

**Committee:** Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

**Issue:** Tackling inequalities among more and less economically developed urban districts

**Student Officer:** Ermioni Gounopoulou

**Position:** Co-Chair

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## PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Ermioni Gounopoulou, I am 16 years old, and I am currently attending the 10th grade at the Anatolia College of Thessaloniki. This is my first time attending the DSTMUN and my fourth time attending an MUN conference. This year, I am honored to serve as a Deputy President of the 5th DSTMUN Economic and Social Council.

First of all, I would like to welcome you all to the 5th DSTMUN and congratulate you on your participation in the conference. The MUN conferences are a great way to expand your horizons, get involved in global issues, make new friends with common interests, and most importantly, have an impact on the world's controversial matters. Most specifically, the Economic and Social Council is a very important committee in which we will have the chance to debate very demanding topics that concern all of us and to find drastic solutions.

In this session, we will be discussing the very crucial topic of the inequalities that have been troubling the urban districts based on their economic strength and the COVID-19 outbreak, and we will further analyze the impact of this on global labor and economic well-being. This is a very interesting and challenging topic, with numerous things to view and in which we will engage in fruitful debates. The purpose of this document is to use it as your guide to help you understand the important aspects of the issue and to help you organize your research. However, you are all highly encouraged to also expand your research further by visiting the links provided at the end of the study guide or any other sources that you may consider useful.

Of course, if you have any questions concerning the following study guide or the conference, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email is [ermionigioun@gmail.com](mailto:ermionigioun@gmail.com). I am sure that you will all do your best and that we will create powerful resolutions while we all enjoy the process to the fullest! And I can not wait to meet you all.

Best regards,

Ermioni Gounopoulou

## TOPIC INTRODUCTION

In the last three decades and especially in the 21st century, with the improvements that have been made in international global trade and with the economic and technological advances that have led to automation, there have been a variety of inequalities among urban districts. As a result, there is a clear distinction between Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) and More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) which have an impact on global well-being.

As a result, urban districts and, by extension, countries are experiencing unprecedented urbanization and serious inequalities. The difference among the different urban districts can be viewed in the aspects of transportation, as many urban districts have limited transportation options that include specific public transport, such as important train lines and subways. The outcome of the public and transportation infrastructure in certain urban districts and mostly in the suburbs is that people have trouble accessing adequate education, services that may be in a different area, and jobs that are equal to their academic background and offer them economic stability.

To understand the impact of this problem, it is important to state that, the percentage of the population moving from rural to urban areas has been expanding quickly and is expected to do so in the future. In 1950, 30%<sup>1</sup> of the global population that resided in urban areas was in urban areas. However, in 2018, it was estimated that this number had increased by 25%<sup>2</sup> and that by 2030 it would have reached a significant number of 60%<sup>3</sup>. Thus, we understand that the current limitations lead to an economic system where there is a clear difference between the "gainers" and the "losers," a fact that has drastic effects on a global scale.

To summarize, it is impossible to eliminate all economic disparities between urban districts, but they must be monitored and addressed because they can lead to political, environmental, and social disadvantages. Finally, it is of great importance to remember the vital role that policymakers and important institutions can have.

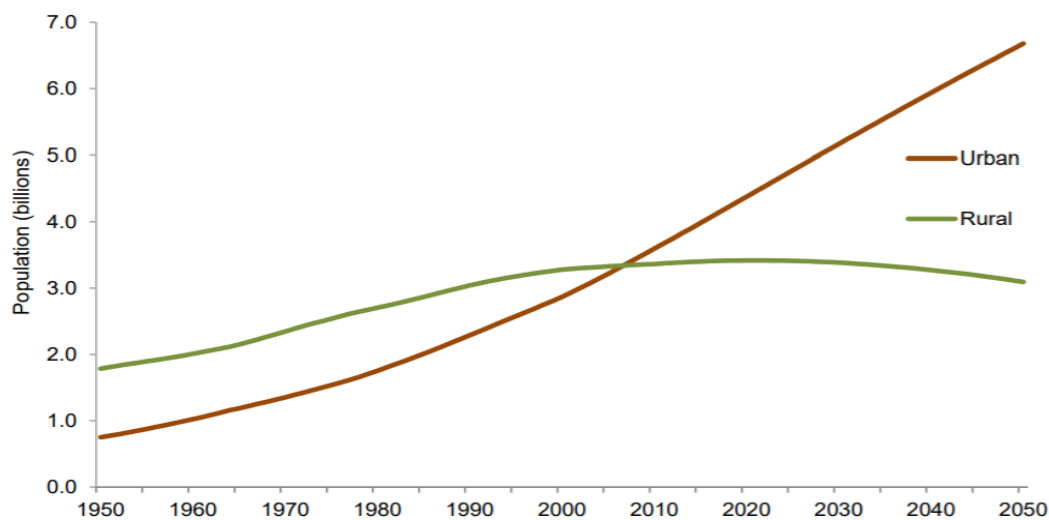
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Figure 1: Urbanisation: Trends, Causes and Effects: View as Single Page,  
<https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=79940&printable=1>.

<sup>1</sup> Gooptu, T. (2019, September). *Tarik Gooptu: Address global inequality by focusing on cities – IMF finance & development magazine: July 2019*. IMF. from <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2019/09/tarik-gooptu-inequality-and-cities>

<sup>2</sup> Gooptu, T. (2019, September). *Tarik Gooptu: Address global inequality by focusing on cities – IMF finance & development magazine: July 2019*. IMF. from <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2019/09/tarik-gooptu-inequality-and-cities>

<sup>3</sup> Gooptu, T. (2019, September). *Tarik Gooptu: Address global inequality by focusing on cities – IMF finance & development magazine: July 2019*. IMF. from <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2019/09/tarik-gooptu-inequality-and-cities>



Data source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018a). *World Urbanization Prospects 2018*.

Figure 1: Urban and rural population of the world, 1950–2050. (UNDESA, 2014)

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

### Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDs)

“These are the countries that, based on their economy, are considered to have less developed economies than others. According to the United Nations, these are mostly the countries in Africa, Asia (except Japan), Latin America, the Caribbean and Oceania (except Australia and New Zealand)”<sup>4</sup>

### More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs)

These are the countries that, based on their economy, are considered to have more developed economies than others and have their own quality of life and standard of living which is usually better than that of the LEDs. According to the United Nations, these are the USA, Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and all the countries of Europe

### Economic Inequalities

“Economic inequality is the unequal distribution of income and opportunity between different groups in society. It is a concern in almost all countries around the world and often people are trapped in poverty with little chance to climb up the social ladder.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (n.d.). *less economically developed countries*. Encyclopædia Britannica. from <https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/less-economically-developed-countries/604088>

<sup>5</sup> *What is economic inequality?* IZA World of Labor - Home. (n.d.). from <https://wol.iza.org/key-topics/economic-inequality>

## Urbanization

“Urbanization, the process by which large numbers of people become permanently concentrated in relatively small areas, forming cities.”<sup>6</sup>

## Social Inequality

“Social inequality is an area within sociology that focuses on the distribution of goods and burdens in society. A good can be, for example, income, education, employment or parental leave, while examples of burdens are substance abuse, criminality, unemployment and marginalisation”<sup>7</sup>

## Gini Index

“The Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income (or, in some cases, consumption expenditure) among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution.”<sup>8</sup>

## Urban Planning

“technical and political process concerned with the welfare of people, control of the use of land, design of the urban environment including transportation and communication networks, and protection and enhancement of the natural environment.”<sup>9</sup>

## Population density

“Population density is the concentration of individuals within a species in a specific geographic locale”<sup>10</sup>

## Industrialization

“Industrialization is the process by which an economy is transformed from a primarily agricultural one to one based on the manufacturing of goods.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> the Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (n.d.). *Urbanization*. Encyclopædia Britannica. from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/urbanization>

<sup>7</sup> *Social inequality*. Department of Sociology and Human Geography. (n.d.). from <https://www.sv.uio.no/iss/english/research/research-areas/social-inequality/>

<sup>8</sup> “Glossary of Statistical Terms.” *OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms - Gini Index Definition*, <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=4842>.

<sup>9</sup> *About urban planning*. School of Urban Planning. (2015, August 7). 2022, from <https://www.mcgill.ca/urbanplanning/planning>

<sup>10</sup> “Population Density.” *National Geographic Society*, <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/population-density>.

<sup>11</sup> Team, The Investopedia. “Industrialization.” *Investopedia*, Investopedia, 8 Feb. 2022, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/i/industrialization.asp>

## Commercialization

“Commercialization is the process of bringing new products or services to market.”<sup>12</sup>

## Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

“Total market value of the goods and services produced by a country’s economy during a specified period of time.”<sup>13</sup>

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Urbanization

Since the formation of the first agricultural societies approximately 10.000 years ago, the phenomenon of accelerated urbanization has always been developing. Back in the days, humankind used to live in rural communities where groups of people used to live in sparsely populated areas, and they were supported by manual activities such as labor, agriculture, and fishing. However, as the years passed and the population grew, cities and urban areas began to develop. According to research, urbanization was first seen in ancient Mesopotamia in the Uruk Period (4300–3100 BC), and it was a procedure where the most prosperous village invited the less prosperous tribes to all together achieve a successful settlement and a strong alliance.

Urban human settlements were slow to develop until the 17th century, and in 1800, less than 3% of the global population lived in cities with 20,000 or more residents.<sup>14</sup> It was not until the rapid population explosion in the last three centuries that urbanization began to evolve rapidly.

The Industrial Revolution in the 18th century had a huge impact on the phenomenon of urbanization as it changed people’s perspective on what organized cities had to offer because commerce became a priority. Technological advances updated the residents’ way of living, and it encouraged people from rural areas to transfer to urban areas to find better career opportunities.

By the nineteenth century, the European Union was facing massive urbanization as residents of rural areas, particularly immigrants, sought better living conditions and opportunities in cities. Consequently, by the mid-1960s, more than half of the total population was residing in urban areas.

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<sup>12</sup> Kenton, Will. “Bringing a Product to Market through Commercialization.” *Investopedia*, Investopedia, 19 May 2021, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/commercialization.asp>

<sup>13</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (n.d.). *Gross domestic product*. Encyclopædia Britannica from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/gross-domestic-product>

<sup>14</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (n.d.). *Urbanization*. Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved July 27, 2022, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/urbanization>

Currently it is estimated that about 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas and as mentioned before, it is expected to reach 68% by 2050.<sup>15</sup> We can understand the current speed of urbanization by the research that was made in 2019.

10 Largest Urban Areas in 1990: Change to 2019					
Urban Area	1990		2019		Change
	Rank	Population	Rank	Population	
Tokyo-Yokohama	1	32.5	1	38.5	18.4%
Osaka-Kobe-Kyoto	2	18.4	14	17.2	-6.5%
New York	3	16.1	8	21.0	30.6%
Mexico City	4	15.6	10	20.4	30.4%
Sao Paulo	5	14.8	9	20.9	41.4%
Mumbai	6	12.4	6	23.6	89.8%
Kolkata	7	10.9	19	15.2	39.6%
Los Angeles	8	10.9	18	15.4	41.5%
Seoul	9	10.5	4	25.3	Note
Buenos Aires	10	10.5	20	15.1	43.6%
Population in Millions					
Seoul 1990 and 2019 definitions not comparable (Note					
Sources: United Nations (1990) and Demographia (2019)					

**Figure 5**

**Figure 2: the population percentage in urban areas between the years 1990 and 2019**

### The causes of urbanization and urban inequalities

There are some major factors that can be viewed as the causes of urban inequalities as they are helping the phenomenon of urbanization to evolve and therefore show all its positive and negative effects.

### Industrialization and automation

One of the various causes of urbanization is industrialization, which is the phenomenon that describes the shift from the old agricultural economy to a non-agricultural economy with the help of the widespread development of industries in urban regions. Consequently, as mentioned before, with all the industrial developments, rural residents become urban so they can find better employment opportunities. a trend that is considered a follow up of industrialization. Is automation. Automation is a part of the human agglomeration, and it has provided numerous jobs to people while it has also replaced the human workforce in an abundance of tasks.

Figure 2 "Demographia World Urban Areas: 2019: Population, Land Area & Urban Densities." <https://www.newgeography.com/content/006272-demographia-world-urban-areas-2019-population-land-area-urban-densities>

<sup>15</sup> Urban Development Overview. World Bank. (n.d.). from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/overview>

Concerning the larger and more economically developed urban areas, the impact of automation is not as great as it is for the less economically urban areas as they are positions for managerial and technical professions and therefore the job opportunities are not being minimized. However, according to the studies of OECD the smaller and less economically powerful cities undertake important adjustments with the most important being the worker's displacement

### **Commercialization and labor market**

Another aspect that has been developed on a big extend and has had an impact on urbanization in commerce and trade. The process of the distribution of goods and the commercial transactions have established contemporary marketing institutions and trading techniques, which have greatly fueled the expansion of towns and cities. As a result, it is inevitable for people to believe that towns and cities provide better economic possibilities and returns than rural places.

### **Migration**

Migration is the moving of people from place to place, and it usually has economic and employment purposes. More specifically, the two types of migration that drastically affect urbanization are economic migration, which is when people decide to leave their countries for a better career path, and social migration, which is when people seek a better quality of life. However, migrants are not necessarily people with a poor economic background, and they may come from either rural areas or urban areas; the move may be internal, meaning that they are moving to different cities within their country, or international, meaning that they change countries. All these facts drastically interrelate to the policy issues of urbanization that concern demographic, economic, and environmental concerns. The underspecified moving of migrants to different urban areas also alters the population density, which as a result can bring negative results such as inadequate infrastructure, the lack of affordable housing for everyone, the high rates of crime, congestion, and poverty, and the uneven opportunities for everyone.

Another important aspect of migration is the placement of minorities in less developed urban areas. There are many cases where the poorest migrants, because of the need to secure access to employment opportunities and the scarcity of land, frequently settle in neighborhoods that are overwhelmingly exposed to environmental hazards. While these settlements may be in relatively convenient locations, they are typically unsuitable for residential use, if not downright dangerous, and they make the urban and economic inequalities even more noticeable.

Europe and South and North America now have the highest rates of urbanization, with 73 percent, 83 percent, and 82 percent of the population residing in cities, towns, and other urban areas, respectively. Africa accounts for around 40% of the world's population, while Asia accounts for 48%; both regions are expected to grow exponentially over the next several decades because of rising birth rates and migration.<sup>16</sup>

### The social benefits and services

Because of all the advancements in technology and in urban planning, it is a fact that cities offer improved living circumstances that include increased access to housing, sanitation, health care, and educational resources. All these help to make the shift even quicker from rural to urban areas.

Lastly, there are some other factors that help urbanization to flourish, such as the natural population growth in comparison to the decrease in birth rate and growing birth rate, the emergence of large manufacturing centers, and the availability of easy transportation. However, as mentioned previously, these amenities are not the same for every urban center, as every city has its own pace of development due to the aforementioned causes.

### Counting inequality

To understand the impact that economic and social inequalities have on global well-being, it is first important to view how inequality is being measured. According to the European Commission, there are two methods by which inequality can be counted.

#### S80/S20 ratio

The first method is called the S80/S20 share ratio, and it measures the annual income of the wealthiest 20 % of households in comparison to the poorest 20 per cent of households. Thus, the distribution between the more and less wealthy residents can be easily reviewed and discussed upon

#### Gini Coefficient

The most widely used indicator of income disparity worldwide is the Gini Coefficient. By comparing each household's income position to all other households' income positions, it calculates the income distribution. The coefficient is calculated to be stated as a percentage between 0 and 100. An income distribution that is perfectly equal would have a Gini score of 0, whereas an income distribution that is completely unequal would have a Gini score of 100. These two methods have helped the governments of each country to understand the economic differences among residents and cities.

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<sup>16</sup> "Inequality and Urban Growth." *OECD*, <https://www.oecd.org/social/inequality-urban-growth.htm>.

<sup>17</sup> "Yokohama." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yokoham>

### Population density

On the other hand, to understand what the needs of each urban area are and what actions need to be taken, it is important for each government to understand how populous each city is. This also defines if an area is considered rural, metropolitan, or urban. For this reason, population density is used, which is, as mentioned before, the act of counting the population of people gathered on a specific geographic scale. For example, a rural area is expected to have fewer than 500 people per square mile, while an urban area is expected to have at least 1200 people per square mile. Currently, the most populous city in Japan is considered Tokyo-Yokohama, with a population density of 22.103<sup>17</sup> per square mile.

### Inequality and economic growth in the urbanization context

While urbanization may offer a variety of positive effects, it goes without saying that the negative effects also exist and create an ambiguous situation for numerous cities. While there are many different patterns of urban growth within every country, there are also differences in the distribution patterns of inequality. Even though there will always be inequality to a certain degree based on national and regional characteristics, social and economic inequalities have not been overcome in recent decades, and research shows that urban inequality primarily affects African and Latin American cities, as well as all developing countries.

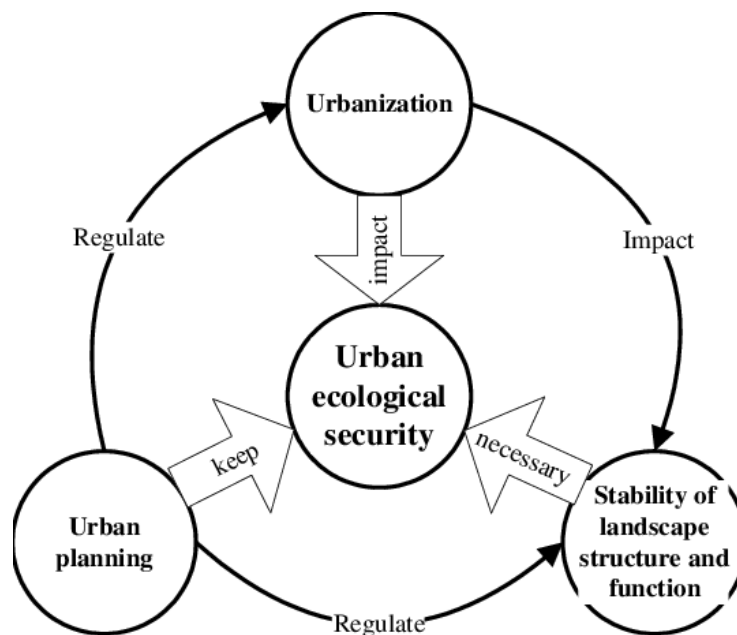
The first problem that designers, developers, investors, and policymakers are facing concerns transportation and mobilization. Without the proper transportation and road systems, and without the necessary framework and adequate infrastructure for every city, challenges concerning traffic congestion and the lack of proper education and, therefore, employment opportunities rise. As a result, the academic background of people is significantly limited, and the economic and social gap between the "gainer" and "loser" cities will just continue to widen. Thus, LEDCs will never cease to exist while MEDCs will continue to develop even more rapidly.

Apart from the important problems of mobilization and public transportation, there are also some socio-economic and environmental challenges that the OECD and the organizations working toward urban equality have highlighted. The cities with slower economic development have had problems with the high population density, which leads to issues with finding affordable housing. And the cities with more inequalities have been found to have higher crime rates due to poverty and low income.

Furthermore, the challenges that are associated with the environmental problems stem from the problem of poor urban planning and inadequate quality accommodations. These often include issues with flooding, pollution, and slum creation, which means that the housing is of very low quality.

While urbanization is an inevitable phenomenon that is drastically connected to technological and industrial development, it is important to mitigate the

consequences that it has in less developed countries and to find ways that urbanization is sustainable and closely inspected.



**Figure 3: the relationship among urbanization, urban planning and stability of landscape structure and function**

### The impact of COVID-19 in the situation

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, the situation with structural and systemic inequalities has been even more noticeable. At the beginning of 2021, the World Bank research team conducted a phone survey to better understand the effect that that pandemic had on the economic stability of households and how urban inequality was affected. The survey revealed that extreme poverty for the LEDCs increased in 2020 and that all households in less economically developed urban areas experienced negative effects on the distribution of income. Even though some countries were able to mitigate the challenges of the pandemic to a certain degree and to manage the problems with public health and economic activity, difficulties ascended for all countries. More specifically, in South Africa, it was estimated that from February to June of 2020, about 15% of the overall workforce lost their jobs due to the economic and financial problems that the pandemic brought and about one third of the total population temporarily lost their earnings. On a more general scale, COVID-19 has been a cause for geographical changes and economic recessions in both rural and urban areas as it has aggravated the pre-existing rural-urban disparities.

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Figure 3: The Relationship among Urbanization, Urban Planning and  
... [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/figure1-the-relationship-among-urbanization-urban-planning-and-stability-of-landscape\\_fig1\\_274430953](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/figure1-the-relationship-among-urbanization-urban-planning-and-stability-of-landscape_fig1_274430953).

## Economic Growth and Economic Development

The phenomenon of economic growth refers to the increase of goods and services per person for a specific amount of time, while economic development explains the process of when countries produce more products to make wealth improvements. Economic growth and urbanization are two forces that are inseparably linked as Economic growth often refers to the conversion of rural land to urban land and in aspects of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Changes in information and production technologies are part of economic growth and can have profound effects on urbanization. However, even though urbanization is based on economic growth and economic development, it can sometimes occur and without the help of it, but the development of economic growth and development are of vital importance in order to tackle urban inequalities.

## UN Millennium Development Goals

The UN Millennium Development Goals were voted in the year 2000 by the UN and they are eight international goals that, among other things, have as a goal to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and to achieve a global partnership for the necessary development of the goals. Goal No. 1 seeks to achieve productive employment and decent work for all. According to the Millennium Development Goals report that was written by different treaties and organizations, extreme poverty has seen a decline in the last few decades, as in 1990 1.9 billion people lived in appalling conditions, while in 2015 the number had dropped to 836 million and it is expected to drop even more. Tackling poverty will give the necessary ground for urban inequalities to be tackled.

## UN Sustainable Development Goals

The UN Sustainable Development Goals were voted on in 2015 as part of the creation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and they are a set of 17 goals that aim to have an impact on global problems and produce results by 2030. The UN has already conducted surveys and has examined the people that are at risk of social exclusion by the degree of urbanization, and it was shown that rural residents face the most exclusion with a percentage of 27.6 percent and that social exclusion also exists among the urban population with an alarming percentage of 23.8 percent for the year 2014.<sup>18</sup> However, there has been an improvement in the last five years. The effort that the UN has been making for inequalities since the creation of the SDGs has helped to understand the impact of the problem and the need to address the situation.

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<sup>18</sup>Archive: urban Europe - statistics on cities, towns and suburbs - poverty and social exclusion in cities. Archive: Urban Europe - statistics on cities, towns and suburbs - poverty and social exclusion in cities - Statistics Explained. (n.d.). from [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Archive%3AUrban\\_Europe\\_%E2%80%94\\_statistics\\_on\\_cities%2C\\_towns\\_and\\_suburbs\\_%E2%80%94\\_poverty\\_and\\_social\\_exclusion\\_in\\_cities&oldid=336830](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Archive%3AUrban_Europe_%E2%80%94_statistics_on_cities%2C_towns_and_suburbs_%E2%80%94_poverty_and_social_exclusion_in_cities&oldid=336830)

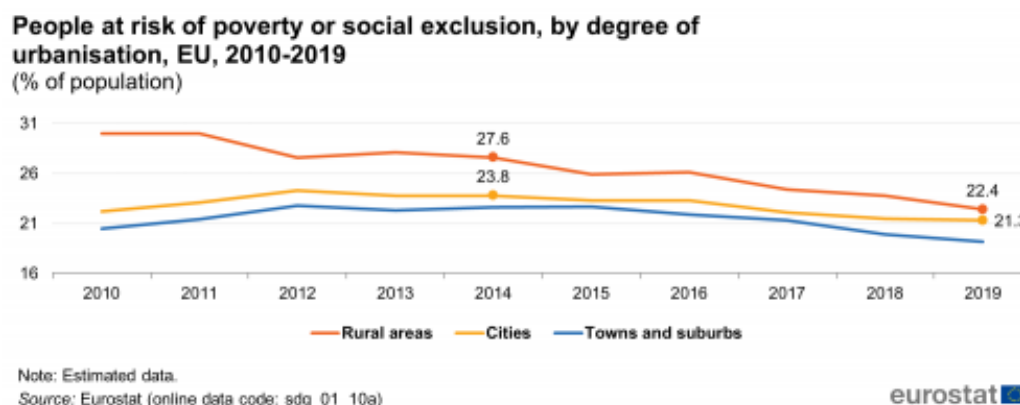


Figure 4: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by degree of urbanisation, EU, 2010–2019 (% of population)

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

### USA

Urban, rural, and suburban issues have plagued the USA for a very long time. The percentage of the US population that lives in rural areas is significant because it is close to 19.3%<sup>19</sup> of the entire population, which means that one in five Americans reside in rural areas. The residents of rural areas acknowledge that the availability of well-paying jobs, access to public transportation, access to good doctors and hospitals, access to high-speed internet, and access to grocery stores are the problems that are most significant in their community, even though all categories face problems such as drug addiction, the availability of affordable housing, traffic, and poverty, which are being faced more by the residents of the urban areas.

### Brazil

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Brazil, a nation with a vibrant emerging economy, was the first to find successful solutions between the years of 1999 and 2008 to address income inequality among the various urban areas in all 27 of the Brazilian federation's units, which had an effect on the political and socioeconomic aspects. Brazil made progress during this time by concentrating on trade, technological and financial development, and the problem of unemployment. Brazil has regions with distinct economic variances, yet despite this, her advancements and her successful initiatives served to expose the income inequality policies in many developing countries.

<sup>19</sup> Parker, K., Horowitz, J. M., Brown, A., Fry, R., Cohn, D. V., & Igielnik, R. (2020, May 30). *4. views of problems facing urban, suburban and rural communities*. Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project. from <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2018/05/22/views-of-problems-facing-urban-suburban-and-rural-communities/>

Figure 4: "Statistics Explained." *Statistics Explained*, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File%3Apeople\\_at\\_risk\\_of\\_poverty\\_or\\_social\\_exclusion%2C\\_by\\_degree\\_of\\_urbanisation%2C\\_EU%2C\\_2010-2019\\_%28%25\\_of\\_population%29.png&oldid=531243](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File%3Apeople_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion%2C_by_degree_of_urbanisation%2C_EU%2C_2010-2019_%28%25_of_population%29.png&oldid=531243)

## South Africa

South Africa is thought to be the nation most plagued by inequality, according to the World Bank Gini Index, with a rate of 63.0 percent,<sup>20</sup> which creates murky conditions for city dwellers. As a result, there are serious geographical differences and a lopsided income distribution. There aren't enough jobs for everyone, the income isn't distributed fairly, and the social safety net and tax system aren't strong enough to make a difference, according to a study, which is why this problem exists. Several initiatives have been made by organisations and agreements, like the World Bank Report, a document written by the World bank association, with the aim of analysing the causes of the extreme poverty that people with the income of less than \$1.25 face and reducing it to 3% on a global scale by 2030.<sup>21</sup>

## Japan

Japan has experienced tremendous urbanization over the past ten years, reaching a rate of 91.78<sup>22</sup> percent, which leads us to believe that fewer than 10%<sup>23</sup> of the country's total population does not live in urban regions. As a result, it is regarded as one of the nations that has been significantly impacted by the urbanization phenomena. However, the differences between various metropolitan regions in Japan are made even more apparent by the lack of political empowerment and economic engagement.

## International Urban Development Association: INTA

The International Urban Development Association is a project whose goal is to help governments and civic leaders to improve the living conditions of habitats by focusing on the economic and social aspects of each area. INTA has provided many pieces of research and reports such as the International Panel Report and they have also tried to help policymakers by helping them find the necessary solutions through urban planning training programs and methods.

## Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

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<sup>20</sup> Gini coefficient by country 2022. (n.d.). from <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gini-coefficient-by-country>

<sup>21</sup> World Bank Report. (n.d.)from [https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/gmr/gmr2014/GMR\\_2014\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/gmr/gmr2014/GMR_2014_Full_Report.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> O'Neill, A. (2022, January 19). Japan - urbanization rate. Statista. from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/270086/urbanization-in-japan/>

<sup>23</sup> O'Neill, A. (2022, January 19). Japan - urbanization rate. Statista. from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/270086/urbanization-in-japan/>

The intergovernmental organisation called the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development was formally established in 1960. This group's mission is to develop new policies or improve those that already exist so that everyone, regardless of where they reside, can enjoy prosperity, equality, and opportunity

The OECD expresses concern over the disparities between metropolitan districts that are stronger and weaker since they lead to social deterioration, anxieties, and most significantly, unequal growth and benefits. Since its founding, the OECD has looked at the reasons that contribute to the rising disparities in various urban regions, which are primarily globalisation and technological advancements. The OECD has issued numerous papers in which it assesses the effectiveness of various educational policies.

### **World Bank**

“The World Bank Group provides financing, policy advice, and technical assistance to governments, and also focuses on strengthening the private sector in developing countries.”<sup>24</sup> The World Bank was first formed in 1944 in USA and as stated before, it is an international organization which provides funds and subsidies in countries and areas that are in need. Concerning the urban inequalities, the World Bank has stated that the COVID-19 outbreak has created massive challenges for the LEDCs and the MEDCs, especially in aspects of accessing health centers and using properly the service delivery systems. The World Bank is an organization that over the years it has helped numerous countries in their economic and financial well-being and it is ready to fund the national and local governments to create cities that offer equal opportunities to everyone.

### **Regional Plan Association**

The Regional Plan Association is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1922 and was created in order to improve the quality of life and economic well-being of the New York metropolitan area. The Regional Plan Association has been taking action since its creation by focusing on improving the infrastructure of the city and transportation network. Until now, they have implemented four major effective plans in the city of New York. The First Plan was implemented in 1929 and provided a guide for the area's roads and transportation network. In the Second Plan, which was active in the 1960s, a series of reports were conducted that focused on the reconstruction of mass transit and the deterioration of urban centers. Lastly, the Third Plan in 1996 and the Fourth Plan in 2017 highlighted the importance of maintaining employment in traditional urban centers, making more affordable housing and investing in the area's public institutions. The city of New York was improved by the work of the Regional Plan Association and set an example for other cities to take similar actions.

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<sup>24</sup> Kenton, W. (2022, July 8). *World bank definition*. Investopedia. from <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/w/worldbank.asp>

**BLOCS EXPECTED****Bloc 1**

In the first bloc the countries that are expected to co-operate are the ones that are in favor of tackling the different inequalities among the urban areas and the which according to their policies want to take drastic solutions as they believe that their nation will benefit from the changes that will be made and as they have already taken important actions

**Bloc 2**

On the second bloc the countries that are expected to co-operate are the ones that do not completely approve the mobilization to tackle the inequalities as they do not believe that they will benefit enough from the changes or that they do not wish to invest in this aspect of their economy

**TIMELINE OF EVENTS**

Date	Description of event
May 27 1929	The Regional Plan Association establishes the First Plan for urban planning
June 1944	The creation of the World Bank in the USA
September 30 1961	The establishment of the OECD
May 31 1976	The first UN Conference on Human Settlements takes place- habitat I and the first urban agenda is established
1987	The formal establishment of the international Urban Development Association
September 5 1994	The first conference on Population and Development
June 3 1996	The second UN Conference on Human Settlements takes place- habitat I and the first agenda is established
1997	The UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs released the first report on the world social situation also known as E/1997/15
September 2000	The establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
2008	the Commission on Population and Development of the ECOSOC released the resolution E/CN.9/2008/4 which was the examination of the conference on Population and Development

January 1 2016	The formal establishment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
October 20 2016	The third UN Conference on Human Settlements takes place- habitat III and the new urban agenda
2017	The Regional Plan Association establishes the Fourth Plan and final plan for the city of New York
March 11 2020	COVID-19 was formally acknowledged as a threat to the global health
2021	The most recent update of the UNDESA World Social Report

## RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

### UNDESA World Social Report <sup>25</sup>

The UNDESA World Social Report is a report that is being updated regularly and it was created by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations it was first created in 1997 and it is a report that analyses and examines among others the impact of technological innovation and urbanization. The main reason of the report is to call for governments to pay attention to the rural-urban divide and to take the necessary measures so that the rural areas reach the living standard of the rural ones. However, all the measures that the report suggests aim to be helpful to the planet. The report emphasizes how urbanization increases the gaping between urban and rural areas and how these levels of inequality have an impact on global well-being. Furthermore, the last updates also include information about how the COVID-29 outbreak has helped in the development of inequalities and how it has impacted the urban populations while it also offers recovery suggestions.

### E/CN.9/2008/4 <sup>26</sup>

The report was conducted by the Commission on Population and Development of the ECOSOC in 2008 and its goal was to provide follow-up actions to the recommendations that were made by the International Conference on Population and Development. The study looks at the shift of the global population from rural to urban that was brought on by emigration from rural regions to cities and the growth of the urban population naturally, as well as the reclassification of towns that were previously classified as rural. It explores the effects of urbanization on the economy, society, demography, and environment and outlines some widespread misunderstandings about cities and their development.

<sup>25</sup> *World social report 2021 reconsidering development*. (n.d.).from [https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2021/05/World-Social-Report-2021\\_web\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2021/05/World-Social-Report-2021_web_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> "Documents." *United Nations*, United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/our-work/documents>

## HSP/GC/25/L.9 <sup>27</sup>

This is a resolution that was conducted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme in 2015 with the view of addressing the contribution of the Human Settlements Programme in the 2015 development agenda and more specifically in the promotion of sustainable urbanization and housing. It offers a detailed document on the role of each stakeholder in member states, and it also endorses the involvement of organizations and treaties, but also the mobilization of the local authorities of each urban area.

## The Urban Agenda <sup>28</sup>

The New Urban Agenda was renewed in 2016 at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, also known as Habitat III, and it presents the sudden shift to urban areas and offers plans for the planning, the management, and the improvement of urban areas. The New Urban Agenda is meant to serve as a resource for various treaties at various levels of government, as well as for commercial industry, civil society groups, and everyone who lives in urban areas across the world. The New Urban Agenda insists on including all these sectors in any urban development or renewal policy and plan and emphasizes the connections between sustainable urbanization and the creation of jobs, chances for livelihood, and enhanced quality of life.

## PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

### Habitat III – The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development

The UN conference on housing and sustainable urban development was first held in 1976 and since then it follows the bi-decennial cycle which means that it is held every 20 years and it was last organized in 2016 in Equator. Its goal is to reinsure the global commitment of the member states



Figure 5: the UN-Habitat conference in 2016

in sustainable and equal to everyone urbanization and to renew the Urban Agenda, a drastic and action-oriented formal document. In all conference numerous representatives of the member states take place including parliamentarians, foundations and local, national, and international organizations, and trade units.

<sup>27</sup> "Documents." *United Nations*, United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/our-work/documents>

Figure 5: "Habitat III." *Andrea Posada*, <http://andreaposada.com/habitat-iii>.

<sup>28</sup> New urban agenda - habitat III. (n.d.).from <https://www.habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf>

During the years, Habitat III has been proven to be effective as it offers detailed reports on how urban and rural areas are organized and on how the sustainable development can be made. In the first conference, the outcomes of habitat I in 1976 were that urbanization was formally recognized as a global issue and that the UN Center for Human Settlements was established. Moreover, in habitat II in 1996 important matters were discussed such as the role of global authorities and the strong position of urban areas in the global growth and well-being. The positive effects of Habitat III are yet to be reviewed and examined however it is certain that the UNCHSUD has helped the member states to further understand the impact of urban inequalities.

### **UN Millennium Development Goals**

The UN Millennium Development Goals are 8 international goals that work in co-operation with the UN Sustainable Development Goals to make an impact on the alarming global problems. The Millennium Goals cover a variety of problems with the most important for the topic of urban inequality being goal no.1 that covers the issue of extreme poverty and hunger by reviewing the difficulties in employment rate and labor market and by helping people that have an income of less than 1.25\$ a day and no.8<sup>29</sup> which states the importance of global partnership for development in aspects of trading and financial systems and taking national and international measures.

### **UN Sustainable Development Goals**

#### **Sustainable Development Goal 10: Reduce Inequalities**

In 2015 the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, voted upon the sustainable development goals and more specifically upon goal no.10 which aims to reduce inequality within and among countries by the year 2030. The goal emphasizes on all aspects of inequalities such as sex, race, ethnicity, and religious inequalities but it also focuses on income inequalities and economic inequalities among the residents of each country.

SDG no.10 also examines the ethnic minorities that are often being placed in communities and areas of low socio-economic status and it also makes references to the phenomenon of globalization which later brings issues of migration, disposition and dispossession and enlarges the problem of marginalized areas and social groups.

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<sup>29</sup> United Nations. (n.d.). United Nations Millennium Development Goals. United Nations.from <https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml>

What is more, among all the targets that this goal has placed for the UN members, it highlights the necessity to have universal, economic, social and political inclusion especially since the COVID-19 outbreak and with target 10.3 it endorses the equal opportunities for all humans of all different economic and race background. In combination with the rest SDGs and the MDGs it is a goal that keeps the UN alarmed about the issue of inequality among the different urban areas.

### Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Another SDG goal that was voted among all the others in the goal no.11 which highlights the importance of creating cities and human settlements that are distinguished by sustainability, safety and resilience. The goal no.11 generally aims to cover social, economic, and environmental issues and it is divided in “outcome targets” and in “means of achieving” targets. Concerning the “outcome targets”, even though all the sub targets interrelate with the issue of urban inequalities among the MEDCs and LEDCs it is important to examine the targets 11.2 and 11.3 which focus on the necessity of creating transport systems that are available for everyone and that are considered safe, affordable, and sustainable and on the positive impact that inclusive and sustainable urbanization can have.

Furthermore, they state that it is of vital importance to have the capability for inclusive, sustainable, and integrated planning and management of human settlements in all nations. Also, the “means of achieving targets” emphasize on supporting national and regional developing planning to mitigate social and economic inequalities among rural, metropolitan, and urban areas and on encouraging the construction of sustainable and resilient structures using local materials in the LEDCs, particularly by providing financial and technical help. The goal no. 11 has an important role in the aspect of urban inequalities as it works as the indicator that urban developments need to be addressed and closely inspected.

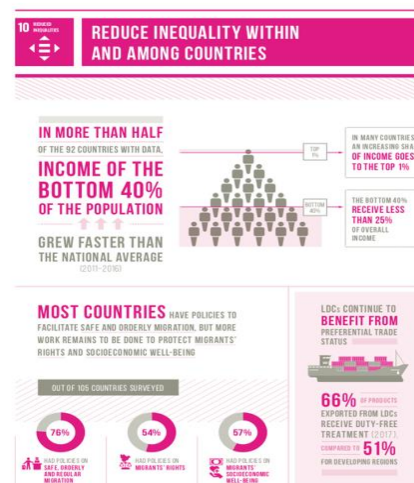


Figure 6: SDG 10



Figure 7: SDG 11

Figure 6: “SDG 10: Reduce Inequality within and among Countries: World Bank Group.” Olc.worldbank.org, <https://olc.worldbank.org/content/sdg-10-reduce-inequality-within-and-among-countries>.

Figure 7: Sustainable Development Goal 11.Png - Wikimedia Commons. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sustainable\\_Development\\_Goal\\_11.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sustainable_Development_Goal_11.png)

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

### Urban Planning

Urban planning can be considered an effective way for cities to make an impact and manage to make the gap between different urban areas shorter. Urban planning is a method that policy makers and designers use as it covers engineering, architectural, social, and political matters and focuses on improving physical forms, economic functions, and social impact. Urban planning is not considered an easy procedure as it focuses on both taking advantage of open land and revitalizing the already existing parts of cities. In order to achieve that, experts need to follow the necessary data collection process and to design and follow strategies that will also include public consultation. Moreover, to achieve all these urban planning needs, the necessary technology and geographic systems (GIS) will gather all the important information about the improvements that need to be made. It is a fact that urban planning can be considered one of the most effective solutions as it covers numerous city elements. Pre-existing land, road systems, transportation and mobilization, infrastructure, economic development, and communal spaces are some of the categories.

Because of the many city-life settlements that urban planning covers, it has been divided into smaller categories. The categories that urban planners and policy makers need to take into consideration for the problem of urban inequalities are strategic urban planning, a category that focuses on setting the necessary goals for development; land-use planning, which mostly concerns legislation, policies, and adopting planning instruments; and urban revitalization, which mainly aims at improving urban areas that are in a state of decline. Lastly, a category that needs to be taken into consideration is economic development. This is a section that identifies areas of economic growth to gain better financial prosperity within the city by encouraging strong companies to move their offices there. All the aforementioned categories will have a positive effect, and this has been proven by the previous implementations by countries such as Brazil and the Netherlands, and by organizations such as the Regional Plan Association and the INTA. However, it is a solution that needs financial and economic support as technological help is needed.

### Create a strong data collection network

It goes without saying that to tackle the inequalities that arise from the economic stability of each urban area, it is important to first collect all the necessary data from each area. The necessary collection of data can also help governments to further realize in what ways urban planning will be implemented. Therefore, it is of vital importance for each country to create organizations and associations that will be in charge of collecting information and tracking which aspects of every urban area need improvement. This is something that is already being implemented by some organizations such as the Regional Plan Association. However, this should be expanded to a global level in order to closely speculate how economic and social

inequalities develop in every country. Besides the necessity to create special organizations whose goal will be to inspect urban growth, there are already some associations that have already helped and can help even more with adequate investment. The World Bank group gets involved with a variety of global issues and has already conducted surveys to analyze the problem of poverty in the last few decades. Also, the OECD, The Department for Economic and Social Affairs and the Economic and Social Council are always on the lookout for any sudden shift in urban development and growth. The creation of a strong data collection network that will be available for specialists and will give them access to constantly keep it updated will drastically help all organizations and treaties to further understand the issue and move faster towards its solution. Thus, countries from all over the world will be updated about the situation, and all the different treaties will be able to analyze the data.

### **Subsidies and financial support**

All the possible solutions already mentioned cannot be implemented without adequate financial support. On a local and national scale, governments are encouraged to invest in important issues that relate to urban inequalities and provide higher national investment. They can also find payment methods for urban residents in less economically developed urban areas so that affordability is increased. To understand the importance of adequate financial support, the World Health Organization provided research that showed that clear drinking water for city dwellers would cost about \$141 billion in five years,<sup>30</sup> while the current situation of not sanitized water in some urban areas costs about ten times more, and it also impacts the residents' well-being. Global organizations whose purpose is to provide financial help to countries and people in need are expected to invest in this aspect of inequality, with some examples being the World Bank, but also the EU can provide grants, loans, and equity as forms of financial assistance.

### **Recognition and support of informal workers**

On a global scale, more than half of the total urban workforce consists of informal workers. These workers offer prosperity in the cities, but they do not receive the economic and social recognition that they deserve. Thus, it is of great importance to not only invest in formal sector productivity and to recognize the efforts of informal workers and let them access public spaces, safety, and services. Support for these people will not only provide cities with economic resilience, but will also create an environment of acceptance and safety in urban areas. agencies could be properly informed by the governments and provide city funds to these people, thus easing the problem of urban inequalities.

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<sup>30</sup> Weston, M., & King, R. (2021, October 19). *7 major transformations to solve urban inequality*. World Resources Institute. from <https://www.wri.org/insights/transformations-to-solve-urban-inequality>

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