have to pay taxes. Many think that they are paying too much and that countries have introduced too many new taxes on too many things. They also think that people other than themselves do not pay their fair share and as a result they have to pay more. Think about the countries with high levels of tax evasion and corruption. People are bothered by that! If you complain about the tax burden imposed on you as a person, you may be right, but things should be different from a collective point of view, because the higher the taxes the higher the state revenue, which should be distributed for the well-being of the whole community. But how does a state use the money collected from taxes? Not that people would be happy to pay taxes even if they were used fairly but at least people would consider their tax system to be valid. There is a joke about taxes which dates back to the early 1970s and says: “I think that taxes should be paid with a smile. I tried to do it, but they did want money”.

Why taxes have to be paid. A country is just like a big block of flats. It is

true that nobody likes paying expenses for upkeep and management of common properties to the administrator. However, what would it be like without proper collaboration? A civilised country has got an articulate tax system. If you pay taxes, you are civil; if you do not pay them you show disrespect for others and it is considered a crime. By paying taxes, each citizen helps towards the costs for common services such as health, security, education and environment. If the tax system is fair, you pay for the good of the community, and you are part of it. Yet a lot of people think they are paying too much in taxes. Italy, for instance, is one of the countries with the highest tax rate. There is a hilarious joke about taxes nowadays in Italy. It says that the actual Government has introduced a very easy form to make a tax return, in just two stages:

1. How much do you earn?
2. Send it to us.

Unbelievable but real taxes. There are so many taxes that a doubt can come to mind: are we being made fun of by the rulers of our country? There is a tax imposed on all goods or services, and sometimes it is strange. In Italy, for example, there is a tax on the shade. If the awning of a public place sticks out and covers public property, you have to pay a tax on occupation of public property. In the USA, people have to pay a tax on tattoos instead. The Chinese Government encourages unhealthy practices in order to collect more taxes. As there is already a tax on tobacco in China, the Government has started a series of incentives to increase the consumption of cigarettes. The employees working in the Hubei province, situated in the central part of China, have been forced to consume at least 250,000 cigarette packets collectively a year in order to promote business.

Effects of global crisis. Owing to the terrible global economic crisis, fiscal revenue, that is the money collected by governments as a result of taxes, has decreased in the most developed countries of the world. This is the reason why income taxes have gone up again in many states and mostly in Europe. Not only are individuals hard hit by the taxman but also firms.

During the past 15 years, corporations enjoyed tax incentives to encourage

the economical growth but now they are going to see a tax increase to swell the state coffers. In particular, European countries are increasing corporate income tax and value-added tax (VAT) rate.

Go easy on tax. An economic analysis of the last 30 years suggests, however, that any time tax pressure is reduced, economies thrive. This is what has happened in the USA and the UK lately. New Zealand decreased taxes by 36% in 1984 and this favourably affected both growth and employment. Austria reduced taxes by 20% in 1988 and, as a result, state revenue increased by 65% and the government even balanced the budget.

Tax Haven countries. Robert Mundell, a Canadian economist who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics for his analysis of fiscal policy, states that not only countries compete for goods and services but also for tax policy. As a matter of fact, states with lighter tax burden attract more capital investments. Some countries have exacerbated this concept; they are the so-called “Tax Haven” countries. “Tax Haven” refers to a country offering very low tax laws for foreign business and individuals. It is a device that allows you to hide amounts of money from the authorities of your country and to remain anonymous. Large multinationals find it convenient to move to “Tax Havens” as taxes are very low or even non-existent and their banking secrecy allows tax authorities to ignore any transaction. These corporations are called “Offshore”, which literally means “at a distance from the shore or outside the country”. In the USA, during the policy of Protectionism when gambling was forbidden, some bold traders decided to open some floating gambling houses within big boats, which were kept just outside territorial waters. In this way, what was considered to be illegal became legal. Individuals may fly to “Tax Havens” too in order to evade or pay lower taxes or to elude creditors, and sometimes to avoid paying money to ex-partners when they break-up. However, “Tax Havens” also attract the business of criminals who move illegally earned income swiftly and efficiently. It is the so called “dirty money” which may come from arms or drugs trafficking.

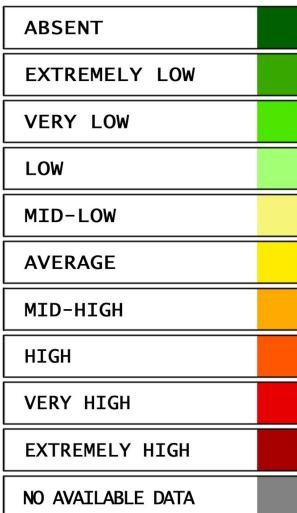
Uncertainty among the Governments. Should “Tax Havens” be put down or kept? People should realise that what is an advantage for firms and

individuals, is a disadvantage for the state of origin. This kind of activity should be blocked from an ethical point of view, but there is a lot at stake. The turnover is impressive. This “industry” runs over 60% of the global flow of capital. If tax havens were abolished, criminal organisations would find themselves in troubles, but at the same time, several firms that act legally would have to pay more taxes and, as a result, there would be less circulation of money and that would reduce global economic development. Moreover, the major world’s Stock Exchanges would stop dealing with loads of money, even though considered to be “dirty”. Ethics finds it hard to win.

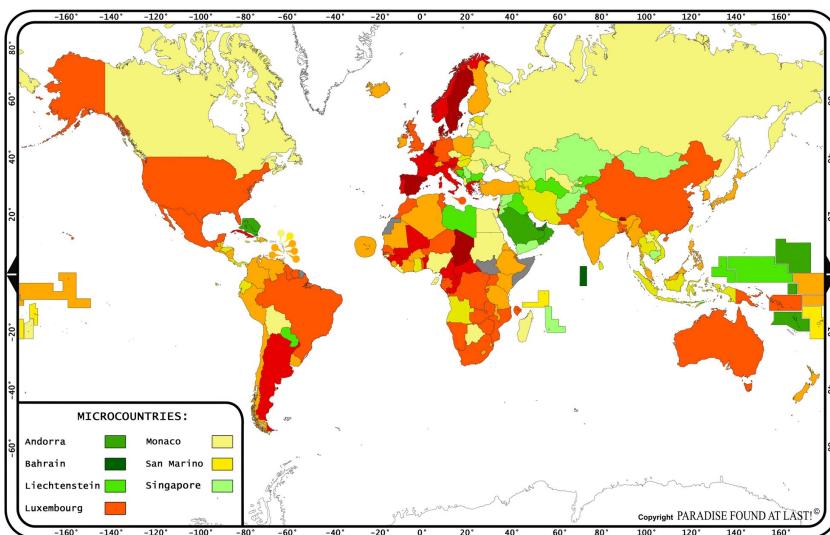
The map. This chapter points out how much citizens have to pay in taxes in every single country by means of the *world map of taxation*. Each country has been given a number, ranging from 1 to 10. 1 represents the countries where taxation is absent and 10 the places with the highest taxation in the world. In particular, three factors have been taken into account:

1. Individual Income Tax Rate, that is the percentage you pay on your wage.
2. Company Income Tax Rate, levied on the profits of a Company.
3. VAT (Value Added Tax), which is imposed on goods and services and paid by the final consumer on purchase.

TAXATION



WORLD MAP OF TAXATION



[Open the World map of independent states to see the names of the states](#)

Chapter 14

The world of thieves and assassins

The Bible is one of the oldest books in the world and tells the story of the most violent episode that might happen to a human family. Cain attacked Abel, through rivalry he took his anger out on his brother and killed him. This was a real crime. Then the first murder, which was archaeologically proven, happened about 50 thousand years ago during the Stone Age. The victim was a Neanderthal man, who was found in a cave in what is modern-day northeastern Iraq. He was killed with an arrow, the ones flying long distances, deep in his chest. Therefore, crime, which is one of the factors that most affects life in the Third Millennium, dates back to ancient times and it has existed since the first man appeared on earth. In modern societies, violence is so dominant that many people live with the fear of being burgled, robbed, assaulted or even murdered. Today people are living in anguish due to widespread violence and do not feel safe even when they are at home. They are frightened that the bad things they usually read in the newspaper or often see on TV might happen to them. The “bad news” include the hijacking of a scheduled flight, armed robberies, rapes and other episodes of violence. You may sense violent individuals who tend to steal and rob inhabit the entire planet. Fortunately, not everywhere things are so bad. This chapter will inform you that there are even countries where the whole society is against injustice and all forms of violence.

Areas of widespread delinquency. It is well known that criminals tend to act undisturbed in populous areas. Both misdemeanours such as housebreaking or street crime like bag snatching, and felonies are likely to occur in places with a high population of potential victims. The growth of the world’s population over the past decades is a factor that leads to the increase in crime concentration, even though it is not its main or only cause.

The criminologist. Why do people commit crimes and what is the psychology behind it? Criminal behaviour has always been studied. There are many factors that can contribute to crime. In many countries, individuals get involved in crime owing to their social background. Desperate people living below the poverty line and, most of all, without a job, are more likely to turn to crime to satisfy basic living necessities. Criminals often have a poor educational background or poor parental discipline so they tend to follow the examples of evil-doers. Sometimes they are opportunistic individuals or deprived members of society. Compulsive gambling, gambling or drug addition, etc., are bad habits that can ruin finances, so people may be tempted to steal or commit crimes to pay their debts. In other cases, people may be obsessively looking for immediate, easy, short-term pleasure and money to satisfy their lust for power. In order to pursue their goals, they are open to commit a crime, even kill without remorse. There are also individuals who find great pleasure in committing a crime. These are compulsive behaviours belonging to psychopathic killers. Stanton Samenow, a psychologist and criminologist said: "I saw crime as being almost a normal, if not excusable, reaction to the grinding poverty, instability and despair that pervaded the criminal's lives". However, after expanding on the subject, he changed his mind. "Criminals choose to commit crimes", he concluded. "Crime is caused by the way the person thinks, not by his/her environment". He also added: "Behaviour is largely a product of thinking. Everything people do is preceded, accompanied and followed by thinking". Therefore, rather than considering criminals as victims, Samenow concluded that "They were victimisers who had freely chosen their way of life. Human beings can choose the course they want to take, even under difficult circumstances. Every day, millions of people struggle against social injustice and poverty, or they may live in dysfunctional families but they do not become criminals. Crime is within the mind of human beings and it is not caused by social conditions". This outstanding psychologist may be right, considering that, under similar circumstances, some people become criminals and some people do not. Consequently, assuming that criminals choose to commit a crime, the other part of society should prevent them from doing it, and help them to act correctly. Justified violence increases the likelihood that it will be imitated. Criminal behaviour can never be excused.

Steps to take. It is important to reduce poverty and social injustice and inequalities but, as mentioned above, this is not sufficient to fight criminality. If criminals have the seed of evil inside, it is difficult to cure them but, at least, their symptoms should be eased. Social interventions could reduce their aggressive behaviour in order to prevent criminals from further harming others. At the same time, offenders should be heavily punished and isolated from civil society, giving them what they deserve. Some governments have taken a number of measures to prevent crime and help citizens. For example, selling alcohol to anyone under the age of 18 is illegal in many countries or police patrols have been intensified but something more has to be done. The modern world needs a civil, cultural and moral regeneration so that people can be proud of their territories and cities again. It is vital to make districts more pleasant to live in and all citizens should play an active role taking part in civic and civil society. The cities with a lower violent rate usually bring considerable benefits to society through important public works, such as the reconstruction of historic buildings and the creation of social services. Moreover, clear and strong projects involving young people should be carried out to develop what is nowadays called “active” citizenship. By encouraging citizens to build a sense of community, an atmosphere of respect will be created and nobody will destroy other people’s belongings.

We are all responsible. Nowadays, violence and rudeness are quite the norm. Not a long time ago, a woman was punched to death by a young man who fled from the scene immediately. It happened in an underground station in Rome. A row had broken out between the two of them in front of the ticket-machine. A closed-circuit camera filmed the whole scene, showing ordinary people passing by and paying no attention to the woman lying on the ground dying. Nobody helped her. Unfortunately, the culprit ran away but the witnesses should be charged with failure to offer assistance. Their inaction in this case borders on criminal indifference. This kind of behaviour is unacceptable; it is passive aggression. Why this “deliberate” indifference? Fear of retaliation? Social Psychology should take this matter further. What if it happened to you? Or to someone close to you? Fortunately, there are also good citizens willing to help others who overcome negative stereotypes. Educational programs can be a powerful

tool. School and families play an essential role in preparing young people to become responsible caring adults. Many parents too often delegate the education of their children to the schools, but teachers cannot solve all of society's educational problems. However, teachers should not tolerate violent and challenging behaviour at school but should take steps towards making it bully free. Bullying is a serious problem, which can negatively impact mental health and well-being. In the United Kingdom, for example, many crimes are committed by school-aged offenders who usually take a weapon to school, such as a gun or knife. Extreme violence is a common occurrence in the USA, a country of great legal tradition, where you can easily obtain a weapon.

Murders in the world. Murder is perhaps the most serious criminal offence that can be committed. Its rate is stable over the last few years or even decreasing in many countries around the world. The exceptions are mainly some Caribbean and central-southern American countries, namely Belize, Honduras, Guatemala, Jamaica and Venezuela. In these countries, there is a significant increase in the murder rate, which is already high, and this may be due to the increase in organised criminal activities, drugs trafficking and gang violence. In Columbia, the murder rate continues to be very high, even though it is stable. Things seem to have improved a little in Ecuador and Brazil. Just to give you an idea of the gravity of the Latin-American situation, think about the fact that, only in 2005, youth gangs in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala killed about 15,000 people. Mexico City's Mayor, to reduce the criminal activity and violence in the district of Tepito, decided to give an Xbox videogame console to anyone surrendering a high-calibre gun (higher than 9mm) to the police. Nobody still knows whether this method can cut down violence; however, it is certain that, on this program's first day, 17 guns were handed in, preventing 17 hypothetical dangers. The situation is worrying not only in Latin America, but also in the black continent. The highest murder rates are mainly to be found in the central-southern regions of the country, where murders are committed with machetes as well.

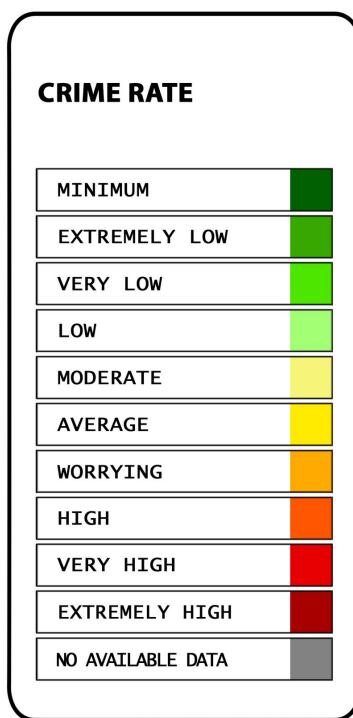
Carjacking and lightning kidnapping. Carjacking has become one of the most prevalent crimes in many parts of the world. It is the theft of a car by

means of force, violence or intimidation. It is a real nightmare for the victim, who, while driving or waiting for a red traffic light to turn green, is stopped by the attackers with an excuse and “persuaded” to give them the car keys and to walk. This crime mainly occurs in a dozen of African regions: Togo, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Burundi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho. Similar episodes usually happen in Pakistan and Papua New Guinea as well as in Belize, Ecuador and Venezuela. Moreover, there has been an increase in the number of “lightning kidnapping”, a less violent kind of crime, which mainly occurs in cities and tourist locations. The victims are usually abducted at gunpoint while walking in the street, taken to an ATM and forced to withdraw the maximum daily amount of cash. The kidnapping lasts for just a few hours.

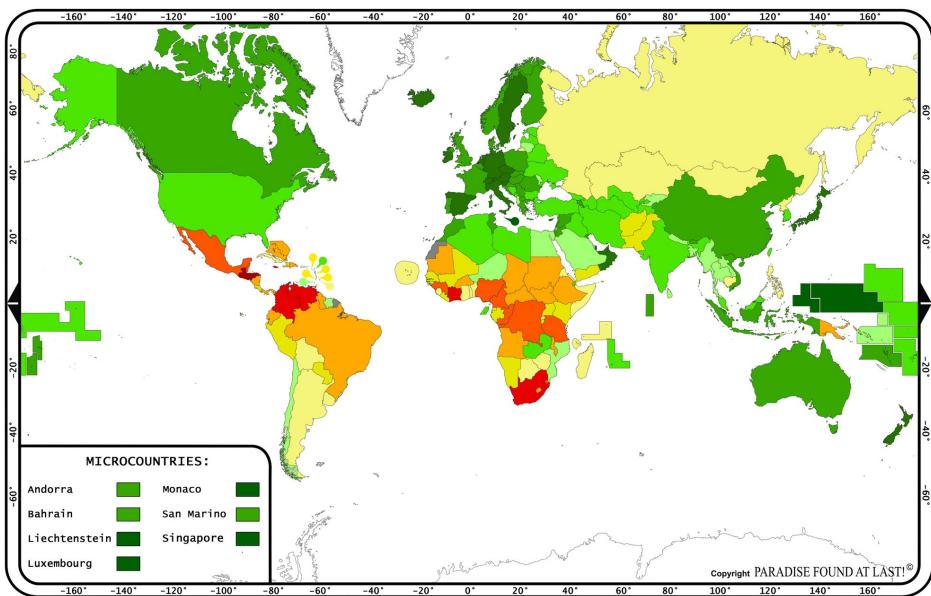
What you should not do. How can people live in such violent places and protect themselves and the people they love? Some people activate archaic instincts at an unconscious level and their fear of becoming the prey of other people make them use violence to regulate social relationships, thinking that it is an acceptable means of making things right. The logic is inexorable: more private citizens buy guns. However, it has been shown that the murder rate is higher in countries where you are allowed to buy firearms. Most murders are frequently due to a sudden bout of anger. In a fit of madness, a neighbour, a wife, a mother-in-law, or that driver honking at another driver, can be killed. At any time, if questioned about the murderer, acquaintances will say that he/she was a really good person and that he/she had never shown signs of being unbalanced before. There has been an increase in the percentage of violence in countries where firearms can be easily bought.

The map. The crimes mentioned above are not to be found in all countries. However, moving abroad without knowing the crime rate of the place you have chosen to live in would be very superficial. The *world map of criminality*, purpose-built for this book, displays the crime rate for each single country. Different types of crimes that may be committed in every country, from petty crime like bag-snatching and pick-pocketing to more serious crimes where violence may result in physical injury or even death,

have been taken into account. The percentage of crimes committed in a country is an essential element to consider when choosing your ideal place on Earth. This is the reason why accurate data has been selected to show the real crime situation in every single state. It is likely that your Earthly Paradise is a place with a low crime rate and you will easily identify the right country thanks to this map. However, if the place you have always considered your Eden were located in an area with a very high crime rate, here is some advice: move to rural areas! It seems that rural crime rates are lower than urban crime rates.



WORLD MAP OF CRIMINALITY



[Open the World map of independent states to see the names of the states](#)

Chapter 19

Nasdrovie, Prosit, Cheers!

In many states, alcohol abuse is such a widespread phenomenon that it seems to be a normal part of everyday life. These countries have high death rates from cirrhosis of the liver, to drink-drive deaths and to domestic violence. Alcoholism has a very strong social impact even affecting non-drinkers. Nations that suffer from heavy alcohol use are about fifteen in all. Here the majority of people, both men and women, are addicted. Alcohol influences their existence. These people could probably do good things for their countries if they were sober.

How alcohol affects the body. A glass of wine on the table. You hold it to your nose, sniff it, and then raise it to your lips. Some sips and the glass is empty. When you drink wine, beer or other alcoholic drinks, small amounts of alcohol are rapidly absorbed in the mouth. Most of the remaining alcohol enters the stomach and small intestine, where small blood vessels carry it to the bloodstream. Then it flows throughout the body and reaches the liver, where it is metabolised. Alcohol is the general name for ethanol, also called ethyl alcohol. As it avoids the digestive process in the stomach and intestine, the liver, whose main function is to purify blood, is the main organ where alcohol is broken down. The liver takes about two hours to process the amount of alcohol contained in a standard glass of wine that is 150 ml/5.07oz, as the rate per hour is about 15gr/0.5ounce. Whenever alcohol consumption proceeds at a faster rate than it is metabolised, alcohol accumulates in the body, causing cells to shrink and may even cross the hematoencephalic barrier. The hematoencephalic barrier was discovered about 100 years ago, when scientific evidence showed that if blue dye was injected into the bloodstream of an animal, all its tissues, except the brain and the spinal cord, would turn blue. Therefore, it was thought that a blood-brain-barrier existed, which prevented the dye from entering the brain. This barrier

protects the brain from “foreign” substances in the blood that may injure it. However, the quantity of alcohol that the liver cannot metabolise is able to cross that barrier and to damage the brain. Within minutes, alcohol enters the brain and numbs its nerve cells. Inhibitions and everyday tensions appear to be released, which may have beneficial effects on social interaction and give apparent emotional well-being. After this stage, alcohol affects the brain and central nervous system. People start having problems with their balance, judgment, coordination, and also with communication. Slurred words, memory lapses and clouded vision are all outward signs of heavy drinking. At this stage of alcohol intoxication, some people may become depressed and experience nausea and vomiting. After that, physical pain decreases very slowly, whereas mental torpor persists for long.

Negative effects of alcohol abuse. Continued excessive alcohol consumption can have devastating effects on the body as it can affect almost every cell, organ and tissue. In particular, drinking too much alcohol can lead to serious disturbances including brain damage, loss of memory, gastritis, ulcer, hypertension and hepatitis. Besides, in the long run, cirrhosis of the liver can be expected, which can lead to cancer and heart attack. Small blood vessel bleedings may also occur, which are responsible for the swelling face and the red nose that heavy drinkers usually have. There may also be other symptoms such as poor appetite, weight loss and feeling extremely weak. After long-term alcohol abuse, which is about 10 years for women and 20 for men, alcohol produces dependence due to cellular alterations and the typical behaviour of addiction appears. At this point, alcoholics may show aggressive behaviours. After a few hours of not drinking, alcohol withdrawal symptoms occur. They are characterised by anxiety and irritability, tremors – hands are usually affected, but also the tongue and face with involvement of the eyebrows – sweating, muscle cramps, tachycardia, hypertension and, later, epileptic seizures may occur. These symptoms usually happen in the morning, as during sleep a person cannot drink. The most severe reaction after stopping alcohol for a few days is “*Delirium Tremens*”. The symptoms are agitation, restlessness, excitement, confusion, disorientation, hallucinations, seeing or feeling things that are not there – usually insects – or other strange phenomena. They can only be calmed by drinking alcoholic beverages. This is the reason

why alcoholics need to drink every day and are not able to stop or reduce alcohol consumption, even if they try. Alcohol is a drug. From a medical standpoint, addiction is a disease that is always considered severe and difficult to cure. Alcoholics are ill people and so they must be helped by family, friends and institutions.

Positive health benefits. Moderate alcohol consumption may provide some health benefits. Several scientific research show that adequate daily alcohol intake may reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases. Some studies point out that “moderate drinking” is associated with lower risk of coronary heart diseases, as small amounts of alcohol would raise levels of High Density Lipoprotein (HDL), the so-called “good” cholesterol, protecting the cardiovascular system. However, more studies on alcohol consumption are needed to confirm these results.

Yet, it is important to highlight that men and women are differently affected by alcohol and that health benefits from alcohol have not been found for women. Remember, therefore, that if you are a woman, alcoholic beverages are bad for your health and for your waistline. Drinking even small amounts of alcohol in pregnancy can be harmful to your fetus. Besides, breastfeeding women should be aware that, after alcohol intake, there would be higher alcohol levels in breast milk than in the mother’s blood. Other study findings say that even moderate alcohol intake can cause high blood pressure for both men and women. This is the reason why doctors advise hypertensive patients against drinking alcohol. In contrast, low levels of alcohol may have positive effects on inactive men, but no significant effect has been found in men reporting regular aerobic exercise such as jogging. The definition of “moderate alcohol consumption” considered by these studies depends on genetic predisposition. It is important to take a test to identify your alcohol consumption threshold, above which alcohol is harmful to you. If you do not take this test, not even light moderate alcohol intake is advisable. It is likely that a doctor will tell healthy men with safe levels of drinking and who are not at risk of developing alcoholism, that they can keep on drinking moderate quantities of alcohol. Some scientists think that polyphenols, which are contained in high concentration in red wine, may inhibit a substance in the process that

leads to the hardening of arteries. However, epidemiological analysis show that this pattern is true for all types of beverages. Therefore, there is no scientific evidence that wine is healthier than other alcoholic beverages. Moderate alcohol consumption in these studies on health effects of alcohol is defined as up to 340ml/12oz of light beer or 150ml/5oz of wine or 40ml/1.5oz of spirit per day. Be careful not to exceed these limits. It has been shown that these quantities of alcohol in women and double quantities in men may have negative effects on cardiovascular diseases and may also lead to a dramatic increase in the risk of cirrhosis - liver cancer - or even colon cancer.

Do not cheat. It goes without saying that health benefits from moderate alcohol intake are obtained if you drink small amounts of it over a week and not the same quantity in one night!

Several doctors do not recommend moderate alcohol consumption as they think it is not good for any kind of patients. Some groups of people may benefit from moderate alcohol intake, but doctors say that the risk of developing an addiction is too high and that risk factors for cardiovascular diseases may be lowered safely with other proven ways, which are without negative side effects. To sum up, it is better not to drink alcohol at all, but if you want to drink it, you should consume it in moderation. In any case, it should never be considered as a medicine, although it is relaxing.

Those who want to stop drinking. If you are really concerned about the role alcohol plays in your life and you want to stop drinking, you should also consider changing your eating habits. Healthy food, like salad, fresh fruit, legumes and whole-grain rice, whole-grain bread and whole-grain pasta, is recommended. You should drastically reduce eating meat and processed foods, white bread and white pasta included. Poor quality food stimulates consumption of alcoholic drinks. There is a negative relationship between meat consumption and alcohol abuse. Actually, it is rare to see a vegetarian drinking alcohol!

New consumers: women and youth. Alcoholism, in the past, had a male/female ratio of 4/1. This difference, however, is decreasing as more

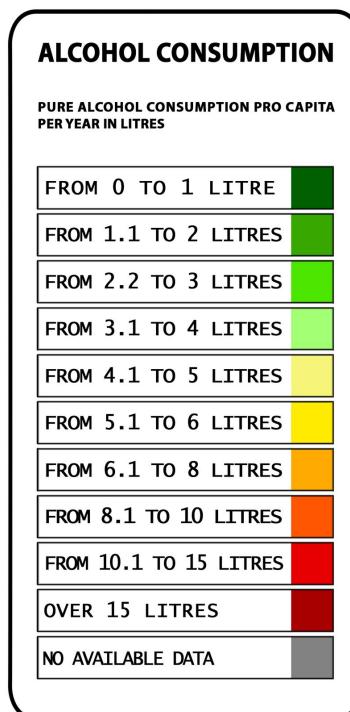
and more women are drinking. At the same time, there is an increase in alcoholic drinks among young people, both boys and girls. Statistics say that binge drinking is associated with higher car accidents. Some countries have raised the legal drinking age in order to tackle harmful drinking. The results are comforting. Other countries, like France, introduced a ban on selling alcohol at motorway service stations. In general, statistics say that drink-drive deaths have fallen sharply in countries with strict drink driving penalties.

Global drinking. Presently, alcoholic drinks are the most common luxury goods in the so-called “modern world”. Despite alcohol abuse can cause social problems, alcoholic drink consumption is tolerated or even encouraged. There are cultures where drinking is integrated into eating habits and social customs so alcohol consumption is encouraged. Drinking is often considered a cultural “norm”, so “heavy” drinkers are sometimes considered as virile and strong men. Alcohol consumption is associated with social activities such as celebrations, special occasions and meals. Bacchus, the Olympian god of wine, was so popular among gods and mortals that many festivals were held in his honour. However, a “great” god should have also taken into account the negative effects of alcohol abuse! According to the “Daily Yomiuri”, there has been an increase in alcohol acute poisoning in Japan lately. This is mainly due to the practice of “ikkinomi”, which means “down-in-one”, which is downing an entire drink without stopping to take a breath, very often at the encouragement of people cheering at the drinker. Ikkinomi is dangerous as alcohol is consumed at a faster rate than the body can handle and with harmful consequences for the body. They say it is for real men but some studies on heavy male drinkers show that they tend to become “less” virile. Alcohol can dramatically lower testosterone levels – the male sex hormone – leading to loss of libido. Reduced activity of hormones may include growth of male breasts. If you drink to feel more masculine, you must stop drinking for the same reason!

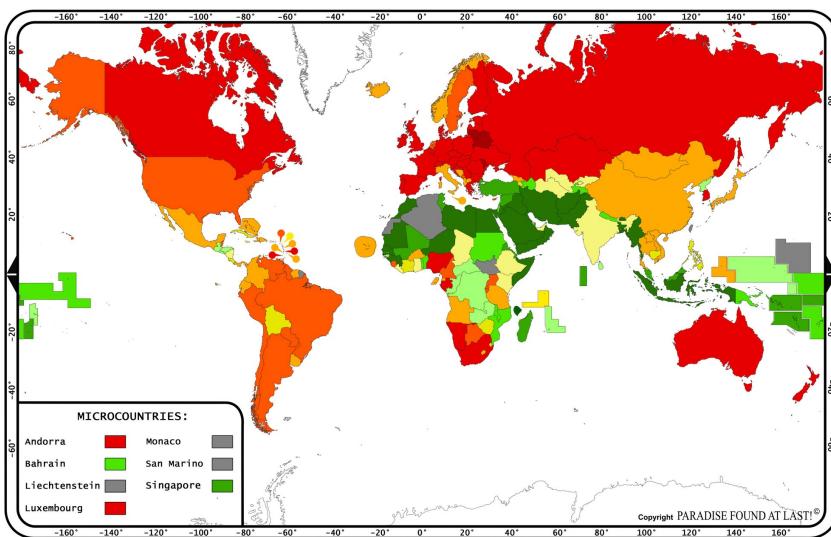
Highest and lowest consumption rates. The highest alcohol consumption is to be found in the former Soviet bloc countries. In particular, Belarus and Moldova are the biggest drinkers in the world with 17.5 and 16.8 litres

of pure alcohol consumption respectively per capita a year. In contrast, there are several countries where alcohol consumption is null or very low. In fact, alcohol consumption is forbidden in Islamic countries for religious reasons. Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country in which Islamic law is strictly enforced: alcohol is also prohibited to foreigners and non-Muslims.

The map. In the *world map of alcohol consumption*, you will find average values for drinking habits referring to every single nation. The data are supplied by the WHO. The map shows the litres of pure alcohol that are consumed, on average, by each person per year. Obviously, you may find teetotalers or alcoholics in every country. However, the data reflect the actual situation you will find if you move to a given country.



WORLD MAP OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION



[Open the World map of independent states to see the names of the states](#)

Chapter 37

Condemn the death penalty!

We are now going to discuss another ethical subject on your journey to Eden: the death penalty. This subject may revoke gruesome medieval executions. Since then things have radically changed. Among the 196 independent countries, there are still a few arrogating the right to execute human beings. Should a state inflict the death penalty? Is it a serious violation of human rights? Can a state offer itself as a paradise and then impose the death penalty?

The reason why the death penalty is implemented in some countries. Today there are still countries that impose the death penalty for horrendous crimes. The reason for death penalties may differ from country to country; but there are five main aspects related to the use of the death penalty:

1. To prevent criminals from committing similar crimes again. The only way to be totally sure that criminals will not repeat their crimes is to execute them.
2. To dissuade the civil population from perpetrating similar crimes. The death penalty acts as a restraint.
3. To prove that justice works in behalf of civilians. Executions instill a feeling of safety as they represent strong measures that seem to be decisive and that can put an end to a feeling of social insecurity.
4. In the case of murder, the death penalty responds to the victim's relatives' cry for justice. The death penalty is the revenge that relatives want.
5. A few dictatorial countries use the death penalty as a repressive tool either to physically eliminate a political opponent or to squash dissent.

The method used. Every form of execution is cruel and agonising. Over the last two centuries, the method of capital punishment has changed. In the past, some methods tended to maximise prisoners' suffering; today there are more modern and functional ways. However, these systems always raise ethical issues and can cause a lot of suffering. The most common forms of execution today are shooting and hanging. Executions by electric chair, lethal gas or lethal injection are only applied in the USA. Five countries sentence prisoners to death by decapitation and other seven countries by lapidation, according to Islamic laws.

A moral issue. Once capital punishment was supported unanimously as it did not offend people's conscience. In the past slavery, racial discrimination and lynching for example were normally accepted but today they are considered to be a serious violation of human rights. Consequently, at the turning of the last century, the death penalty was universally accepted. Back then only three countries opposed the death penalty. At the beginning of 21st century two thirds of the world's countries have abolished capital punishment as uncivilised and antisocial. Nowadays citizens living in countries where capital punishment is inflicted may feel insecure. In such countries those who take the lead tend to think that the death penalty is the only way to dissuade criminals from committing heinous offences. In reality the death penalty is not synonymous of a well-functioning system of justice. Countries adopting capital punishment often tend to postpone real problems and to focus on severely punishing those who are considered to be offenders. The suffering of family members who are indirectly victims of a crime must also be taken into consideration. Put yourself in their shoes. When a family member is murdered revenge is the first reaction. It is a natural reaction due to an extreme state of anger and sorrow. It must be highlighted however that when a death penalty leads to an execution the criminal's family suffers too, a family composed of mother, father, partner, children who are not guilty but completely helpless, like the victim's family. Currently there is the tendency for countries that still apply capital punishment to replace it with a life sentence. Life imprisonment costs are obviously much higher than execution costs. The data relating to USA shows that amongst 2.2 million prisoners, about 3,000 (0.1%) were sentenced to death. It may therefore be inferred that if all those 3,000 prisoners

sentenced to death were executed, the difference in costs between execution and life imprisonment would not be significant. It is important to remember that the decision to execute a human being should not be based on economic but on ethical reasons. Life imprisonment is as terrible as capital punishment, but it is certainly less cruel. Research was carried out by Sodokata Kogi, a Japanese psychiatrist, who followed 145 assassins for two years. It showed that none of the respondents had taken into account the risk of being sentenced to death before committing their crime. The reason is that criminals were heavily influenced by violent emotions such as rage or spirit of revenge. Many crimes are committed under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs or by panic-stricken people who realise the crime they have committed and its negative effects only later. This is the reason why the conscience of a criminal does not make any difference between life imprisonment or death penalty. Criminologists say that professional killers are not afraid of being punished with the greatest severity but are afraid of spending their whole life in jail, which from a psychological view is like being sentenced to death. Nobody can question life imprisonment ethically whereas several religions and the conscience of many human beings consider the death penalty to be an abominable act.

Doubts and shadows. As mentioned above, the death penalty is not only inflicted to murderers. Take for example Malaysia and Singapore, where if you are caught with more than 15 grams of heroin you are sentenced to death. Actually it is a very small quantity that anybody could put in their pocket. In less democratic countries where freedom is heavily violated, capital punishment is inflicted as a way to eliminate political dissidents opposing the regime. In these cases, convicts cannot defend themselves. For example, Amnesty International declared that, in Iran, political prisoners running the risk of being sentenced to death have not been allowed to be defended by a lawyer since 1979. In this country, the defendant is considered to be guilty, which means that the trial lasts just a few minutes. Consequently, as soon as the charges against the defendant are read, the jury's sentence is unappealable. That is not the sort of morality you would expect of civil countries. In 1984, an Iraqi physician reported that he was forced to take part in the execution of prisoners who were left bleeding to death. He was also told that between 1982 and 1983 the blood of 1,000

prisoners who were sentenced to death had been sent to the Iraqi national blood bank. Even in the most democratic countries tragedy may lurk just around the corner. In fact, infallible justice does not exist, as judges can err. This has happened too many times. Even in the American civilised system of justice, if an inexperienced counsel appointed by the court errs, for example he/she forgets to give evidence for the defense in time, a defendant may not be granted an acquittal. There are also a few very striking examples that could be easily forgotten by public opinion. Think about what happened in the USA. Carlos De Luna, a 26-year-old Spanish man, was sent to prison and executed as he was accused of killing a shop-assistance during an armed robbery in a retail-shop. The young man always pleaded not guilty but he was sentenced to death and executed as there was evidence against him. Some years later, another Spanish young man was arrested as he was charged with a crime. The man confessed to the murder but he also admitted that he had committed the murder for which Carlos De Luna had been convicted. Unfortunately, there are hundreds of similar cases where the system of justice fails.

How many people are executed worldwide? Totalitarian governments do not provide official statistics on death penalties so their executions are likely to be higher with respect to the data that may be collected. Chinese and Vietnamese governments are notorious for keeping statistics secret so the news reported by local newspapers or independent sources are only a small part of the phenomenon. Therefore, the reality is worse. There are about 1,200 executions a year in China. Criminals that are charged with murder, robbery, organisation of secret societies or even promoting pornographic films are executed. In the 1980s, trials were even suspended in order to execute more defendants. Secret capital punishments also occur elsewhere. In North Korea, Mongolia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Botswana and Japan, prisoners are secretly executed. Their family members, lawyers and the prisoners themselves are not informed of their executions until the very day the execution is carried out. One of the reasons why the death penalty is considered to be valid is that it dissuades the civil population from committing the same crimes and that is why it is so important to publicise it. On the other hand, in some countries, the death penalty remains secret where the victims are dissidents or political opponents in order to prevent

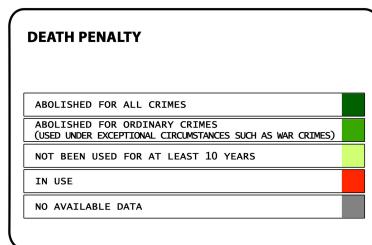
popular uprisings. Moreover, they do not want the intervention of other states or international organisations meddling in their affairs and fighting for human rights.

The death penalty is an abnormal solution. More people are becoming aware of this. Take for example Italy. In the 1980s, the death penalty was supported by 52% of the population whereas 48% was against it. During the 1990s, there was a global tendency to abolish it. It has been abolished for any offence since 1990 in 60 countries. Several organisations around the world work to protect human rights such as Amnesty International and the Italian organisation Nessuno tocchi Caino (May nobody touch Cain!), as well as others. They are among the most efficient and active organisations in the world, developing strong actions to abolish the death penalty. In 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2014, the General Assembly of the United Nations approved a resolution calling for a moratorium on the death penalty. Things are gradually changing thanks to its great political and moral weight. European states, except for Belarus, have abolished the death penalty from their penal codes. In countries where the death penalty is still in force, executions and death sentences have dramatically decreased. It is still hard for certain parts of Asia to conform to this tendency.

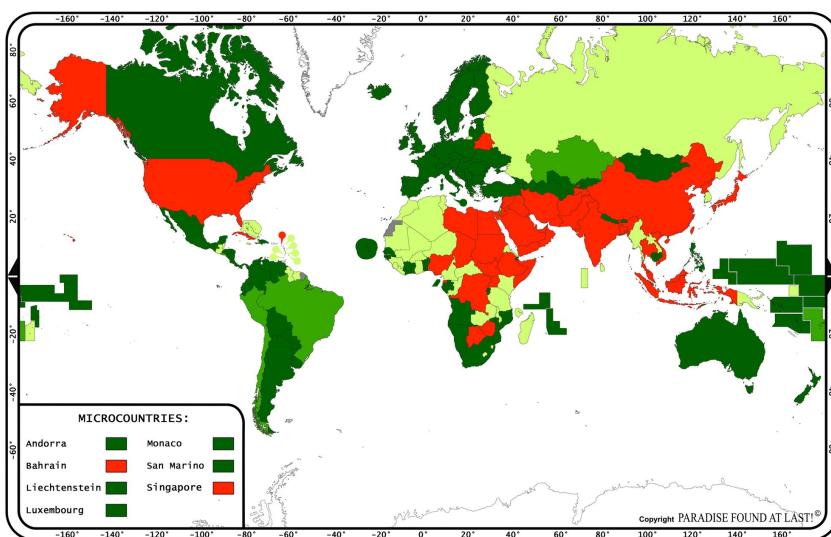
Conclusions. First of all, being opposed to capital punishment should be a moral duty. The death penalty is inhumane, not only the execution itself but the excruciating years of anguish waiting for it to come. Nobody, nor individually or collectively, should arrogate themselves the right to kill another human being, no matter what he/she may commit. The death penalty is against the principle of non-revenge. The culprit should not merely be punished but re-educated from a human and social point of view. How can a dead person be re-educated? Prisoners spend a long time in prison before they are executed so their personality changes radically. This means that the person who is executed is very different from the person who committed the crime. Moreover, it is important to underscore that the death penalty is not a deterrent as criminals do not consult the penal code before committing their crimes. The death penalty is not an effective tool against organised criminality either; other ways have been implemented to fight it, mostly aiming at hitting its economic profits.

There are also other two important reasons why the death penalty should be shunned. First, judicial errors are likely to occur. Second, an innocent person may be executed unjustly. This could justify its abolition.

The map. The *world map of death penalty* will show you the countries where it is in force, the countries where it is out of use, the countries that have not used it for at least 10 years and finally, the countries inflicting it only on specific occasions. The data is collected from “Nessuno Tocchi Caino”. Globally it is worth noting that among the 37 states where the death penalty is in use, 31 of them are undemocratic, authoritarian or illiberal regimes.



WORLD MAP OF DEATH PENALTY



[Open the World map of independent states to see the names of the states](#)

Eden, finally!

You are now approaching the end of this intriguing journey. No doubt you have learned a great deal. Before reading this book and observing the title you had no idea what to expect. When you started this journey did you ever think it would be easy going? Maybe, but the reality turned out to be a long and tedious journey. That is how we felt when creating, organising and writing the book until its completion. What struck us is how difficult it is to decide which country meets the requirements of being a possible Eden, the best place in the world to be. This is the first time that a book has tried to reach such a conclusion. Actually you can find books such as “The 50 Most Romantic Places to go on The Weekend”, or “The 100 Places to be Seen Before You Die” but they are more for tourists and thus inadequate to help you decide where to find Eden, your earthly paradise to live.

Against the mainstream. We could have written an easier book, in a more narrative style, possibly rich in anecdotes and funny stories, but it would have been just another of the stereotyped and useless guides on how to move abroad. We could have narrated the story of a person who has already moved abroad. That would have been a very absorbing but subjective experience, containing perhaps a number of specific personal events and experiences of some interest but far from being a practical and objective narration. We chose to write a disquisition instead and the information that we have painstakingly obtained and placed together is impartial so as not to affect your choices. That is the reason why we decided to examine and scrutinise all the topics that could and would affect your life if you decide to move abroad.

Time to reach a conclusion. We have analysed many topics. What topic affects you most when it comes to your future plans? Have you already examined and subsequently pondered on them? Before making a decision continue to examine carefully the world maps so that you understand all

the themes discussed in this book. The supreme Italian poet said: "If you are aware of what you know, that is science!" Do not be hasty, read carefully, analyse and compare the data of the maps over and over again. Try to understand them and then you can reach a conclusion. You might even associate your personal Eden with more than one country. You may not only identify the country where your earthly paradise is located, but also a specific portion within its territory or, why not, more than one. Then you can use Google Earth, a very important and powerful tool. This famous search engine is freely available to any Internet user and will easily allow you to take a virtual trip over the area you like through a satellite image. You will be able to stop and zoom around, getting closer and closer to discover details of the place. This is the best way to locate the area you prefer. If you love living in an urban area you would probably prefer to live near a sports and leisure centre or perhaps you would prefer to live in a quiet area away from motorways and traffic noise. On the other hand, if you love living in rural areas and in the open-air, you are likely to search for a hilly or mountainous area, maybe near a river or a lake. So use this programme as it is a revolutionary invention. A similar tool which has been developed by NASA, known as World Win, could be a valid alternative. It is a bit more complicated but it is provided with extremely interesting functions. You can download free of charge.

What kind of Eden? This journey has been full of events which has most probably assisted you in many ways. After such a thorough examination you may have found a country you would like to move to, and leave your habitual patterns behind, or you may decide to visit the place you have discovered every now and again. You may plan to go there on holiday or to travel there more often. However, the search for your own Eden could have purely been spiritual, an imaginary journey searching for a genuine earthly paradise without moving from your computer. You may just decide to visualise its abstract image so as to maintain your dream, a dream that will not be damaged or ruined. Finally, after a careful examination of all the facts, some readers may not have found their own paradise. They might have identified a place or more places that are close to their idea of Eden but have not found the real one. We hope that even the more sceptical and probably more romantic readers have gleaned something about the real

world for their spiritual and cultural development.

A preliminary visit to your favourite place is recommended. If you belong to the first category of people, those who have been searching for the best place to live and believe that you have identified it, we strongly recommend you to go there on holiday, for at least a month. This will allow you to get a first-hand idea of its reality and local life and to get to know the sort of people who live there. You may also need to learn a foreign language: in this case, it would be advisable to attend a language course before leaving. English language speakers are advantaged because English has become the international tongue and practically you will find people who speak English everywhere, but you might also consider learning the new language once you live there: that will take time and patience. You should consider your first journey as explorative, and gather information about property, houses and flats for rent or sale. Transportation, amenities and other available resources should be examined to see if the locality is viable for your needs. At the end of your sojourn, after examining all the pros and cons, if you feel satisfied with this first experience, then you may well be able to make plans towards moving there. To reiterate, before you move, you should be acquainted with its culture and lifestyle so that you will not feel out of place, or even worse, feel isolated later. We recommend great caution and deliberation before you take such a fundamental step and a new life choice. It is also important that your Eden is not a way of escaping from your present situation. If you are escaping from your problems, debts, worries and emotional difficulties, they will haunt you and will follow you everywhere and anywhere you go. If you cannot find peace within yourself, you will not find it elsewhere and no place will make you happy. The first thing to do is to try and understand why you want to leave your country and then examine the motivations for doing so. If you clearly understand yourself, well then you will be able to find a better life.

It is not a matter of money. Money is not an obstacle to reach your goal. Remember you do not have to be rich to be able to travel. You need to set goals. You should say to yourself: "*Now that I have identified the best country (or countries), I need to visit it (them) and to get to know the place personally*". If you are well-off, there should be no problem whatsoever; on the other

hand, if you believe that your finances are not sufficient you may convince yourself of not being able to carry out your project. So be careful and give priority to this goal, otherwise you will always find other ways to spend your money resulting in a lack of resources to accomplish your journey. Examine your budget, renounce spending for certain luxuries so as to save as much as possible, so that you can visit the place of your dreams with the goal of moving permanently to your chosen paradise.

Your Eden and red tape. You need to consider that there will be bureaucratic procedures in order to enter your earthly paradise. First of all, let us consider a temporary stay. If you officially move for studying, you will be able to obtain a student visa, which usually lasts 12 months; after that, you must apply for an extended visa each year. Before obtaining it, however, you have to prove that you have enough money to cover your study and living costs. If you move abroad and want to work there, you need to apply for a work permit. Then you will have to find an employer willing to hire you. Then you will have to convince the authorities that you are the best candidate for the job. Once your offer of employment has been approved by the local authorities, you will have to apply for a work permit at the Consulates of the two respective countries. It is important to note that if you change your job, you will have to repeat the same procedure over again. After working for many years, you can apply for permanent residence that will enable you to continue living in your Eden for an indefinite period of time. On the contrary, if you can prove that you have a regular income, such as a pension or life income annuity, you will easily obtain the permanent residency directly. The amount of this income varies from country to country and sometimes from year to year. Any Embassy or Consulate provides you with up-dated websites and employees with specific responsibilities will give you advice. Moreover, those who decide to invest a certain sum of money in commercial activities or residential property usually obtain the permanent residence immediately (Embassy and Consulates will always provide you with updated information). Last, but not least, if you fall in love with a local person living in your Earthly Paradise and you marry, well then the state would usually give you permanent residence as a gift. All the Embassies and Consulates abroad can provide you with all the information you need.

Conclusions. You tend to consider the typical values belonging to your country of origin as justifiable, necessary and inevitable. Therefore, positive and negative aspects of other cultures are assessed from your personal point of view, according to the parameters you have learned since adolescence. However, the world maps of this book will often show a different reality with respect to what people would expect it to be. In fact, this book reveals things as they really are, so it can help you to shed prejudices. This book has the aim of broadening your knowledge, opening up your mind and providing you with excellent updated information. All these factors will enable you to make the right choice for a better life. Now that you have opened your horizons you are now catching a glimpse of life in a new world. Now you can put your life on the line again because you have been informed. We suggest that you keep on studying. There are still things you need to know. This work aims at helping you to answer several questions but it also urges you to ask further questions. Remember that those who lack initiative, those who are unwilling to improve themselves as they prefer sticking to what they know or have been told, will never be blessed with good luck. No venture, no gain. However, after reading this book something has probably changed in your life. Perhaps you thought your Eden to be simply an imagination of your mind or a biblical myth. Could it be that now it has turned into a tangible reality and that you can clearly visualise it? Moving abroad is an ambitious project and there are difficulties and the results are not immediate but persist in achieving your goals. If you have this purpose in life, be determined and it will become a reality. The place you have already chosen, or you will choose, is or will be undoubtedly amazing and it will leave you speechless. It will be the life you have always wanted in a special place that you have chosen. Your new life starts now!

www.mypersonaleden.com is the website that gathers the latest expatriation updates.

You are invited to write an email to info@mypersonaleden.com and share with us your comments, criticisms and suggestions in order to improve the eBook. Please let us know your choice (that is your personal Eden) and your plans for the future.

If you want to perfect your research while searching for your personal Eden you will be able to do so by obtaining all the global maps (or only a few) through the website in an A3 printed paper format so that you can physically overlay them, thanks to the use of a transparent global map, which will help you to materially, concretely and realistically make your research.