Digital Media, Identity, and Cultural Representation: A Review of Contemporary Scholarship in Digitally Mediated Societies

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Abstract

Digital technologies increasingly shape how individuals and societies communicate, construct identities, and represent culture. Digitally mediated spaces, including social media, online communities, and algorithmically organized platforms, influence how meanings are produced, circulated, negotiated, and contested. Within liberal arts and media studies, these developments have generated growing scholarly interest in the relationships among digital media, identity construction, cultural representation, and power. This review examines how contemporary scholarship explains the role of digital media in shaping identity, representation, and power relations in digitally mediated societies. It aims to identify major scholarly debates, synthesise key theoretical insights, and determine recurring patterns across the literature. The study adopts a qualitative literature review based on published journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers in media studies, cultural studies, and digital humanities. The selected literature is examined thematically to identify recurring discussions concerning self-representation, participation, visibility, exclusion, and platform influence. The review finds that digital media can expand opportunities for creative expression, identity negotiation, and cultural participation. At the same time, they can reproduce or intensify inequalities through algorithmic bias, commercial platform structures, and unequal access to visibility. The literature further shows that representation in digital spaces is shaped by social power, language, technological design, and platform governance. These findings indicate that digital media should be understood not as neutral communication tools, but as cultural environments in which identities and meanings are produced, negotiated, and contested. By bringing together these recurring arguments, the review clarifies key tensions in contemporary research and highlights the value of critical, inclusive, and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of digital culture.

Keywords: *Cultural Representation, Digital Media, Digitally Mediated Societies, Identity, Literature Review,*