

Introduction: Malthus across nations*

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The reception and dissemination of the works of a major author requires a complex and multifaceted analysis. To various degrees, it always involves the reactions by different groups of actors – experts in the field or laymen – in specific historical and intellectual contexts and with particular theoretical, political and moral concerns. This is all the more true when these works cross borders and spread in different environments from that prevailing in their home country. As time goes by, whether in the home country or abroad, these works have to face quite a few more or less faithful interpretations and are susceptible, in the end, to be read or used in a way far removed from the original intentions of their author.

The case of Thomas Robert Malthus's writings is a perfect illustration of the vagaries of reception, especially during the heyday of the controversies they raised, that is, prior to the First World War. Primarily known for his ideas on population in conjunction with an ethically serious set of strictures for everyday life, Malthus could see his approach misunderstood and distorted during his lifetime and, had he lived longer, he would also have seen it mixed with social Darwinism, neo-Malthusianism and even eugenics. How could this happen? Among Malthus's ideas, which ones were adopted and developed, distorted or left aside, and in which contexts? To provide some answers to these questions, the chapters collected here study some significant aspects of the reception of Malthus prior to the Great War in various intellectual and historical contexts: in their home country, of course, but mainly in

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Continental Europe (French- and German-speaking countries, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Russia), America (United States, Brazil and Spanish-speaking Latin America) and Japan. Malthus's writings, published two centuries ago, rarely ceased to be referred to among economists and politicians during this period – and even after, as the case of John Maynard Keynes eloquently shows. Moreover, nowadays, some of Malthus's ideas on poverty have reappeared in political discourses all over the world in more or less hidden and radical ways. This is the reason why an assessment of the reception of Malthus's works in different countries is not only a fascinating piece of comparative analysis in the history of economic thought, but also, in many aspects, a contribution to the understanding of current debates.

I.1 MALTHUS IN CONTEXTS

I.1.1 Lags in Translations

When studying the international reception of Malthus's writings,¹ one of the first questions to examine is the availability of the works in the selected countries. This question, of course, is not so important in the United States of America, except perhaps at the beginning of our period, when intellectual exchanges were still not so easy between Britain and its former colonies.² But the problem is more complex in the other countries. In those contexts, especially at the beginning of our period, the English language was much less widespread than it is today,

¹ It is perhaps useful to remind the reader of the publication dates of the main works referred to in the following chapters. *An Essay on the Principle of Population* was first published in 1798, and had five subsequent revised editions in 1803, 1806, 1807, 1817 and 1826. The first edition of the *Principles of Political Economy* was published in 1820 and the second, revised, was posthumously published in 1836. The *Definitions in Political Economy* were published in 1827. As for the pamphlets on rent and the Corn Laws published in the 1810s, they are *Observations on the Effects of the Corn Laws and of a Rise or Fall in the Price of Corn on the Agriculture and General Wealth of the Country* (1814), *The Grounds of an Opinion on the Policy of Restricting the Importation of Foreign Corn, intended as an Appendix to 'Observations on the Corn Laws'* (1815) and *An Inquiry into the Nature and Progress of Rent, and the Principles by which it is Regulated* (1815).

² For example, the unique North American edition of the *Essay on the Principle of Population* was published in 1809 and was based on the third English edition, 1806, while the fourth had been published in 1807.

and only relatively few people could read Malthus in the original versions, provided they could get a copy of them: hence the role played by translations, especially those into French, which was understood and used in intellectual circles across Continental Europe.

As a matter of fact, the French translations of Malthus's main works were the first to be published. Extensive excerpts of the *Essay on the Principle of Population*, based on the second English edition of 1803, were published in 1805 in Geneva, and an almost complete translation was published in 1809 in Paris and Geneva, based on the fourth English edition of 1807. Finally, a complete translation, from the fifth English edition of 1817, was printed in 1823 and had a remarkable number of editions (1830, 1836, 1841, 1845 and 1852) with different publishers in Paris, Geneva and Brussels. As for the first French edition of Malthus's *Principles of Political Economy*, it was published in the same year as the English original, 1820.³ The second English edition, 1836, was translated in 1846, together with that of the 1827 *Definitions in Political Economy* – both works being published in the same volume.

The case of the French-speaking countries is certainly exceptional. It is true that in Germany, during our period, an abridged translation of the *Essay* was published in 1807, but a complete edition had to wait until 1879, and a German edition of the *Principles* was only published in 1910 – with the exception of an excerpt of it in 1821. Some other works – the three pamphlets on agriculture and rent published by Malthus in 1814 and 1815, never translated into French – were published in German in 1896. In other non-English-speaking countries, the picture is not fundamentally different. While in Spain, some excerpts, based (loosely) on the Genevan 1805 partial publication of the *Essay*, were translated as early as 1808, and the translation of the two first chapters (and a few lines of the third) from the 1809 French edition in 1814, a comprehensive edition had to wait until 1846, and was based on the 1845 French text. No other works were translated during our period – a Spanish version of the *Principles* was only published in 1951 in Mexico. In Italy, the order of the publications was, so to speak, reversed: translations of the *Principles* and *Definitions* were published first but only in 1854, the pamphlet on rent was translated in 1859, and the *Essay* in 1868 – an edition probably based on the latest French edition, as the presence of Malthus's Appendix, presented as 'Book V' and split into three chapters, seems to indicate. In Russia, a translation of the *Essay*, based on the 1845 French edition, was published in 1868. Three essays on agriculture and rent (the

³ A translation of unsatisfactory quality, according to Malthus himself.

same as in the 1896 German edition) were translated in 1908 – there was no Russian translation of the *Principles*. Finally, there were no translations of Malthus's works into Portuguese during our period: some of them were only published at the beginning of the 1980s. The case of Japan is more complex. While the contact with Malthus's works came much later than in the other countries, many Japanese editions were published from 1923 onwards: prior to the First World War, only the translation of the 1895 *Parallel Chapters from the first and second editions of An Essay on the Principle of Population* was published in 1910.

All this does not mean, of course, that Malthus was unknown in these countries, Japan included, before translations were made. On the contrary, his name became famous quickly, and some of his ideas – more or less faithfully interpreted in each country, Britain being no exception – widely discussed. In this respect, as the following chapters show, the French editions and discussions played an important role on the Continent. Translations of the *Essay* were even made from the French versions: this is the case in Spain and Russia and probably in Italy where, moreover, the 1868 translation was followed, in the same volume, by that of Joseph Garnier's 1857 *Du principe de population* – with all the appendixes describing the state of the debates around Malthus, with a special accent on French authors.⁴

It is also interesting to note that, in the different countries outside Britain, the first edition of the *Essay* was virtually unknown at the beginning of our period, and was only translated in 1923 in Japan, 1966 in Spain, 1976 in Italy, 1977 in Germany and 1980 in France – this had the effect of partially concealing Malthus's theodicy.

I.1.2 A Process of Selection

A process of reception is also a process of selection: some works are privileged, some others left out. The following chapters clearly show that, in this selection, the *Essay* came first and foremost. The *Principles* came second, and some pamphlets on agriculture and rent third, together with the *Definitions*. Malthus's other writings were basically ignored. In terms

⁴ On the title page of the book, it is Garnier's summary content which is written, not Malthus's, together with this epigraph, printed in French – 'Il dépend de l'homme que l'accroissement de la population amène le Progrès ou la misère' ('It depends on man that the growth of population brings Progress or destitution') – which also appears on the title page of the French edition of Garnier's book. Joseph Garnier was one of the main French followers of Malthus.

of discussions, the *Essay* captured almost all the attention in the debates, leaving relatively little space (or no space at all, as in Spain for example) to the *Principles*, and a still narrower space to the writings on rent and the *Definitions* – an exception being Portugal, where the *Definitions* were given much more weight than elsewhere.

This relative lack of interest abroad for Malthus's economic theory is certainly due to the intellectual impact of Jean-Baptiste Say, whose *Traité d'économie politique* was influential on the Continent,⁵ and whose *Lettres à M. Malthus sur différents sujets d'économie politique, notamment sur les causes de la stagnation générale du commerce*, 1820, were also widespread: they were published in English and in German as early as 1821 and even had different versions in Spanish in 1820, 1821 and 1827. The structure of the *Principles* was also judged defective by many commentators. In 1821, Charles Robert Prinsep, the British translator of Say's *Traité*, noted in the 'Advertisement' to his edition that, before Say, 'little has been done towards the better organization of the science since the days of Smith and Stewart', and that Ricardo's and Malthus's attempts were unsatisfactory. 'The later Essay of Malthus',⁶ he wrote,

is equally deficient in arrangement, as well as vague and inconclusive: and he seems so sensible himself of these failings, that he has offered it rather as a commentary than a text, – a refutation of the opinions of others, than a clear exposition of his own, or a digested classification of approved and admitted principles: plainly intimating, that the science is not yet far enough advanced to be regularly marshalled; and leaving the public to hope for a more complete view of the whole, at some future indefinite period. (Prinsep 1821, vi)

Opinions were similar abroad, especially in France. It is thus not surprising that the discussions over the *Principles* remained relatively marginal and confined to political economists or certain intellectual circles. Malthus's theory of rent was mentioned, but some authors, while acknowledging Malthus's priority in the field, nevertheless found that Ricardo's statement of it was clearer and more rigorous. Malthus's position on the possibility of general gluts was also examined. Liberal

⁵ And not only in Continental Europe: a translation, by C.R. Prinsep, of his *Traité d'économie politique* was published in Boston and London in 1821 and had many editions in the United States – Thomas Jefferson corresponded with Say and himself translated or revised the translation of some works by Antoine Louis Claude Destutt de Tracy, whose developments go in the same direction.

⁶ Prinsep obviously refers here to Malthus's *Principles* published one year before, and not to the *Essay* on population.

thinkers rejected it because Say's law of markets was at stake, and they could not understand how such a fundamental tenet of the new science could be called into question. Say himself tried to defend his principle against the attacks of Malthus and Jean-Charles Léonard Simonde de Sismondi and it is interesting to note how he came to qualify his views in such a way as to transform it, as Malthus noted, into a tautological statement. As for Malthus's general analytical framework, based on the interaction of supply and demand, it was certainly more developed and systematic in Say. Malthus's emphasis on the limits to the application of general principles in political economy was diversely received and sometimes thought to be contradictory with his own stress on the general principle of population.

A minority of authors, however, also influenced by Sismondi, tried to use Malthus's objections to the law of markets – as well as, sometimes, his theory of rent – to question the legitimacy of the liberal socio-political order based on free competition and capital accumulation in manufactures and industry. Pointing out the plague of economic crises and pauperism, they proposed to reshape the economic system along different lines, for example conferring a new priority to agriculture over manufactures and industry. This was the view of some moderate reformers, but also, in a more moral and radical way, of some conservative authors, nostalgic of the ancient orders, or, in Catholic countries, some traditionalist currents of thought who tried to develop a 'Christian political economy'.⁷ But a radical reshaping of society was also proposed, in a more progressive way, by different associationist or socialist plans for a new, democratic and more efficient society. Finally, in some countries (Germany in particular), Malthus's ideas gave rise to under-consumptionist theories of crises.

In all these discussions, to various degrees depending on the context, Malthus's seemingly 'conservative' views on society, and especially the necessity of a class of unproductive consumers, were criticised by authors from all quarters and judged flawed.

The fate of the *Essay on the Principle of Population* was totally different and it would be difficult to overstate the importance of the book: it attracted almost all the attention of Malthus's commentators – far beyond that devoted to the *Principles* – whether in its original versions or in translations, translated in its entirety or in abridged forms, really read

⁷ In the Catholic countries, the phrase 'Christian political economy' had a different meaning from that accurately analysed by Waterman (1991) in the British case.

or only known by hearsay through favourable or hostile commentators. Perhaps because the subject of population not only broached a recurrent and important point of economic policy but also prevailing religious beliefs, mores and the intimate life of families, it was received with passion and provoked irrational reactions. The number of misunderstandings or distorted interpretations and the lasting nefarious reputation of the author are astonishing, to a degree probably rarely reached in the reception of a work, whatever the country – was not Malthus accused of encouraging infanticide, forced sterilisation, depravity and vice? The celebrated image of ‘nature’s mighty feast’, moreover, significantly contributed everywhere to Malthus’s cold, pitiless and inhumane picture. As Joseph Garnier wrote, not only was Malthus not really known and his ‘true thought’ ignored: ‘what has eventually been created in public opinion is a Malthus who did not exist, a fantastic Malthus, to whom the strangest propositions have been attributed and at whom gratuitous reproaches or vehement imprecations were levelled’ (Garnier 1853, 383). Echoes of the discussions over the principle of population and the real or imagined Malthus were so pervasive as to find space in the daily press or even in novels or short stories – sometimes written by the major novelists of the time – as the chapters on France, Spain, Germany, Russia and Japan in this volume show.

Many aspects of the views stated in the *Essay* were discussed, first and foremost, the celebrated two ratios – but they were not taken too seriously by commentators, who very often considered them as an inappropriate and clumsy way of stating the principle of population. Authors also reacted in different ways, owing to the diverse national situations: while discussion of the principle of population was judged topical in the most advanced countries of the time, in those countries such as Spain, Russia, Latin America or the United States, where uncultivated land was abundant, Malthus’s principle was thought to be only relevant, if at all, in a very distant future. The famous checks were also questioned – the ‘moral restraint’ was in general judged unrealistic and inefficient – and so too were certain statements such as the doubling of the population every 25 years (based on the example of the United States). The respective parts played by emigration and colonisation were put in due perspective in the different countries, and the case of slavery extensively discussed in some of them (in the United States in particular). Malthus’s underestimation of the role of technical progress in agriculture was also generally denounced, as well as that of the potential change of behaviour of people through education and social progress. The controversies over the *Essay* also brought about an evolution of economic theory as regards the labour market in general and the determination of

wages in particular (see Britain and Germany) and a change of perspective on population itself, which became one economic variable among others within the general demand and supply framework, the agents making use of economic calculation in order to determine the size of their families (France).

It must finally be noted that some critics of Say's law did not deal with the subject of economic crises independently of the 'principle of population' – contrary to what most liberals did. The principle, they stated, was not an explanation of pauperism. Poverty and crises were linked and resulted from a faulty organisation of the economic system. In so doing, they often (but not always) rejected Malthus's view on population and, implicitly or not, contrasted two Malthuses – the good author of some critical points developed in the *Principles*, and the bad Malthus of the *Essay*, thus reversing the terms of the opposition made by liberal economists. Alternatively, some stressed the fact that the principle was not a 'natural law' but instead a social and historical law only valid for a free market, capitalist society. Some others, finally, admitted that the principle could also be a threat for a socialist society and that neo-Malthusian policies had to be implemented, both to establish and to maintain such a social organisation.

One major aspect of Malthus's thought, however, was neglected almost everywhere: its theological components – even if, in Italy and Belgium, some optimistic interpretations of the principle of population unknowingly revived it. This is probably due to the fact that this fundamental aspect of Malthus's approach was less obvious in the second and subsequent editions of the *Essay*, and that the 1798 edition had been largely unknown outside Britain or else dismissed as a purely polemical, non-scientific pamphlet – religion being considered as no part of 'science'. Moreover, the reception of his work outside Britain largely occurred in very different religious environments, and this probably shaped the way that readers responded to this element of the *Essay*. Catholic authors, for example, reacted against the 'married priest', and even socialists were hostile to this 'gloomy Protestant of dismal England'. This opposition, together with Malthus's reputation as a utilitarian, prevented many from taking seriously – or even from noticing – his theological views, and certainly was not conducive to an accurate understanding of his contributions.⁸

⁸ Certain recent literature provides a fascinating, more accurate picture of Malthus. See for example Waterman (1991), Winch (1987, 1992, 1996) and Cremaschi (2014).

But, in the end, the above-mentioned points are insufficient to explain the huge worldwide impact of the *Essay*. To reduce the substance of the book to the claim – even when supported by a wealth of historical and geographical evidence – that population is limited by the means of subsistence while at the same time tending to exceed this constraint, is to downplay its novelty and significance. Once Malthus had attached his name to the population principle, Donald Winch wrote (1996, 233), ‘a licence existed to hunt for all those pre-Malthusian writings that contained anticipations of the principle’. And what was found in some countries was not only ‘anticipations’, but full statements – with the exception of the famous ratios, Malthus’s ‘trademark’. As Samuel Taylor Coleridge put it, probably around 1804, in his marginalia to the second edition of the *Essay*:

If by the main Principle the Author means both *the Fact* (i.e., that Population unrestrained would infinitely outrun Food) and the Deduction from the Fact, i.e., that the human race is *therefore not* indefinitely improvable, a popgun would batter down this Impregnable Fortress. If only the First be meant, the assertion is quite nugatory – in the former case vapouring, in the latter a vapour ... Merciful God! are we now to have a Quarto to teach us, that great misery and great vice arise from Poverty and that there must be Poverty in its worst shapes, wherever there are more mouths than Loaves, and more Heads than Brains! (in Potter 1936, 1061 and 1062)

Admittedly, Coleridge was a critic of Malthus. But, in a different way, a similar point was raised by a Malthusian, Gustave de Molinari, when he asked: ‘So what was there in his [Malthus’s] book to excite to the highest degree the noisy rage of some and to be adopted as a kind of Gospel by others?’ (Molinari 1885, x). This could not be the principle itself in its simplest expression. Its importance lies in fact in a change of perspective in ethics and morals: it promoted an ethics of individual responsibility. As Molinari emphasised:

This is the ultimate theory of *self-government*. Man is free and master of his destiny, but he is by the same token responsible for his actions. If he does not fulfil all the obligations implied by self-government, if he does not put a brake on his passions and vices, he and the human beings who depend on him must endure the consequences of his careless and immoral behaviour. He has no right to pass off these consequences onto others. (Molinari 1885, xxvii–xxviii)

Read in this perspective, the *Essay* became highly polemical and subject to all controversy, because it was a decisive challenge to existing intellectual frameworks in morals and politics. Hence the endless debates

and reactions in different countries. The book, while ‘based on a simple idea, easy to understand and to remember’, was in fact encouraging ‘man’s bad inclinations: egoism, hardness, indifference to the ills of his fellow men’, Jérôme-Adolphe Blanqui noted in 1837, witnessing the rapid changes in mentalities. ‘The principles on which it is based ... tend so quickly to imbue institutions that, soon, it will be only possible to record their victories instead of questioning their value’ (Blanqui 1837, II, 152). *Nolens volens*, the famous image of ‘nature’s mighty feast’ stayed at the centre of things. It only appeared, it is true, in the 1803 edition of the *Essay* and was deleted by Malthus in the subsequent versions: ‘but it expresses with a vigorous truth the spirit of his doctrine, and it was the doctrine, rather than the language, that ought to have been changed’ (Blanqui 1837, II, 153n).

Finally, as is obvious, it must be noted that the reception of Malthus did not occur in a vacuum in any of the nations examined here. International personal relationships and networks (liberal, Catholic, socialist, anarchist) were important for the diffusion of Malthus’s ideas and the debates over his work, through translations of papers or books, surveys and reviews and so on: multiple examples thereof will be found in the following chapters. A more complete analysis of these personal and social connections, however, is still to be done.

I.2 THE CHAPTERS

Much has already been written on the reception of Malthus in Britain. The first chapter, by Ryan Walter, focuses on one precise point: Malthus’s theological views, some of their immediate impact and the way in which British political economy got rid of them.

When Malthus’s *Essay* was published in 1798, British politics was still attempting to process the French Revolution and its implications for the possibility of political economy as a science of reform. In this setting, the anti-utopian character of Malthus’s brand of Protestant Enlightenment was embraced by important sections of his society, above all, by those Christian political economists who shared his preparedness to use natural theology as the architecture for political economy. The reception was colder from utilitarians such as James Mill, reforming Whigs at the *Edinburgh Review*, and, on the other side of politics, Romantics such as Robert Southey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. At a more general level, Malthus’s principle of population was widely absorbed, but also subjected to reformulation that removed its theological basis. This pattern was reinforced towards the close of the nineteenth century, as the new

economics of William Stanley Jevons and Alfred Marshall displaced the question of population and reduced Malthus to little more than a father-figure to invoke when reflecting on the discipline's history. In short, the story of Malthus in Britain tracks a broader process of secularisation.

On the other side of the Atlantic, Malthus's *Essay* also generated its share of controversies. As David Andrews states, the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 reflects the same Enlightenment ideals that led William Godwin in Great Britain and the Marquis de Condorcet in France to argue that it was possible to construct a new society conducive to the perfectibility of humanity. Malthus's *Essay* on population, written as a response to Godwin and Condorcet, may also be read as a rebuke to Americans who, believing that European poverty and misery were due to European institutions, sought to build a new society with a different structure that would provide freedom, equality and general prosperity. Malthus predicted, that is, that the American experiment was doomed to end in failure.

Americans in the nineteenth century responded to Malthus in various ways. The most aggressive critics were from nationalists, those who supported the programme, first put forward by Alexander Hamilton in 1791, of government action to promote the growth of manufacturing through tariffs, a national bank and provision of infrastructure, in order that the United States would become a world commercial and military power. Malthus implied that this project would lead to misery and vice. The nationalists argued that Malthus was fundamentally mistaken, for two main reasons: first, European inequality was the result of European social institutions; and second, Malthus misunderstood the relationship between increasing population and average productivity. Critics of Malthus such as Daniel Raymond, Alexander Everett and Henry Carey argued that productivity increases as population increases.

Defenders of slavery viewed Malthus as a symbol of the horrors of the so-called free labour system. George Fitzhugh, for example, argued that the material and emotional conditions were better for slaves than for wage workers because the slave owner had an interest in the well-being of the slave due to the nature of their ongoing relationship. Wage workers, on the other hand, could be exploited and discarded because the employers have no interest in workers who can be replaced.

The academic establishment in America remained committed to British classical political economy and to Malthus during the nineteenth century. It was not a matter of great concern since, according to the document itself, the *Essay* did not apply directly even though it would in the future.

In Continental Europe, the role of French-speaking countries in the reception of Malthus's works was material – Pierre Prévost, in Geneva, initiated the process in 1805. The circumstances and intellectual context in which Malthus's works were received there are first highlighted, and in particular some legacies from the Enlightenment: the conviction that France was undergoing a process of depopulation, the Herrenschwand model of the instable development of a modern economy based on manufactures, and Condorcet's optimistic view on the future of mankind. The complex history of the various editions of Malthus's works in the French language is then studied – marked, in the first half of the nineteenth century, by an exceptional number of editions of translations of the *Essay* and the translations of the two editions of the *Principles* – before analysing the reception of the works themselves. The reception of Malthus's *Principles* and *Definitions* is first examined: direct exchanges between Malthus and Say, with Sismondi in the shadow, are to be noted – it led Say to significantly amend the formulation of his law of markets – and so are, in a different perspective inspired by Herrenschwand and Sismondi, the critical comments of Malthus's first translator of the *Principles*, Francisco Solano Constâncio. As for the liberal economists, their evaluation of the *Principles* was, to say the least, lukewarm, if only because Say's law was challenged.

While these discussions remained confined to specialised literature, the *Essay*, by contrast, provoked huge controversies over pauperism, morals and the social question. The reception by the liberal economists was both critical and positive: the principle, they stressed, was not new, stated in a clumsy way, and needed some reformulations, especially in the more general context of economic theory. But the moral and political message it conveys was thought to be essential: an ethics of personal responsibility. The positions of some economists, however, evolved during the period: while, at the beginning, the *Essay* seemed topical because the spectre of overpopulation had replaced the eighteenth-century fear of depopulation, the spectre of depopulation came back to haunt certain economists and politicians, calling into question the role of France in the world. As for the critics of liberal political economy, be they conservative or socialists, they massively rejected Malthus's principle as an explanation of pauperism and blamed instead the economic system itself for being responsible for crises and poverty. The chapter concludes with the evolution of the discussions towards the end of the period, when Malthus's name came to be associated with social Darwinism, neo-Malthusianism and some changing views on population, which shifted the emphasis from its quantity to its quality. An appendix gives a few

examples of how the controversies over the *Essay* found an echo in the works written by the most celebrated novelists of the time.

The chapter on France is followed by an account, by Christian Gehrke, of the reception of Malthus's contributions in Germany and Austria. The focus is mainly on the debates triggered by his *Essay* on population, which strongly influenced the discourse on social and economic policy in Germany. In addition, the chapter also takes a closer look at the reception of Malthus's theory of overproduction and crises. The latter was received favourably by some influential authors, such as Karl-Heinrich Rau, Johann-Carl Rodbertus and Wilhelm Roscher, but rejected by the great majority of the German-speaking economists. Malthus's *Essay* quickly received attention in the public discourse already in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, with followers and opponents among both liberal economists and protectionists. While no impact of Malthus's writings on Friedrich Benedikt Wilhelm Hermann's theoretical contributions can be discerned, Johann-Heinrich von Thünen's social policy proposals, and in particular his concept of the 'natural wage', appear to have been strongly influenced by his reading of Malthus's *Essay*.

Turning to the second half of the nineteenth century, the chapter then reviews the controversial debates about Malthus's *Essay* among socialists and Marxists in the German-speaking countries. It contrasts the views on Malthus's population theory of the early socialists and state socialists, like Wilhelm Weitling and Johann-Carl Rodbertus, with those of Ferdinand Lassalle, Eugen Dühring, Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx as well as with the positions of 'Socialist Darwinists' like Friedrich Albert Lange and Ludwig Büchner. With regard to these authors, the focus is mainly on their differing assessments of the relationship between Malthusianism and Darwinism. The chapter then turns to the contributions of some of Marx's and Engels's followers, most notably Karl Kautsky and Eduard Bernstein, and to their debates with the so-called 'Socialists of the chair' and with adherents of the German Historical School. Next, the chapter looks at various contributions from the last two decades before the Great War, by authors such as Franz Oppenheimer, Julius Wolf and others, in which the Malthusian population theory was criticised against the background of the newly emerging fact of declining birth rates. The final section studies the impact of Malthus's contributions on the first-generation Austrian economists, that is, Carl Menger, Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk and Friedrich Wieser, and briefly discusses Knut Wicksell's neo-Malthusianism.

The chapter on Italy, by Daniela Donnini Macchiò and Roberto Romani, shows how Malthus played a remarkable role in the intellectual history of the peninsula, chiefly through French translations, from the end of

Napoleonic rule to the First World War. The chapter first deals with the reception of Malthus's political economy. Two facets of it were discussed by Italians: the underconsumptionist theory of crises and rent theory. Basically, Malthus's pessimistic perspective was dismissed in favour of Say's, at a time when Italian liberals were eagerly promoting industrialisation and free trade. The chapter then turns to the principle of population. After surveying the debate before 1848, the authors show that in the 1850s Malthus's principle was made 'progressive' by interpreting it as a stimulus to work and enterprise. As for Catholic thinkers, they initially welcomed the principle of population but rejected it from the 1850s onwards. The methodological approaches of Angelo Messedaglia and Vilfredo Pareto to Malthus's principle are also discussed. The authors then examine how Malthus's law combined with Darwinism and socialism at the end of the century. Finally, the appeal to the law made by neo-Malthusians is dealt with.

As Javier San Julián Arrupe shows in his chapter, the name of Malthus was well known in nineteenth-century Spain. He was the first political economist, Spanish economists claimed, to scientifically deal with the subject of population, but they thought that his principles could not be applied to Spain, a country slightly populated with large areas of available arable land. While Malthus's *Essay* on population was not translated until the middle of the century, his theory permeated the Spanish culture and references in favour of or against it are to be found in a great number of publications. Malthus's other economic contributions, his *Principles* in particular, remained almost unknown outside of a small group of economists. Some of them praised the theory of land rent but, in an environment where J.-B. Say's theories were intellectually dominant, virtually none endorsed Malthus's views on underconsumption. As for the dissemination of Malthus in Spanish Latin America, it is still to be analysed in depth. But upon a first investigation, the evidence shows that the process of the reception of Malthus in the subcontinent was similar to that of Spain. His ideas on population were known among the cultured elite, and Latin American economists appreciated his contributions. However, they did not think that they were relevant for the vast and scarcely populated new republics – Malthus's other writings seemingly having had no echo at all.

The following chapter, by José Luís Cardoso and Alexandre Mendes Cunha, deals with the diversity of readings and appropriations of the work of Thomas Robert Malthus in Portugal and Brazil. Special attention is given to the manner in which the most significant of his works have been read, discussed and used by Portuguese and Brazilian authors who lived during Malthus's lifetime. Three cases of reception are considered.

The first concerns the comments by José da Silva Lisboa to the *Essay* (1798 and 1803), stressing the relation between population growth and available means of subsistence. The second case discusses the critical analysis of Francisco Solano Constâncio of Malthus's *Principles* (1820) in the context of the discussion of J.-B. Say's law of markets and of the occurrence of crises of overproduction. The third relates to the use by José Ferreira Borges of Malthus's *Definitions* (1827) and his search for a systematisation of relevant concepts. This chapter also includes a variety of examples of the dissemination of Malthus among Portuguese-speaking authors, with impact on political debate related to demographic and social issues.

The chapter on Russia, by Maxim Markov and Denis Melnik, first describes Malthus's personal encounters with Russia on a total of three occasions: when he stayed in Saint Petersburg while returning from his Scandinavian tour in 1799, when he was elected a foreign fellow of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in 1826, and when he was given an honorary professorship at the Imperial Saint Petersburg University in 1830. It points out that these events did not have any lasting influence beyond inspiring a chapter on Russia in the *Essay*. After describing the first Russian translation of the *Essay* from the French 1845 edition, which was published in 1868, the chapter divides the reception of Malthus in Russia into three periods: from the 1800s to the 1830s, the 1840s, and from the 1850s to the 1910s. Malthus was known in Russia by the 1830s not only for his ideas on population but also for his economic writings such as his *Principles* and *Definitions* that were introduced in lectures and textbooks on the subject of political economy at universities. In the 1840s Russian conservatives focused on the revolutionary aspect of the Malthusian doctrine while radicals criticised Malthus's conservatism. From the 1850s to the 1910s there were debates between Russian Marxists and Narodniks (Populists), such as Nikolay Chernyshevsky and Georgy Plekhanov, over the 'Malthusian law', the 'agrarian question' and overpopulation. Malthus the demographer at last became directly relevant to Russia's situation: agrarian problems and rapid population growth confronted Russia with her own Malthusian trap – at least that was the widely held conviction that took root across the political spectrum. This chapter also suggests that the reception of Malthus in Russia may offer a clue to distinguishing trends in Russian intellectual history and comparing this history with that of other nations.

The last chapter, by Masashi Izumo and Hiromi Morishita, traces the outline of the reception and diffusion of Malthus's economic thought in Japan from the 1870s to the 1910s, and presents the earlier political and economic inquiries undertaken from the seventeenth to the nineteenth

centuries that form the background to the widespread acceptance of his theory of population. It points out that while the first complete translations of his *Essay* on population and *Principles* did not appear in Japan until 1923 and 1943, Malthus's theory of population had become widely known by the end of the nineteenth century through various types of lectures, translations, journals, newspapers, textbooks and literary works. After describing the Malthus who appears in Japanese literary works, it demonstrates that political and popular novels also played a vital role in spreading Malthus's theory of population throughout society, and in particular among the lay public. It then shows that both the advocates of migration and expansion who attempted to use Malthus's theory of population and the socialists who were against Malthus shared a common misunderstanding of Malthus's proposition of the geometric growth of the population as a proposition concerning real population growth trends, and examines how the combination of this theoretical approach and the notion of 'population is power' resulted in the birth of imperialistic expansionism. This chapter also notes that it was Fukuda Tokuzō, Kawakami Hajime and Takata Yasuma who corrected the misunderstanding of Malthus's population theory and opened the way for research aimed at revealing the significance and limitations of Malthusian population theory, and discusses their role in such controversies as the debate between Marxists and Malthusians over the population question and the nature of the Japanese population problem and the measures to be undertaken to address it. It also suggests that these problematic issues were taken up by later generations of scholars and greatly contributed to the development of economics, demographics and social policy in Japan.

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