

Preface

Urbanisation and inequalities have emerged as key contemporary challenges despite the fact that population growth is projected to stabilise and overall poverty levels have been declining. The present book analyses these issues through a dual lens: that of a traditional Malthusian framework and the global development agenda. While the book is concerned with the analysis of both urbanisation and inequalities, the speed of urban growth and its impacts on human development remain the primary focus of investigation.

The book is the result of a marriage of academic training, practitioner's perspective and philosophical reflection. The motivation for the subject developed gradually. First, it was prompted by the author's professional experience working in international development and direct exposure to the shaping of the sustainable development agenda. Global development politics and policies remain largely unknown outside of the specialist area, despite the fact that both often have a tangible effect on people's lives. Second, the inspiration for the book arose from the rich Malthusian scholarship, which remains most notorious for Malthus' claim that population growth would impact disastrously on food supplies, or resources more broadly. Combining these two aspects—the practical human development challenges and the need to revisit the traditional Malthusian framework—provided an opportunity for extended research, resulting in this book.

While the present volume has been written in an academic context and its content is evidence-based, it is the author's hope that the chapters of this book will appeal to different audiences, both in terms of professional interests and geographical location. Urbanisation is a key contemporary issue that crosses boundaries: the fast growth of Asian cities is occurring at the same time as urbanities are expanding in Africa and as Europe faces unprecedented challenges associated with living in urban areas. In addition, inequalities continue to rise despite positive aggregate trends in most human development indices.

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Urbanisation and Inequalities in a Post-Malthusian
Context

Challenges for the Sustainable Development Agenda

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