

From Recognition to Allocation: Reimagining Social Order Through Identity Economies

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Abstract

Drawing on Identity Group Theory (IGT), the paper proposes that modern societies are structured through identity economies in which individuals and groups compete for access to finite resources including time, attention, status, reciprocity, and material resources. Identity narratives function as regulatory mechanisms that determine which claims are considered legitimate and which forms of participation are rewarded or marginalised.

The paper develops a general framework linking identity, allocation, regulation, and social reproduction. It demonstrates how identity economies provide a common analytical language capable of explaining phenomena often studied separately, including political mobilisation, institutional legitimacy, cultural conflict, and social inequality.

The argument contributes to ongoing discussions concerning recognition, social value, and the organisation of contemporary societies by proposing that identity should be understood not only as a source of meaning but also as a mechanism through which social order is reproduced and contested.

Keywords: identity group theory (IGT); social identity; social value; recognition theory; social order