

# Foreword

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*Inequalities and the Progressive Era* is a unique and very important book. It is an original contribution on two levels. First, it focuses on the “Progressive Era” (1890s–1930s), and the treatment of social and economic inequalities in that period. Each chapter, written by distinguished scholars, highlights the extent to which inequalities during the “Progressive Era” offer an angle to both better understand and deal with inequalities today, through the implementation of particular economic and social policies. The book makes it possible to deal with important issues or authors of the “Progressive Era,” who have at times been insufficiently discussed, such as R. T. Ely, A. W. Small, and J. Dewey. Second, the authors come from all parts of the world, thereby giving the book a valuable international flavor.

This dual lens implies the book makes valuable contributions to the in-depth understanding of contemporary debates regarding the treatment of inequalities, and the necessary policy response to this major challenge of our times.

Relying both on a multidisciplinary and multicountry approach, this book characterizes a very broad concept of inequalities, including: inequalities of rights, inequalities of opportunity, geographical inequalities, income and wealth inequalities, inequalities of race, and gendered inequalities. Such a broad approach is very valuable.

Given that the authors of the “Progressive Era” had established a clear link between the economic and the democratic system, in particular through the role of the state, the current lessons to draw from their contributions to economic and social policies reveal valuable insights into the treatment that the state could give to inequalities.

More than just theoretical, historical and empirical reflections (important as these are), this book aims to rethink the nature of economic and social policies related to the treatment of inequalities. It is therefore highly relevant to current policy debates, giving a valuable historical depth to these debates.