Families, Relationships and Societies

Family Display, Family Type, or Community? Limitations in the application of a concept.

--Manuscript Draft--

Manuscript Number:	FRS-D-18-00057R3
Full Title:	Family Display, Family Type, or Community? Limitations in the application of a concept.
Article Type:	Academic Article
Keywords:	Family; Community; Belonging; Family Display; Childhood.
Corresponding Author:	Julie Walsh, Ph.D University of Sheffield Sheffield, UNITED KINGDOM
First Author:	Julie Walsh, Ph.D
Order of Authors:	Julie Walsh, Ph.D
	Sally McNamee
	Julie Seymour
Abstract:	In this paper we develop the concept of family display by responding to David Morgan's suggestion that researchers should consider whether 'family displays' are used to convey a 'type' of Family. We do so by applying the concept to the accounts of migrant family children living in an English city, and those of adults that grew-up in Mennonite communities in Mexico and Canada. Analysis uniquely shows that migrant family children do display a type of 'Family', and that this is influenced by familial constructs privileged by intended audiences. We contribute further by arguing that whilst some families do display core values attached to Family 'types', this is not the case in the example of the Mennonite community and researchers should be cognisant of applying this concept to all contexts. This is because the priority for display may not be the presentation of legitimate Family, but other features of collective identity.
Order of Authors Secondary Information:	
Funding Information:	Western University — Sally McNamee The University of Hull, PhD Scholarship — Julie Walsh

Powered by Editorial Manager® and ProduXion Manager® from Aries Systems Corporation

Cover page (not anonymised)

MANUSCRIPT FRS-D-18-00057

COVER SHEET

Family Display, Family Type, or Community? Limitations in the application of a concept.

Authors and affiliations:

Julie Walsh, The University of Sheffield, England. Email: j.c.walsh@sheffield.ac.uk

Sally McNamee, Kings Western University, Canada. Email: smcnamee@uwo.ca

Julie Seymour, Hull York Medical School, England. Email: Julie.seymour@hyms.ac.uk

Abstract:

In this paper we develop the concept of family display by responding to David Morgan's suggestion that researchers should consider whether 'family displays' are used to convey a 'type' of Family. We do so by applying the concept to the accounts of migrant family children living in an English city, and those of adults that grew-up in Mennonite communities in Mexico and Canada. Analysis uniquely shows that migrant family children do display a *type* of 'Family', and that this is influenced by familial constructs privileged by intended audiences. We contribute further by arguing that whilst some families do display core values attached to Family 'types', this is not the case in the example of the Mennonite community and researchers should be cognisant of applying this concept to all contexts. This is because the priority for display may not be the presentation of legitimate Family, but other features of collective identity.

Key words: Family - Family Display - Belonging - Community – Childhood.

Word Count: 7902 (excluding this from sheet and including details about funders and acknowledgements).

Final manuscript (NOT anonymised)

MANUSCRIPT FRS-D-18-00057

Family Display, Family Type, or Community? Limitations in the application of a concept.

Julie Walsh, Sally McNamee and Julie Seymour.

Introduction

This article expands and tests Janet Finch's concept of family display (2007). In 2007, Finch introduced the concept of 'displaying families', which builds on Morgan's earlier argument that family is no longer defined by biology or household, but has, instead, become a set of 'practices' that must be 'done' (Morgan, 1996; 2011). For Finch, 'doing' family is not enough and family practices must *also* be 'displayed' to significant others if they are to show that 'these are my family relationships and they work' (2007: 73); that they are legitimate. In her original article, Finch invites scholars to develop the concept further and, in 2011, David Morgan suggests that one way in which researchers might do this is to consider if and how 'family displays' are used to convey a specific 'type' of family; they are not just displaying family (membership and behaviours) but displaying Family (type which incorporates particular values). For him, such research should focus on 'the deployment of family members in displaying the idea of and the core values attached to family' (2011: 63) and he uses, as an exemplar; the Christian Family. In an empirical examination of this conceptual development, Seymour's (2015) study of families that live in commercial homes[1] (eg family hotels and guest houses) shows that these families *do* display a specific type of family; in this study the Commercial Home Family. The current article further addresses this gap in research identified by Morgan (2011) by applying the lens of family display to data from two distinct studies and communities - accounts of migrant family children living in a northern English city, and accounts of adults talking about their lives as children growing-up in a Mennonite community (some of whom migrated from Mexico to Canada). In doing so, we expand and test the concept of family display and contribute by uniquely showing that while some family members *do* display core values attached to Family 'types' researchers should also be wary of applying this concept to all contexts.

Overall, we argue that in the context of migrant families living in a northern English city, family display is a useful conceptual addition to the 'tool bag' of family sociologists (Finch, 2007) and that some children within some migrant families do use 'family display' to present a 'type' of Family; variously the Assimilated Family, and a Family with culturally specific family values, here, the Polish Family. We also argue, however, that Finch's concept must be applied after careful consideration, because the family is not always the unit of display. In the case of children in Mennonite families, we show, for example, that what might first appear as a Mennonite Family display is, instead, a display of broader community; the particular Mennonite Community of which they are part. By doing so, we further contribute by arguing that it is important to be reflexive in our analysis and to think beyond the theoretical framework we are applying as researchers.

The data presented are taken from the narratives of children, and adults discussing their childhood. This is because the views of adults in the studies considered have been discussed elsewhere (Walsh, 2018: McNamee, 2016) but, more importantly, because all the authors have an interest in highlighting the active participation of children in their family practices (McNamee and Seymour, 2012; Walsh, 2015).

Conceptual Framework

In her influential article, Finch (2007) builds on Morgan's (1996) argument that contemporary family is no longer the 'fixed' concept of a nuclear family - defined by biology, co-residence or marriage - but it is changeable and diverse. Rather, the concept of family is now 'done' and family members engage in a set of 'practices' which take on meaning associated with family (Morgan, 1996, 2011). This approach has since been shown to be useful, particularly when circumstances do not reflect the dominant normative familial model, for example, same-sex relationships (Weeks et al., 2001). Finch argues, however, that contemporary family needs to be 'displayed' as well as 'done' and that the 'the meaning of one's actions have to be both conveyed to and understood by relevant others if those actions are to be effective as constituting "family practices"' (2007: 66). She goes on to assert that the reasons that display matters to modern

families are that: family no longer equates to household; the fluidity of family and family life over time; and the relationship between family and personal identities (2007: 68-71). As such, by engaging in displays, family members aim to show that 'these are my family relationships and they work' (2007: 73). The example Finch provides is of a father becoming more attentive to his non-resident children in the period post-divorce. This is a 'display', because the change in parenting practices shows his children, and the broader audience, that despite him not living with his children anymore, his relationship with them remains familial and of a high quality (2007: 74).

As noted, in the 2007 article, Finch also invites others to refine and expand the concept of family display. Subsequent applications of theory primarily examine why display matters within individual families, and the ways in which display is supported by 'background features that we might define as "tools of display" e.g. photos, domestic artefacts, heirlooms and narratives' (Finch, 2007: 77). Examples of familial constructs and relationships to which the lens of family display has been applied include: Kehily and Thomson's (2011) exploration of the construction of mothering; Carter et al's (2015) study of couples that live apart; Philip's (2013) research of post-divorce fathering; and Almack's (2008) study of lesbian parent couples. Others examine familial contexts that resonate with those discussed in this paper, that is when familial norms and cultural norms intersect. Hayes and Dermott (2011), for example, consider the role of family display in dual-heritage families (2011) and Carver (2014) shows how family display occurs in marriage narratives constructed in UK immigration applications. Elsewhere, Walsh also shows display to be a strategy employed by migrants when establishing their new lives in the host country (2018) and in the transnational context (2015).

Writing in 2011, Morgan (2011) responds to Finch (2007), by suggesting that researchers should examine if family display is employed by family members in order to display a specific type of Family and the 'core values' of that Family 'type', for example, the Christian Family. Indeed, Seymour (2015) has shown how families who live in family-run boarding houses, hotels and pubs, are obliged to carry out family production and reproduction in ways that also display the Commercial Home Family. That is, family members are deployed to show that, while the host

family is an integral/essential element of the business location, they are not privileged over guests; it is 'a presentation of 'familyness' which is commercially expedient' (2015: 122). This is, however, the only study that responds to Morgan's suggestion and this article, therefore, interrogates additional empirical data to address the knowledge gap he identifies.

Scholars have also responded to Finch (2007) by problematising the concept of 'family display', asserting if displays are to be 'successful' in showing familial legitimacy, they have to reflect the familial norms 'required' and or accepted by a particular audience (Dermott and Seymour, 2011). Indeed, in 2007, Finch explicitly acknowledges the role of the audience of display, stating that 'the meaning of one's actions have to be conveyed to and understood by relevant others if those actions are to be effective in constituting 'family practices'; 'they need to be linked to the wider system of meaning' (Finch, 2007: 66-67). She later builds on this, but emphasises that, for her, family display is primarily concerned with conveying meaning to those within, and not audiences external to, the family unit (Finch, 2011). Heaphy (2011) argues, however, that the wider audience *is* significant and that the concept of family display is flawed, because some family constructs are privileged and perceived to be more legitimate than others; their displays are more likely to be judged as 'successful'. Gabb (2011), for example, considers when teenage children of lesbian parent couples choose not to display family – to omit displays – in order to avoid homophobic bullying. For Heaphy, this is because, 'alternative or critical displays of family are weak displays' (2011: 37) and can result in those to whom the displays are 'conveyed' (Finch, 2007) – the potential audience (whether within or external to the family) - being unwilling to receive, interpret and validate them as desirable alternatives to family.

Walsh (2018) argues that display is complicated further in the context of multi-cultural communities. This is because, as Morgan argues, types of practices – cultural, gendered and family – overlap and influence each other. For him, 'individuals do not start from scratch as they are going about family living. They come into (through marriage or parenthood, say) a set of practices that are already partially shaped by legal prescriptions, economic constraints and cultural definitions' (Morgan, 2011: 7). Werbner (2007), for example, argues that the wearing of

the hijab within Islam is perceived as an external cultural and religious symbol of female modesty *and* familial honour. As such, *family* may be the site where both familial and cultural practices are displayed. Seymour and Walsh (2013) argue, therefore, that what is perceived to be an acceptable or successful family practice or display, may differ depending on both the family and observer's country of origin and culturally located familial practices may also constitute 'alternative' displays in relation to the normative cultural construct in any given context. Subsequently, 'family display' does not always reveal the positive nature of family relationships, displays may not always be 'successful', and if 'display is not successful then the cost may be high' (Seymour, 2011: 109). Indeed, Walsh (2018) argues that migrant families may engage in family displays that 'omit' cultural indicators of otherness, as a strategy to achieve recognition and validation in the host country. She does not, however, consider in her article if this results in these migrant families displaying a specific 'type' of Family.

Looking at 'displaying Family' (type) can, however, allow us to consider the discourse, as well as the activities element of family display/practices, and examine cases where they reinforce or disrupt hegemonic discourses of family. For while families are carrying out the activities that sustain and reproduce the individuals who make up each family (Hughes and Valentine, 2011), they also confirm or contest prevalent ideologies around family (Seymour, 2015). This paper, therefore, tests and develops the concept of 'family display' by showing that some families do display a 'type' of Family, and that this is influenced by familial constructs 'privileged' (Heaphy, 2011) by a particular audience. In doing so, we also affirm that cultural practices can overlap with family practices (Morgan, 2011) but uniquely reveal that the 'family' may not always be the primary unit of display.

The Empirical Studies:

The data that inform this paper are drawn from two distinct studies and communities: Walsh's study of migrant families living in a northern UK city (2015, 2018) and McNamee's interviews with adults recollecting their childhoods in Mennonite communities. The following sections describe the data on which we draw, the research methods and present the analysis of each data set.

Study 1 – Migrant Family Display: The Context

The accounts of migrant children presented here were produced as part of a broader study that aimed to examine the role of family display in an increasingly culturally diverse city in the north of England. Mulvey (2010) argues that prevalent political and media narratives related to immigration can influence individual and community attitudes towards the topic. It is therefore important to note that, at the time of this study – 2013 – the media in the UK continued to depict *all* immigration as a problematic issue, that also presented a challenge to 'British' national identity (Mulvey, 2010). The UK's newly elected coalition government, in their election campaign and in their subsequent political term, promoted the imposition of further immigration 'control', grounded in a need to kerb supposedly undue pressure on the welfare system and public services. These intersecting political and media narratives implied that some migrant groups were 'worthy', whilst others were 'unworthy' of living in the UK (Robinson, 2010). Both the government and the Labour Party in opposition also continued to have a pro-assimilationist stance on community cohesion (Sharma, 2008); all black and minority ethnic people living in the UK, and migrants, were expected to conform to a white, Christian form of 'Britishness' (Kundnani, 2007; Uberi and Modood, 2013). Embedded within these narratives was the attitude that all living in the UK should be competent speakers of English (BBC, 2013).

The study

To examine the role of family display in community relations, ten migrant families were recruited by distributing posters and flyers in local community spaces and via the researchers pre-existing networks, previously developed as a community development worker. Migrant families represented a range of migratory backgrounds and were from a number of countries. This study was also conducted from a participatory family research perspective (Gabb, 2008) and methods were adopted with a view to engaging effectively with adults, and children and young people as active agents in their families (McNamee and Seymour, 2012). Whilst the broader study included participant observation in public spaces and interviews with British born community members, the focus here is on family group interviews and one-to-one interviews conducted with members

of the ten migrant families. Of the ten families, nine included children, and three included children between 7 – 18 living in the family home. Data presented are therefore taken from three family group interviews to which family children contributed, and four subsequent one-to-one interviews with children over the age of seven. Those that were interviewed, and therefore able to speak for themselves, were all children or young people from families of Eastern European origin (three Polish and one Slovakian).

The focus groups and one-to-one interviews were audio recorded, and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed thematically; transcripts were read and re-read, and codes identified, which were then systematically applied to the data. This led to the emergence of a number of key themes, and the data set was then analysed with these in mind (Mason, 2002). A broad range of themes were identified, two of which are relevant to the arguments presented here: migrant families, including their children, engaged in family display so as to display an 'Assimilated Family' type; and that children of Polish families engaged in family practices reflective of Polish culture and values so as to display a 'Polish Family' type.

The Assimilated Migrant Family.

In the UK, cohesion policies are, then, assimilationist in character (Mulvey, 2010) and, as noted, at the time of the study, anti-migrant narratives dominated policy and the mass media (Uberi and Modood, 2013). Consequently, children interviewed felt that there may be negative consequences if their family displayed in ways that identified them as 'other' in public places; they understood that, as argued by Walsh and Seymour, 'if 'display' is not successful then the cost may be high' (2013: 696). Ruta, a Polish teenager, reported, for example, that: 'I think that some people [think] that people shouldn't come here from certain countries and that people should be, like, British people'. As such, family children, when in culturally mixed environments, were driven to actively display that their family had 'assimilated' to what they perceived to be British norms. Further, in line with Gabb's (2011) research, these migrant children also *omitted* displaying in ways that might reveal their migrant family origins. In public, for example, Matus (Slovakian, age ten) rejected elements of his family's Slovakian identity. He stated, for example,

that he would always support 'England' in football matches and he was clear in his decision to not engage with other Slovak children at school. In addition to this, he intentionally avoided Slovak community events with his family, stating that, 'I don't go to the community cos I'm at football […] I don't really like it. It's boring'. Instead, he chooses to attend public, typically English activities - notably related to England's national sport, football – with English friends.

This desire to display as an Assimilated Family is exemplified particularly well in family displays grounded in when and where children chose to speak the language of their country of origin. As noted, assimilationist policy and media narratives at the time of the study emphasised that all people living in the UK – including migrants - should be competent speakers of English (BBC, 2013). As such, Matus chose to display in ways that reflected this expectation by only speaking Slovakian 'in the house, on holiday [in Slovakia], when my family's here' and his mum, Lenka, confirmed that Matus asked her to not speak Slovakian in public. Similarly, Daniella (Polish, age seven) was resistant to learning the Polish language; even when she was with her Polish friends at school, they spoke 'in English to each other' and she stated that she only spoke Polish when she 'comes home. I do it mostly times at home'. Further, she did not speak Polish 'in front of the swearing boys on the corner', which she explained to be English teenagers that 'cause trouble'. Lech, despite his rejection of Polish families he saw as 'trying to be English', also noted that 'sometimes, when I'm in public place with [Polish] friends, I sometimes just speak English', as did Ruta, who overtly stated that this is because of not wanting 'to be different'. Here, these children, are agentic family members, and the rejection of symbols of their migrant familial identity, and the adoption of seemingly 'British' familial norms, is a key feature of their strategy to display as an Assimilated Family.

Displaying the 'Polish Family'

The migrant family displays of young family members are, however, multifaceted. As noted above, when in public spaces, Lech and Ruta displayed as an Assimilated Family. At other points in time, however, they also displayed 'belonging' to a home area network; those from their country of origin living in close geographical proximity. On these occasions, Ruta and Lech, for

example, displayed 'Polish Family' norms, because this also reflects cultural 'belonging'. These siblings engaged in 'family displays' that mirrored another *type* of family; the Polish Family. As argued by Seymour and Walsh (2013), what is perceived to be a successful family display can be culturally located, and analysis shows that these young family members displayed in line with their perception of a 'proper' *Polish* Family. For Ruta, a Polish family is different to a British family, because they 'do things together and more, like, not having anyone separate. Supporting each other. Being close'. Similarly, for Lech:

> 'Polish care more about their relationships between their families – I think. Family, for Polish families is the most important and I don't think I see that it is the same with English people […] because I don't see them contacting their families. There's just Mum, Dad and there's like I don't know if they're contacting their grandads, nephews'.

For these young people, the values and practices they described are claimed as uniquely Polish, and they actively engaged in displaying 'the idea of and the core values attached to [the Polish] family" (Morgan, 2011: 63, our insertion). One way Ruta displayed these familial values was by 'supporting' her mother: 'I just like cook food for her and when we clean the house, I do that.' She also reflected these values in the importance she placed on having regular contact with her adult sister, husband and nephew, in London, and she ensured that she was present at annual familial events: 'We went last year at [my nephew's] birthday'.

Whilst these family displays were primarily intended for immediate family members, they were both shaped by familial values perceived as Polish, and were more intense during events celebrating Polish festivals. As such, these 'family displays' were observed by, and were perhaps also intended for a broader Polish audience. At Polish parties, Ruta, 'gives out food at the beginning, like, hot stuff. Then we give salads out […] I was helping my mum'. Similarly, Lech stated that he continued to engage with these Polish traditions 'because my family does' and, as such, he was involved in the Polish events organised by his mum: 'I always go because I do the music for it […] I'm the DJ for it'. This family, therefore, presented a unified 'display' of a *Polish*

Family that ‘works’, despite living away from their country of origin. In this multi-cultural context, where cultural identification is potentially fragile, Lech and Ruta’s family displays – as young family members of the Family – served to reify what they perceived to be a legitimate Polish familial identity.

The significance of displaying this ‘type’ of Family is highlighted by Lech’s pejorative tone when referring to Polish people that do not engage in these ‘Polish Family’ activities. For him, they were ‘trying to be more English than English people […] they’re trying to move to English tradition […] because they want to fit in […] they’re just trying to, like, lose contact with Polish people’. As such, for Lech, the failure to display successfully (Almack, 2008) - by engaging in what he perceived to be legitimate Polish Family practices - located these migrant families outside of *Polishness*. By contrast, both Ruta and Lech attended the Polish church a number of times a week, although their mum did not. Ruta did so to connect with her mostly Polish friends, because, ‘I can just speak normally, and we don’t have to think about it’. Further, for Lech, this was ‘because of our story. Because we’ve moved countries, and everyone’s got family and things in another country’. Whilst this resonates with their claim that they wanted their family to be viewed ‘like, not any different from any other family’ (Ruta) and ‘just, like, normal’ (Lech), this also indicates that they are displaying a broader ‘Polishness’ that extends beyond ‘family’. In this context, then, analysis shows that, as Morgan (2011) suggests, cultural displays merge with family displays and consequently influence what individuals perceive to be correct familial behavior.

Discussion here, therefore, affirms that some migrant family members do engage in family displays in order to achieve validation and recognition with a particular audience (Walsh, 2018). Analysis presented, also expands the concept of family display by showing that some children, as agentic members of the family unit (McNamee and Seymour, 2012), do engage in displays associated with ‘the core values attached to’ a ‘type’ of Family (Morgan, 2011: 63); here variously the Assimilated Family and the Polish Family. It is, however, apparent that these migrant family children should also be acknowledged as community members developing creative strategies to support a desire to ‘belong’ to either the local community or their home area network.

Discussion also shows that in the context of migration, displays that may be interpreted as cultural are, as Morgan (2011) suggests, incorporated into what can also be interpreted as family displays. Here, then, we show that whilst the primary unit of display is the family, the boundary between displays of family and community are in fact blurred and, interdependent. This is examined in more detail in the following section.

Study 2 - Mennonite Communities: The Context

The data which inform the following discussion are drawn from interviews with eight adults (seven women and one man) recalling their childhood experiences of growing up in a Mennonite culture, conducted by McNamee. Before describing the participants further, to contextualise this study it is useful to provide a brief background to the Mennonite groups in North America, but specifically in this research, in South Western Ontario, Canada.

The origins of the Mennonite faith stem from the Protestant reformation in 16th Century Europe. Mennonites are part of the Anabaptist movement, whose religious beliefs emphasise believer's baptism, pacifism, and separation from the world. Migration has been and still is central to the experience of the Low-German speaking Mennonites, whose experiences of childhood are discussed here (Loewen, 2015). Originating in Switzerland, Germany and Holland, the Anabaptists have a long history of religious persecution, which has resulted in a parallel history of migration from their native territories to Eastern Europe, Russia, North America and South and Central America in search of community isolation, increased economic opportunities and freedom from persecution (Epp, 2008). Migration to Canada, following the Russian revolution, was prompted by the Canadian Government's offer of land, freedom from state involvement and the promise that they could educate their children as they wished. This promise was reneged upon when the demands of the English settlers were emphasised and anyone who failed to send their children to the new state schools with instruction in English could be fined and/or imprisoned. This threat to their culture resulted in the wholesale migration of thousands of Mennonites to form colonies in Mexico and elsewhere in South America. Today, the migratory relationship between the Mennonite colonies of Mexico and Canada continues; but this

migration is primarily a result of economic need as families migrate seasonally or more permanently. It is not unusual, then, for Mennonite families living in Canada to have a history of living in Mexico. Central to the Mennonite way of living, their faith and their culture, is conservative tradition. The community's separateness from the world is emphasised, there are a range of cultural practices that are unique to the community, and families are patriarchal and dominated by the Church brotherhood.

The Study

There has been very little written about Mennonite communities and, in particular Mennonite children. There are a number of memoirs which give wonderful accounts of what it was like to grow up in the community (see for example Katie Funk Wieber's (1997) The Storekeeper's Daughter and some works of fiction e.g. Miriam Towes' (2004) novel A Complicated Kindness) but from a sociological perspective – and particularly in relation to issues around childhood - work in this area is sadly lacking. The data presented here are therefore taken from a broader study that aimed to learn from interviewees about their recollections of growing up in a Mennonite family and community. This was prompted by an observation from a social worker in the community (whose childhood was formed in a conservative Mennonite community), that head teachers did not recognise Mennonite childhoods as 'normal' childhoods, but rather problematised Mennonite children. Subsequently, McNamee wanted to understand in what ways being a Mennonite child, migrating to and living in Canadian culture, impacted the experience of childhood. Speaking to adults about their childhoods enabled the researcher to explore issues relating to family, culture, belonging, agency and identity.

The interviewees who took part in the study all lived in Canada and were aged between mid-20s and mid-40s, and access to them was gained via a connection with a prominent figure in the community. Seven women and one man were interviewed. The family background of most of the interviewees were Low-German speaking[2] and most participants had spent phases of their childhoods in Mexico. Some also came from very large families – one woman had 17 siblings – while other families were much smaller. All of the women interviewed had gone on to higher

education, either straight from school or in later life, and all were working in professional occupations. While they may have distanced themselves from the more conservative communities, all of the interviewees remained within the Mennonite culture in professional or service roles. In this way, these adults are atypical of the general experience of (conservative) Mennonites, and children from Mennonite families in South Western Ontario. It should also be noted that there is not one Mennonite culture. Within the Mennonite faith there have been many shifts and splits which have fragmented the community. Communities range from very traditional, conservative orders to more liberal orders, each with associated cultural practices. In terms of their descriptions of their experiences of childhood, however, the similarities within their accounts of childhood indicate that we can assume commonality of experience across the boundaries of these orders.

The interviews conducted were semi-structured in nature, they were audio recorded with the participant's permission, after which they were transcribed verbatim and returned to interviewees for comment. Thematic analysis was then conducted; after reading and re-reading the transcripts, codes were applied which led to the emergence of themes, and the data set was scrutinized according to those themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). A number of themes were revealed but, in this paper, we focus on that which is most relevant to the discussion; that whilst Mennonite children do engage in 'displays' this is not in order to display family *or* Family but, rather, to display 'belonging' to the Mennonite community.

Displaying Mennonite Community Belonging.

As noted previously, types of practices – cultural, gendered and family – overlap and influence each other (Morgan, 2011). As such, constructions of childhood also differ between cultures, families and communities. Childhood in the developed West is characterised as a time of play, freedom from responsibility, and innocence (McNamee, 2016). Within the Mennonite community, and for families therein, while children are loved and welcomed, childhood is, instead, a time of work, obedience and responsibility. Mennonite parents are, therefore, expected to raise a good worker and a member of the Church: 'train up a child in the way he

should go, and when he is older he will not depart from it' (Proverbs, 22). In this sense, the expectations placed on children are important to Mennonite families *and* communities as it is through the raising of children that the church and the community continues. Menno Simons (the founder of this faith) spoke about raising children as follows:

> *'Teach, instruct, admonish, threaten, correct and chastise them, as circumstances require. Keep them from naughty, wicked children among whom they hear and learn nothing but lying, cursing, swearing, fighting and knavery. Have them instructed in reading and writing, bring them up to habits of industry and let them learn such trades as are suitable, expedient and adapted to their age and constitution"* (Simons, 1557)

Although written in 1557, the recollections of the interviewees illustrate childhoods which largely follow this prescription. Certainly, there were many examples of parental discipline which sometimes exceeded the admonition to 'correct and chastise' amongst the accounts, and it remains common that education past a basic level is frowned upon, with children leaving or being removed from school between the ages of 12 and 14. As one interviewee said

> "And then (sigh) there's also shame if you go to school past age of 12 in Mexico. It's, if you go to school, you're embarrassed. At age 12, you start being a woman of the house. You start your cleaning, sewing, you do all that and your toys get put away. Or given to somebody else … and you take pride in your work" (Interviewee E)

Further, family practices within the Mennonite community are highly gendered, with many of the women in this study reporting beginning to cook and care for siblings from the age of seven, with girls' work taking place within the home, and boys working on the family farm. Whilst engaging in these gendered *and* cultural practices might be perceived to be family members displaying the core values of a 'type' of Family - the Mennonite Family - the data reveal stories about conformity to *community* norms, obedience and a lack of choice. Rather than showing 'this is my family and it works', failure to leave school at the age of 12, and adopt prescribed gendered

practices results in feelings of ‘shame’ within the community; these practices are an external display of belonging to the Mennonite community not *Family.*

Similarly, the most visible marker of identity for this community is the traditional dress worn by women and girls. Dresses all follow the basic pattern of modesty – high neckline, long sleeves, calf length dresses – while fabric may be quite colourful, it is usually a dark background on to which flowers of a lighter colour are printed. After baptism or marriage, women and girls wear a black kerchief. Girls’ hair should be kept off the face and braided (Angulo, 2004). Whilst this gendered practice could, again, be seen to be a clear display of the Mennonite Family, it is argued here that it is, again, community that is the dominant unit of ‘display’. This is because there are differences in dress standards according to which church or colony the group belongs to – for example, Swiss Mennonites wear white caps rather than the black kerchief of the Russian Mennonites. Clothing, then, displays belonging to a particular group beyond the immediate ‘family’. These displays may only be understood by insiders who are familiar with the often very small variations which indicate membership (e.g. the depth of a hem on an apron). When asking ‘what is the audience for clothing as display’ the answer has to be not only other Mennonite communities, but the rest of the world. By their clothing Mennonite women signal their separateness from the world, a defining feature of their community (Epp, 2008). As one interviewee remarked, the wearing of traditional clothing means “publicly wearing your faith” (Interviewee A).

This is further reinforced by the fact that all of the women interviewed remembered with pleasure the first time they were allowed to wear pants or trousers rather than the traditional dress – a transition which allowed them to stop wearing their faith. More difficult in the telling however were the stories of feelings of difference from their peers at school which were prompted by having to wear traditional dress:

> “even though school was a nice escape from home it was still a nightmare. Because, you know we had to wear the traditional dress and we had to have our hair done the

> traditional way. and I remember people asking me, like not only did we have the traditional dress but they had this crazy thing where you had to wear this apron over top of it and I remember kids looking at me and "what is that?", "why are you wearing that?" and I would say "apron". Well for an English child, an apron is something you wear in the kitchen when you're cooking, right? They just didn't get it. And then our hair! That was a big one. It had to be braided as you can see there [indicates photograph] and the kids would make fun of us so much. It was a nightmare" (Interviewee B)

For interviewee 'B', school was a 'nice escape' from home because home was a place of harsh discipline and hard work. However, even this 'nice escape' was a 'nightmare' for her because of the bullying that she and her sisters encountered, on account of their indicators of 'separateness' (Epp, 2008). Again, clothing as a feature of family display is not primarily about displaying membership of family or displaying the values of a Mennonite Family but, in this example, what is displayed is membership of a cultural / religious group. Although Walsh (2018) has usefully highlighted that the culturally assimilated families in the UK can choose to omit culturally located elements of family display which serve to 'other' their family, this choice is not available to children in Mennonite communities. Instead, children are expected to demonstrate and to highlight their cultural difference and tradition. The wearing of traditional clothing is intended to be a marker of difference that demonstrates adherence to tradition, faith, cultural identity and *community*, to those within and beyond that community.

Accounts of Mennonite community members, therefore, appear to raise questions about the possible links between the ability to display and the ability to exercise agency, and whether the two are linked. Linked to this, both empirical examples presented here, also allow a further consideration of the flexibility of 'tools' of display (Finch, 2007). As outlined in the article, for example, some tools such as language may be used or omitted through choice, but others, such as clothing, are less able to be hidden or displayed at will. This applies whether those displaying are children or adults. As such we can give further interrogation to the role of specific tools in

conveying a successful display, especially in public spaces. These issues are considered in the conclusion.

The example of Mennonite community display shows that display can be a largely visual act that needs to be understood in context to be deconstructed as intended by the participants. The audience for the display, whether they are other members of the family, community or neighbourhood, or indeed researchers, need to understand the intent of the displayers in order for the display to be successful. Previously, a successful family display has been discussed in terms of whether or not the audience perceives that the family 'works' (Seymour, 2015). The Mennonite data presented show that a display can be unsuccessful if it is read through the wrong lens; as a family display when it is intended as a display of a specific community.

Conclusion

This paper contributes by *testing* the concept of family display in a number of discrete ways. Firstly, we re-iterate that family display can be employed to display a particular family 'type' and we provide empirical evidence that this includes the 'Assimilated Family' and 'Polish Family'. Further, we confirm that family display does matter and we add to knowledge by showing that it can be a strategy used by some migrant family children, with the aim of showing 'belonging' in their new home. Consequently, we affirm that 'family display' is a useful addition to the conceptual 'tool box' for understanding families.

In addition to this, we also *develop* the concept in a number of ways. Firstly, analysis presented shows that family display cannot always be assumed to have positive outcomes. This is because, whilst family display has transgressive potential to broaden hegemonic norms around family, display which finely differentiates between Family types may contribute to segregational discourses and practices. In the context of migration, for example, data presented show that family display can have negative outcomes; the discursive practice of talking about an almost intangible difference between 'Polish Families' and 'British Families' etc. reduces individuals to

homogenous ‘types’, is potentially divisive, and this is reproduced in some migrant family children. Similarly, Mennonite children displaying cultural difference and tradition through their clothing can have negative repercussions in the mainstream Canadian culture.

In the discussion presented, we also raise important new questions about the relationship between family display, the role of structure, and whether, and to what extent, individuals are agentic in engaging in displays. We do so by considering different contexts in which children and young people have varying levels of agency and, therefore, ability to make choices in relation to display. There is, for example, evidence that children in some Eastern European migrant families do engage in family display and they are active agents that negotiate various audiences. It is also suggested, however, that this occurs more as children get older and have more agency to act autonomously of their parents. This relationship between ability to display and ability to exercise agency provides a fruitful area of further research linking Family and Childhood Studies.

By drawing on data that compares family life in the context of migration, we have uniquely examined the blurring and complexity of the boundary between cultural and family displays. Conceptually, the data presented support Morgan’s argument that family practices are ‘already partially shaped by legal prescriptions, economic constraints and cultural definitions’ (Morgan, 2011: 7). Our analysis stresses, however, that the latter need to be shared by displayers and the audience for the *family* display to be successful. The article, therefore, empirically develops the family practices approach by showing situations where cultural and family displays are interdependent and overlap. We also develop thinking related to ‘family display’ by showing that display of both family and culture can have a dual function of showing familial legitimacy and supporting positive identity creation in a new community. These accounts show, however, that children may be conflicted in their displays, in that they are making complex decisions about how to display in different spaces. In contrast to the discussion of Polish families, for example, the Assimilated Family does not exist in terms of display for these Mennonite children. Rather, the practice, instead, displays difference rather than assimilation – although within the community itself such display does confirm belonging. In part, this contrast with Polish young people in the

UK context is due to the limited - or thin (Klocker, 2007) - agency exercised by children within Mennonite communities. As such, we argue that, whilst the examples presented do display The Family as well as family, we must be careful of how we read displays and ensure that we understand them from the point of view of those enacting them. Researchers should, instead, be cautious of applying a concept that has been enthusiastically adopted and they need to fully interrogate the intentions of those they study to ensure they do not mis-ascribe displays. Indeed, in this article we show that the priority for display may not necessarily be the presentation of legitimate family, but other features of collective identity: the Mennonite community are perhaps saying 'this is my community and it works'.

Notes

1. Commercial Homes are small-scale hospitality establishments offering accommodation in domestic settings such as small hotels, bed and breakfast, guest and public houses, or farms. The paying guests interact with, and may share space, with the families who live in and run these businesses (Lynch 2005).
2. Low-German is an oral tradition. Worship and instruction in schools within the colonies is primarily in High German which is written.

Funding details: McNamee's study with Mennonite communities was funded by King's University College (Canada), and Walsh's study with migrant families was conducted as part of a broader PhD study, funded by a University of Hull (England) scholarship.

The authors of the article declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements: The authors gratefully acknowledge the contribution made by research participants, without whom this work would not have been possible. We also thank the editor of the journal, and the peer reviewers of the article, for their comments and suggestions.

References:

Almack, K. (2008) Display Work: Lesbian Parent Couples and their Families of Origin Negotiating New Kin Relationships, *Sociology*, 42(6): 1183-1199.

Angulo, C.T. (2004) *Mennonite language, culture, history and education: a general overview and review of the literature*, Unpublished M.Ed. thesis, Texas Tech University.

BBC News (2013) *Eric Pickles: Immigrants Must Learn to Speak English*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-23271315

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology*, Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2): 77-101.

Carter, J, Duncan, S, Stoilova, M. and Phillips, M. (2015) Sex, love and security: accounts of distance and commitment in LAT relationships, *Sociology*, 50(3): 435-452.

Carver, N. (2014) Displaying Genuineness: cultural translation in the drafting of marriage narratives for immigration application and appeals, *Families, Relationships and Societies,* 3(2): 271-286.

Dermott, E. and Seymour, J. (eds) (2011) *Displaying Families: A New Concept for the Sociology of Family Life*, Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan.

Epp, M. (2008) *Mennonite women in Canada: a history,* Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

Finch, J. (2007) Displaying Families, *Sociology*, 41(1): 65-81.

Finch, J. (2011) Exploring the Concept of Display in Family Relationships, in E. Dermott and J. Seymour (eds) *Displaying Families: A New Concept for the Sociology of Family Life*, Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 197-205.

Gabb, J. (2008) *Researching Intimacy in Families,* UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gabb, J. (2011) Troubling Displays: The Affect of Gender, Sexuality and Class, in E. Dermott and J. Seymour (eds) *Displaying Families: A New Concept for the Sociology of Family Life*, Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 38-60.

Haynes, J. and Dermott, E. (2011) Displaying Mixedness: Differences ad Family Relationships, in E. Dermott and J. Seymour (eds) *Displaying Families: A New Concept for the Sociology of Family Life*, Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 145-159.

Hughes, K. and Valentine, G. (2011) Practices of Display: The Framing and Changing of Internet Gambling Behaviours in Families, in E. Dermott and J. Seymour (eds) *Displaying Families: A New Concept for the Sociology of Family Life*, Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 122-125.

Heaphy, B. (2011) Critical Relational Displays, in E. Dermott and J. Seymour (eds) *Displaying Families: A New Concept for the Sociology of Family Life*, Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 19-38.

Kehily, M. J. and Thomson, R. (2011) Displaying Motherhood: Representations, Visual Methods and the Materiality of Maternal Practice, in E. Dermott and J. Seymour (eds) *Displaying Families: A New Concept for the Sociology of Family Life*, Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 61-80.

Klocker, N, 2007, 'An example of "thin" agency: Child domestic workers in Tanzania', in R, Panelli, S, Punch and E, Robson (eds) *Global perspectives on rural childhood and youth: Young rural lives,* New York: Routledge.

Kundnani, A. (2007) *The End of Tolerance,* London: Pluto Books.

Loewen, R. (2015) A village among the nations: Low German migrants and the idea of transnationalism in the history of Mennonites in Canada, *The Conrad Grebel Review*, 33(1).

Lynch, P.A. (2005) Reflections on the Home Setting in Hospitality, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management,* 12(1): 37-49.

Mason, J. (2002) *Qualitative Researching*, London: Sage.

McNamee, S. (2016) *The Social Study of Childhood: an introduction*, London: Palgrave Macmillan

McNamee, S. and Seymour, J. (2012) Towards a Sociology of 10-12 Year Olds? Emerging methodological issues in the "new" social studies of childhood, *Childhood: A Journal of Global Child Research,* 20(2): 156-168.

Morgan, D. (1996) *Family Connections*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Morgan, D. (2011) *Rethinking Family Practices,* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mulvey, G. (2010) When Policy Creates Politics: The problematizing of immigration and the consequences for refugee integration in the UK, *Oxford Journals Online,* 23(4): 437-462.

Phillips, G. (2013) Relationality and moral reasoning in accounts of fathering after separation in divorce: care, gender and working at 'fairness', *Families, Relationships and Societies*, 2(3): 409-24.

Robinson, D. (2010) New immigrants and migrants in social housing in Britain: discursive themes and lived realities. *Policy and Politics*, 38(1): 57-77.

Seymour, J. (2011) 'Family Hold Back': Displaying Families in the Single-Location Home/Workplace, in E. Dermott and J. Seymour (eds) *Displaying Families: A New Concept for the Sociology of Family Life*, Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, 160-174.

Seymour, J. (2015) The Transgressive Potential of Families in Commercial Homes, in E. Casey and Y, Taylor (eds) *Intimacies, Critical Consumption and Diverse Economies*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 107–125.

Seymour, J. and Walsh, J, 2013, Displaying Families, Migrant Families and Community Connectedness: The Application of an Emerging Concept in Family Life, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, XLIV(6) 689-698.

Sharma, S. (2008) *Sleep-walking Into Segregation: The Backlash Against Multiculturalism and claims for a Differentialist Citizenship.* http://www.surrey.ac.uk/cronem/files/conf2009papers/Sharma.pdf

Simons, M. (1557) *The Education of Children*, http://www.mennosimons.net/ft056-education.html

Uberoi, V. and Modood, T. (2013) Inclusive Britishness: A Multiculturalist Advance, *Political Studies,* 61(1): 23–41.

Towes, M. (2004) *A Complicated Kindness: a novel,* Canada: Knopf Canada.

Walsh, J. (2015) Displaying Across Borders: The Role of Family Display in Maintaining Transnational Intergenerational Relations, in I, Juozeliuniene and J, Seymour (eds) *Family Change in Times of De-Bordering in Europe and Global Mobility: resources, processes and practices,* Vilnius: Vilnius University Press, pp. 340-358.

Walsh, J. (2018) Migrant Family Display: A Strategy for Achieving Recognition and Validation in a Host Country, *Sociological Research Online*, 23(1).

Werbner, P. (2007) Veiled Interventions in Pure Space Honour, Shame and Embodied Struggles among Muslims in Britain and France, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 24(2), 1661-186.
Weeks, J., Heaphy, B. and Donovan, C. (2001) *Same Sex Intimacies: Families of choice and other life experiments*, London: Routledge.