



Identity and Capitalism

Marie Moran

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"This is a splendid book that dispels myths about 'identity' and presents a cultural-materialist case for the study of such keywords and their preoccupations under the hegemony of neoliberal capitalism."

- *Professor Jim McGuigan, Loughborough University*

'Identity', particularly as it is elaborated in the associated categories of 'personal' and 'social' identity, is a relatively novel concept in western thought, politics and culture. The explosion of interest in the notion of identity across popular, political and academic domains of practice since the 1960s does not represent the simple popularisation of an older term, as is widely assumed, but rather, the *invention* of an idea.

Identity and Capitalism explores the emergence and evolution of the idea of identity in the cultural, political and social contexts of contemporary capitalist societies. Against the common supposition that identity always mattered, this book shows that what we now think of routinely as 'personal identity' actually only emerged with the explosion of consumption in the late-twentieth century. It also makes the case that what we now think of as different social and political 'identities' only came to be framed as such with the emergence of identity politics and new social movements in the political landscapes of capitalist societies in the 60s and 70s.

Marie Moran provides an important new exploration of the articulation of the idea of identity to the social logic of capitalism, from the 'organised capitalism' of the mid-twentieth century, up to and including the neoliberal capitalism that prevails today. Drawing on the work of Raymond Williams, the cultural materialist approach developed here provides an original means of addressing the political debates about the value of identity in contemporary capitalist societies.

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