

Table I.1: Social science keyword trend in social science disciplines, 1980–2017

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017
Economic Growth	160	204	1,632	5,182	11,586
	Economics	Economics	Economics	Economics	Economics
	50% (37%)	49% (36%)	37% (29%)	36% (25%)	29% (20%)
Economic Inequality	8	33	332	1,054	2,553
	Humanities	Sociology	Economics	Economics	Economics
	33% (12%)	33% (16%)	30% (14%)	29% (10%)	23% (12%)
Economic development	350	429	2,635	9,282	21,075
	Economics	Economics	Economics	Economics	Economics
	36% (16%)	34% (17%)	15% (6%)	19% (6%)	16% (7%)
Modernity	57	212	608	1,356	2,509
	History	Sociology	History	History	History
	14% (2%)	17% (7%)	16% (1%)	15% (6%)	15% (6%)
Neoliberalism	(1)	(3)	62	446	1,542
			Political science	Geography	Education
			29% (10%)	22% (4%)	15% (3%)
Globalization	(0)	39	1,063	3,180	4,611
		Economics	Economics	Economics	Economics
		21% (5%)	15% (3%)	15% (5%)	12% (1%)

Note: Percentage figures in parentheses represent the % lead of the dominant discipline over the nearest rival. The table presents the number of articles with stated keywords, followed by name of discipline with highest percentage of references.

Source: Web of science.

We need to go a step further than this. Inequality is an anomaly that questions the core guiding values underpinning projects of modernization, growth, and development over recent decades. In this respect, it comes to dispute visions of progress and growth that have characterized both expert and popular thinking in the decades since the core values of liberal modernity became dominant. It is this which reveals the true gravity of the stakes at play. Let us now open a third layer of the Russian doll.

3: Equality as a Transcendental Ideal

Here is a puzzle. Why has inequality caught the attention of powerful and wealthy elites rather than those who are actually on its receiving end, those who are subject to the deprivation, marginalization, and economic hardship