

1 Social Justice

A Historical Introduction

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Social justice is a subject that in contemporary Europe is understood primarily by its absence. Whichever way one might define it – in terms of the material equality of living standards, the rights of specific social groups, the policies of public authorities, or the wider ethos of society – the perceived deficit in social justice is a pervasive element of debate in early twenty-first-century Europe. The wealth of the new global rich, the stark disparities in access to the basic securities of life between European citizens and migrant communities, and the prevalence of gendered and racial inequalities within supposedly egalitarian European societies have all contributed to the contemporary preoccupation with social inequality. Most notably, perhaps, after a period of relative marginalisation during the 1990s and 2000s, questions around material inequality have been catapulted back onto the political agenda. This is evident in the success of a range of publications – most prominently Thomas Piketty’s *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* – that have encouraged a debate about the prevalence of social inequality as well as contributing to broader public discontent surrounding the markers of wealth and poverty.¹ But it is also apparent in the priority accorded to social justice among groups that a decade ago would have dismissed such discussions as an absurd irrelevance. From the Davos World Economic Forum to the party manifestos of the British Conservatives, references to social justice have re-entered the mainstream of political vocabulary.

This renewed discussion of social justice is part of a larger story of change taking place in contemporary Europe, and can be seen as one of several distinctive shifts that marked the end of the twentieth century.² But what is less new in this debate is the tendency to refer to social justice in terms of its

¹ T. Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA, 2014). For other examples of this genre, see, e.g., A. B. Atkinson, *Inequality: What Can Be Done?* (Cambridge, MA, 2015), and B. Milanovic, *Global Inequality: A New Approach for the Age of Globalization* (Cambridge, MA, 2016). For a forceful exploration of the implications of inequality on life chances, see G. Therborn, *The Killing Fields of Inequality* (Cambridge, 2013).

² On the notion that the twentieth century has ended, see M. Conway, ‘The Crisis of European History’ (2020) at <https://europedebate.hypotheses.org/142>.

2 *Martin Conway and Camilo Erlichman*

absence. In many ways, this has always been so. Social justice is a subject that has rarely existed in the present tense. A few moments of revolutionary hyperbole aside, notably in the Soviet Union in the 1930s,³ it has generally been used in Europe in the past tense – as a lament for a world that has been lost – or in the future tense – as a goal to be achieved through incremental or radical change.⁴ Social justice has therefore always been measured in terms of the distance between an imperfect present and an ideal that resides somewhere else in time.

However, even when they are placed in this longer perspective, there remains something distinctive about the present-day debates. Concern about inequality is in part the consequence of the heightened visibility of differentials of wealth in many European societies;⁵ but it also reflects changes that have taken place in understandings of what constitutes a society of civic and moral justice. The emergence of new concepts of the social rights – both individual and collective – of groups defined by their gender, sexuality, culture, or race necessarily casts a stern eye on the societies of the recent past. Not just the flagrant forms of discrimination practised by a wide range of regimes in twentieth-century Europe, but the quieter, institutional inequality that characterised almost all areas of administration and policy-making across the entire modern project of state rule, reveal just how inadequate – or fundamentally wrong – were the understandings of social justice held until recently by rulers, social organisations, and many citizens.⁶

Demands that institutions and societies should acknowledge these failures have become part of contemporary political culture: through campaigns for restitution for historic acts of discrimination committed by governments and social institutions, or for the removal of statues and other public symbols of the crimes of the past.⁷ Each of these issues – and most powerfully the presence of victims bearing witness to the discrimination and suffering that they experienced – serves to deepen the divide between the present and the twentieth-century past. But it is not only attitudes that have changed. So too have the wider social and economic frameworks of European states within which demands for social justice are shaped. The shift away from an

³ S. Webb and B. Webb, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation?* (London, 1935).

⁴ The paradigmatic example of social justice as a goal to be achieved is the International Labour Organization's Philadelphia Declaration of 1944. On this, see A. Supiot, *L'esprit de Philadelphie: La justice sociale face au marché total* (Paris, 2010).

⁵ D. Dorling, *Inequality and the 1%* (London, 2014).

⁶ Much of this literature bears the imprint of Michel Foucault's work on the disciplining power of the state. See notably M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, 1977).

⁷ Among the many examples, one might cite the Black Lives Matter and the Rhodes Must Fall campaigns, as well as the prosecutions of members of the Catholic Church in a number of countries for acts of child abuse.

employment-oriented model of the economy, as well as the development of a new fabric of social relations defined more by market forces than by state policy, has reconfigured the structures within which people work and live.⁸ The European continent of the early twenty-first century is more unified than at any time since at least 1914, and yet it is also fractured within and across national boundaries by forms of economic and social fragility that find expression in protest movements, such as the *gilets jaunes* in France in 2018–19, and in the emergence of xenophobic mentalities that are emphatically products of the present rather than inheritances from the past.

These changes in understandings of social justice as well as in the wider social and political context have deprived social justice of what was for much of the twentieth century its most pervasive feature: namely, its historical narrative, built around the sense of European societies moving forward, primarily under the impetus of structures of beneficial rule, towards an ethos of equality and a reality of social inclusion. The sense of mourning for a lost ideal of social justice often voiced by the social-democratic left in Europe in recent years has its origins, especially among older generations, in an awareness that the campaigns, languages, and aspirations of the twentieth-century past no longer possess the same purchase in the much-changed landscapes of the present.⁹ For some, such as Eric Hobsbawm, by the early twenty-first century the languages and politics of social justice that his generation could recognise had seemingly exited Europe and migrated to other continents.¹⁰ For others, social justice has moved out of reach and collective imagination, as the opaque structures of governance of the European Union, the lack of democratic accountability of a transnational capitalism, and the concomitant hollowing out of the sovereignty of nation states have combined to suffocate a politics and language of social justice.¹¹ This pervasive loss of popular and national sovereignty and the consequent impotence of government – at any level – to construct an alternative model of society encourages more sectional and

⁸ For an early exploration of this shift away from an employment-oriented model of work, see the report for the European Commission by A. Supiot (ed.), *Au-delà de l'emploi: Transformations du travail et devenir du droit du travail en Europe* (Paris, 1999).

⁹ See, e.g., T. Judt, *Ill Fares the Land: A Treatise on our Present Discontents* (New York, 2010). For an account of how mourning has always been a prominent and mobilising feature of the political left, see E. Traverso, *Left-Wing Melancholia: Marxism, History, and Memory* (New York, 2017).

¹⁰ 'Today, ideologically, I feel most at home in Latin America because it remains the one part of the world where people still talk and conduct their politics in the old language, in the 19th- and 20th-century language of socialism, communism and Marxism.' Cf. 'Eric Hobsbawm: A Conversation about Marx, Student Riots, the New Left, and the Milibands', *The Guardian*, 16 Jan. 2011, www.theguardian.com/books/2011/jan/16/eric-hobsbawm-tristram-hunt-marx.

¹¹ See the manifold publications by Wolfgang Streeck that have popularised this sentiment, e.g., W. Streeck, *Gekaufte Zeit: Die vertagte Krise des demokratischen Kapitalismus* (Berlin, 2015).

4 *Martin Conway and Camilo Erlichman*

individualist attitudes in which the justice that can be imagined or campaigned for is anything but social.

This loss of the template of societal change marks a major change from the political culture of the twentieth century. Ever since the emergence of mass politics, a wide range of regimes and other social institutions had placed concepts of universal social justice at the centre of their ideologies and actions. In the ensuing competition between various political forces, no single group could claim exclusive ownership of notions of social justice.¹² The fascist and authoritarian rulers of the 1930s and 1940s, the Socialist regimes established after the Second World War in East-Central Europe, or the various forms of welfare democracy that emerged in Northern and Western Europe after 1945 all made their claims to the provision of social justice a major focus of their public rhetoric and also of their more private self-justifications. Social justice was a means of critiquing their opponents, but also of defining the better society they were seeking to bring into existence.¹³ That social justice had become deeply ingrained within what one might describe as Europe's competing hegemonic discourses was perhaps nowhere more visible than in the way in which those who mobilised against the existing regimes drew on the language of social justice as a major tool of their critique. This was most notably the case in post-war Eastern Europe, where dissident intellectuals were quick to recognise that using the very language of social justice was an effective means of attacking the existing order and challenging its legitimacy by measuring it on its own terms. As Adam Michnik observed about the collapse of Communism in Poland, this had been a 'revolt against communism in the name of the egalitarian values espoused by communism', and 'social justice was one of its key ideas'.¹⁴

The priority accorded to social justice was indicative, at a broader level, of the shift that occurred during the twentieth century in the legitimisation of government away from languages of historic privilege or of monarchical and dynastic right: government could be justified only through the benefits it brought – or, in the managerial discourse common to many state authorities,

¹² The notion of reading the twentieth century as a competition between different regimes owes much to the approach of M. Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London, 1998).

¹³ T. Toranska, *Oni: Stalin's Polish Puppets* (London, 1987), esp. pp. 13–29; O. Ruin, *Tage Erlander: Serving the Welfare State, 1946–1969* (Pittsburgh, 1990), pp. 208–21.

¹⁴ See A. Michnik, 'Three Kinds of Fundamentalism: For Jonathan Schell', in I. Grudzińska-Gross (ed.), *Adam Michnik: Letters from Freedom: Post-Cold War Realities and Perspectives* (Berkeley, 1998), p. 181. For a similar argument, see J. Kuroń, 'Man muß träumen: Soziale Gerechtigkeit als soziale Bewegung', *Transit – Europäische Revue*, 6 (1993), 6–24.

delivered – to the people. There was, however, little agreement as to what that social justice might be. Approached from a liberal or socialist standpoint, it implied the achievement of the emphatic civic or material equality of all citizens; but for more conservative ideologists it required the retention or reinforcement of the vertical or ‘natural’ hierarchies of society. Nor was there agreement as to its spatial limits. Social justice was often presented as a universal, or even global, goal; but for many political ideologies of the mid-twentieth century it made sense only within the more restrictive borders of the nation, the state, the people, or the ethnic or racial *Volk*. This also reflected a wider divergence as to the agents of social justice. For those at the centre of political power, it was the responsibility of the state to ensure equality of provision and of rights. However, for others, the over-mighty state was the problem rather than the solution. Instead, social justice could only be brought about through the devolution of power to social organisations, corporatist social and economic bodies, and the institutions of local government.

These differences indicated also the ambivalent role that the people occupied within projects of social justice. While the language of social justice was often democratic in tone, it was also adopted by those who rejected the pluralist structures of political democracy in favour of an authoritarian popular community or *Volksgemeinschaft*.¹⁵ This was of course most dramatically so in the Third Reich, where the explicit determination to destroy the Jewish minority and create a new racial hierarchy went hand in hand with the social benefits that this would deliver to the German majority.¹⁶ A key element of many different regimes of the mid-twentieth century was therefore not so much about taking the people as they were as about improving them through policies of health provision, mass education, and public housing, which would overcome the ills of modernity as well as giving birth to a ‘New Man’ possessed of a new social mentality.¹⁷

These projects of social engineering reflected the way in which social justice all too often served as a means of legitimisation for those who knew best. In the modernising cultures of twentieth-century Europe, social justice was defined primarily by experts and elites who, according to the rational logics of modern

¹⁵ See the extensive debate about the concept of ‘*Volksgemeinschaft*’, e.g., I. Kershaw, ‘*Volksgemeinschaft: Potenzial und Grenzen eines neuen Forschungskonzepts*’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 59 (2011), 1–17; F. Bahjor and M. Wildt (eds.), *Volksgemeinschaft: Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 2012).

¹⁶ See, above all, M. Wildt, *Die Ambivalenz des Volkes: Der Nationalsozialismus als Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (Berlin, 2019), esp. chs. 1–3; J. Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, MA, 2008).

¹⁷ P. Fritzsche and J. Hellbeck, ‘The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany’, in M. Geyer and S. Fitzpatrick (eds.), *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 302–42.

government, believed themselves best qualified to identify the needs of the people, and imprint them on society.¹⁸ These top-down policies of social amelioration did, of course, have a number of origins, including long-standing traditions of paternalist charity. But they derived much of their energy from the explosion that occurred in the scope and ambitions of the state and of other public institutions, most notably during times of war. This was not limited to the territories of Europe. Social improvement became the pervasive legitimator of imperial rule, justifying the abolition of pre-existing mentalities, belief systems, and patterns of social organisation in the name of a Western-defined modernity and civilisation. In this way, the colonies became the testing ground for ambitious projects of social engineering and ‘development’, which were subsequently transferred in their content and methodology to the urban centres and peripheral regions of Europe.¹⁹

The purpose of this collectively written volume is to explore the manifold complexities of social justice across Europe during the twentieth century. Its methodologies are primarily historical; and, as such, it consciously avoids establishing a single definition of its subject matter. Social justice was too plural and too contextual a phenomenon – in terms of time as well as space – to be encapsulated in a fixed manner. Instead, the volume embraces the different ways in which the term, but also the reality, has been understood. In doing so, it therefore also rejects a dominant narrative of social progress. The assumption – often semi-submerged in the historical literature – that the European experience of the twentieth century was broadly characterised by a transition to a more democratic, equal, and just society constitutes part of the collective inheritance of Europeans, at least in the west and north of the continent.²⁰ However, as present-day critiques of past projects of social justice have emphasised, there was no ‘high road’ towards social justice; justice and injustice were always inextricably interlinked in the projects of governments. This is not to deny the tangible benefits that were achieved: most notably quasi-universal access to health care, substantially expanded welfare benefits, and the provision of a wide range of social goods, including transport infrastructures and access to subsidised educational and cultural provision. But social justice has to be about more than adding up the benefits; and much depends on who does the addition – and the subtraction.

¹⁸ M. Conway, *Western Europe's Democratic Age 1945–1968* (Princeton, NJ, 2020), pp. 205–12.

¹⁹ M. Nasiali, *Native to the Republic: Empire, Social Citizenship, and Everyday Life in Marseille since 1945* (Ithaca, NY, 2016), esp. p. 9; A. Lyons, *The Civilizing Mission in the Metropole: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State during Decolonization* (Stanford, CA, 2013); G. Sinclair and C. Williams, “‘Home and Away’: The Cross-Fertilisation between “Colonial” and “British” Policing, 1921–85”, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 35 (2007), 221–38.

²⁰ H. Kaelble, *A Social History of Western Europe 1880–1980* (Dublin, 1989).

The three decades after 1945 occupy an almost mythical place in this familiar narrative. Echoing the often-repeated but largely unquestioned designation of the period by the French economist Jean Fourastié as ‘les trente glorieuses’, much historical writing has described this era as the moment when Europeans got closest to achieving just societies in a period of rapid economic growth and increased affluence, through the substantial expansion of welfare-state provision, the reining-in of social inequalities, increases in social mobility, and the resulting reduction in class differentials.²¹ This chimed well with the tenor of a flood of analyses advanced by influential social scientists of the time, who optimistically announced that European societies had ceased to be real class societies and had metamorphosed into what the sociologist Helmut Schelsky, analysing the Federal Republic of the early 1950s, famously called a ‘nivellierte Mittelstandsgesellschaft’, or a levelled middle-class society.²² Nor was this an exclusively Western European phenomenon. Social and demographic changes in East-Central Europe wrought by occupation policies during the Second World War and in its aftermath removed privileged elites,²³ followed by the massive expansion that occurred in welfare provision as well as the rise in living standards which contributed to the increasing levels of consumerism encouraged by the state-socialist regimes of the 1960s.²⁴

This implicit understanding of the post-war period as one of egalitarian reforms has percolated into collective memory as well as into many popular critiques of Europe’s current condition. In Britain, contemporary celebration of the National Health Service – so visible in the era of the COVID pandemic – has reinforced the image of the era of the Labour government elected in 1945 as a decisive moment of social reform against which the actions of all subsequent governments must inevitably pale. These perceptions, however, speak more to present dissatisfactions than to the reality of the social reforms implemented after 1945.²⁵ Elsewhere too, there has been a persistent tendency, both within historical writing and in broader public debate, to use the first decades of the post-war period as a template against which the inadequacies of

²¹ J. Fourastié, *Les trente glorieuses ou la Révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975* (Paris, 1979).

²² H. Schelsky, *Wandlungen der deutschen Familie in der Gegenwart: Darstellung und Deutung einer empirisch-soziologischen Tatbestandsaufnahme* (Stuttgart, 1955). For a forceful demolition of this sociological literature, see H.-U. Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, vol. 5: *Bundesrepublik und DDR, 1949–1990* (Munich, 2008), pp. 110–9.

²³ The classic analysis is J. T. Gross, ‘Social Consequences of War: Preliminaries to the Study of Imposition of Communist Regimes in East Central Europe’, *East European Politics & Societies*, 3 (1989), 198–214. See also B. Abrams, ‘The Second World War and the East European Revolution’, *East European Politics & Societies*, 16 (2002), 623–64.

²⁴ See especially the essays in P. Bren and M. Neuberger (eds.), *Communism Unwrapped: Cultures of Consumption in Postwar Eastern Europe* (Oxford, 2012).

²⁵ For a recent historical critique of the myths around Britain’s post-war Labour government, see D. Edgerton, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth Century History* (London, 2018), esp. pp. 217–8, 224–6, 236–44.

their contemporary societies – and governments – can be judged.²⁶ Such narratives should not, however, be accepted uncritically. Experts who propagated them such as Fourastié were not neutral observers, but were personally invested in the technocratic projects of social amelioration of the era and had their own reasons for claiming the success of the policies they had helped design. Above all, the crises around 1973 and the ‘end of the boom’ led to a sense of nostalgia for a past that seemed full of promise but had now seemingly evaporated.²⁷

The reality was, as always, more complex than the myth. Though post-war governments in the west and east took substantial measures intended to achieve more egalitarian societies, there was no decisive forward march of social justice. Differentials of social class remained an enduring reality in post-war Europe, and were reinforced by the unequal distribution of the fruits of the welfare state. Social mobility was much more constrained than historians had long tended to assume; and, while social inequality did not increase, neither was it reduced considerably. Most notably, perhaps, poverty remained a widespread phenomenon in Europe, while many of the familiar ingredients of middle-class affluence – from ownership of fridges to TVs and cars – reached the majority of Europeans only by the mid-1960s, and for significant sectors of the population never materialised.²⁸ Above all, race and gender retained their distinctive power of stratification, and acquired an enhanced importance as they limited severely the access of many newly arrived citizens to the opportunities of education and stable employment. The unequal distribution of the fruits of the boom was perhaps most evident in the emergence, at the height of the *trente glorieuses*, of shantytowns in the *banlieues* on the outskirts of French cities, where the recently arrived migrants from France’s former imperial territories were left languishing in desolate conditions as a result of repeated government failure to address the housing crisis.²⁹ The grim material reality of the lives of working-class migrants and so-called guest

²⁶ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991* (London, 1994), pp. 257–86, was influential in popularising the notion of the ‘Golden Years’. See also, e.g., G. Eley, ‘Corporatism and the Social Democratic Moment: The Postwar Settlement, 1945–1973’, in D. Stone (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 37–59.

²⁷ R. Pawin, ‘Retour sur les “Trente Glorieuses” et la périodisation du second XXe siècle’, *Revue d’Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 60 (2013), 155–75.

²⁸ See, e.g., the special issue on ‘Contesting Affluence’ in *Contemporary British History* 22 (2008), 445–597; C. Reinecke, ‘Localising the Social: The Rediscovery of Urban Poverty in Western European “Affluent Societies”’, *Contemporary European History*, 24 (2015), 555–76.

²⁹ C. Reinecke, ‘Die dunkle Seite des modernen Komforts: Zu einer Neubewertung der “glorreichen Nachkriegszeit” im (post)kolonialen Frankreich’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 42 (2016), 298–325. See also the essays in C. Pessis, S. Topçu, and C. Bonneuil (eds.), *Une autre histoire des ‘Trente glorieuses’: Modernisation, contestations et pollutions dans la France d’après-guerre* (Paris, 2013).

workers across Western Europe contrasted markedly with the images popularised by contemporary advertisements promoting the newest fitted kitchen and the leisure opportunities generated by post-war affluence.³⁰

Historians – more than social scientists – have been slow to digest the implications of these findings. History, in the overused phrase, is written by the winners; but, more tangibly, the history of social justice has on the whole been related by its beneficiaries. Historians, in Western and Eastern Europe after 1945, were among those who profited most directly from the expansion in access to state-funded structures of university education, public-sector employment, and the provision of public services.³¹ Consequently, too, they have predominantly regarded social justice, along with an expanding range of personal and intellectual freedoms, as among the key defining features of advanced European societies.

These forms of implicit partisanship have been reinforced by the long-term narratives present in much modern historical writing. The emancipation of European societies from the aristocratic and clerical control of the *ancien régime* has merged with the struggles of emancipatory movements – notably, trade unions, socialist parties, and women's suffrage organisations – in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to forge an over-determined account of the democratic and egalitarian societies that emerged in Western Europe after the Second World War.³² In adopting this approach, historians have been influenced, too, by their source materials. Social justice is most readily traced through the official archives, and more especially through the bureaucratic energy and resources invested by regimes of all political colours in projects of social reform. As a consequence, much of the writing on social justice has adopted a state-centred narrative, following the paper trail conserved in state archives.³³ This has not excluded attention to wider social forces, especially when the policies of regimes encountered resistances from sectional groups or

³⁰ See, e.g., F. Cumoli, 'Exode rural et crises du logement dans l'Italie des années 1950–1970', *Le Mouvement Social*, 245 (2013), 59–69; S. Hackett, *Foreigners, Minorities and Integration: The Muslim Immigrant Experience in Britain and Germany* (Manchester, 2013).

³¹ K. Vernon, 'Engagement, Estrangement or Divorce? The New Universities and Their Communities in the 1960s', *Contemporary British History*, 31 (2017), 501–23. See also the comment by Hans-Ulrich Wehler that the period from 1960 to 1980 was 'eine goldene Zeit für akademische Karrieren': Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, p. 381.

³² G. Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850–2000* (New York, 2002); S. Berman, *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York, 2006).

³³ This has been understandably particularly so of histories of the construction of new welfare policies during and immediately after the Second World War. See, for notable examples, J. Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford, 1977); P. V. Dutton, *Origins of the French Welfare State: The Struggle for Social Reform in France, 1914–1947* (Cambridge, 2002). For a corrective to state-centred approaches, see notably P. Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State, 1875–1975* (Cambridge, 1990).

from the mass of the population. But all too often it has been the actions and ‘ways of seeing’ of state officials that have been the central focus of histories of social justice in both Eastern and Western Europe.³⁴ As a result, the history of social justice risks becoming trapped in a hall of mirrors that reflects the actions of the state and of other public institutions, while evading the more complex question of how these policies were shaped and constrained by the shifting patterns and values of European societies.

This volume probably does not evade these forms of bias, but its starting point lies in a shared belief among the contributors of the need for a more open-ended and plural history of social justice in twentieth-century Europe. Ownership of social justice, as we understand it, was almost always contested, between different political groups, but also between a wide range of social actors, each of which sought to advance their understandings of what it should mean in practice. The path to the implementation of policies was therefore rarely straight; and, especially within the complex decision-making structures that characterised both authoritarian and democratic regimes in twentieth-century Europe, they bore the imprint of many hands. Nor were these limited to those within structures of political power. Intellectuals, religious organisations, campaigning movements, and the attitudes – both real and perceived – of populations also played their part in the making of policies that were always partial and never complete.

This also implies that social justice cannot be approached as a self-contained subject. It is striking how rarely social justice features as a subject in its own right in analyses of twentieth-century Europe.³⁵ One explanation for this lies in its amorphous nature; but, more substantially, it also reflects the way that understandings of social justice operate within cloistered disciplinary frontiers. As this volume demonstrates, historians approach the phenomenon in particular ways that are not shared by those who operate within the conceptual frameworks and forms of social knowledge specific to other disciplines, notably political science, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and social anthropology. When these different approaches have prompted interdisciplinary cross-pollination, historians have on the whole been notable by their

³⁴ J. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT, 1998); P. Joyce, *The State of Freedom: A Social History of the British State since 1800* (Cambridge, 2013).

³⁵ Notable exceptions include P. Rosanvallon, *The Society of Equals* (Cambridge, MA, 2013), and S. Moyn, *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World* (Cambridge, MA, 2018).