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Visual landscapes of in/visibility: exploring and challenging the representation and demonization of marginalized mothers and daughters

Abstract

This paper explores the ways in which mothers and daughters in marginalized, urban housing areas in South Wales, UK, become embodied as both different and lacking in contemporary media representations. Drawing on three research studies, the paper examines the demonization of working-class femininities, presenting visual media as a tool of active oppression. The paper considers how participants can reclaim acceptable identities and tell new stories through creative methodologies, and further examines how researchers can understand these visual and participatory productions. In addition, it explores the ethical tensions between ‘giving voice’ and maintaining confidentiality in relation to digital landscapes, ocularcentric cultures, open access and time immemorial. The paper centralizes the space between visibility and invisibility and discusses how visual exposure can be a tool of empowerment and, at the same time, a vehicle of disempowerment.