Blogging Family-like Relations when Visiting Theme and Amusement Parks: The Use of Children in Displays Online

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Abstract

This paper combines sociological perspectives on family display, internet studies on family and private photography and a child studies perspective on the display of children. The paper proposes that blogging practices related to visits to theme and amusement parks in Sweden provide a new arena for people to display family-like relationships. In the different displays, adults mainly use pictures of children in the blogs to demonstrate their ability to perform family-like relationships. The paper suggests that this form of child-centred display, a visualized child-centredness, done during the park visit as well as in the blogging, is part of the construction of contemporary childhoods and what it means to be a child today and has not been theorized in earlier research on the display of family-like relations.

Keywords: Family-like relations, blog posts, visualized child-centredness, online displays, theme and amusement parks

Introduction

The Internet has been highlighted as a social forum for making and remaking identities. Blogging is one of several social practices taking place on the web where 'different kinds of selves' and 'blogging subjectivity' are displayed for virtually anyone to see, comment on or engage with (Dean 2010: 47, 50). We want to combine this theory of blogging with what has been referred to in sociological literature as the display of family-like relations (Finch 2007; James & Curtis 2010). Janet Finch (2007) argues that display is a necessary ingredient of doing family relations since it conveys and at the same time confirms that a practice is about doing family. Mary Jane Kehily and Rachel Thomson (2011) interpret Finch's concept of display as a way of thinking about the audience when family practices are being made. In their study of motherhood, they argue that this display is about embodied visual practices, family narratives and naming practices (Kehily & Thomson 2011). The empirical material investigated in this paper – blog posts – is also highly visual; it is a form of visual stories (Sparrman & Lindgren 2010) and embodied visual practices (Kehily & Thomson 2011) constructed in order to attract an Internet audience. We use this as a point of departure to empirically investigate how the Internet is used as a technology to support photographs and written texts that display family-like relations after visits to theme and amusement parks. It was an unexpected finding that the highly visual stories created on the Internet mainly display children, as if children make the performance of family-like relations legitimate in a specifically normalizing way. We became interested in what this child focus does with 'the links between display and the power of politics of contemporary relational life' (Heapy 2011: 19) and particularly with the notions of children and childhood produced in the displays.

The empirical basis of this paper is blog posts constructed after visits to one theme park (Astrid Lindgren's World, ALW) and one amusement park (Liseberg) in Sweden. According to a report about world-class tourism experiences, visiting theme and amusement parks is a common activity in contemporary society; the parks studied here are specifically mentioned in the report (Danielsson et al. 2011: 28, 37). The same report highlights how people visiting amusement parks, museums, zoos and other attractions are increasingly engaged in documenting their visits. Digital photography and filming are the most common documentation techniques used for uploading experiences onto the Internet or sending them to friends and family (Danielsson et al. 2011: 26). The blog posts we analyze are part of this widespread practice of documenting and uploading a park visit onto the Internet.

In addition to the research mentioned above, which focuses on adults in the display of family-like relations, we focus on the subjects visualized in the displays: the children. We perform detailed analyses of the ways in which norms of child autonomy, child activity and children's need for protection (Cannella & Vi-

ruru 2004; Smith 2012) are brought into play in these displays and how different power relations related to age and the adult-child divide are enacted (Sparrman & Lindgren 2010; Lindgren 2012). The paper suggests that adults use children to display family-like relationships in varying ways, creating what we refer to as visualized child-centredness. In the conclusion we discuss what the implications of adults' widespread use of children in displays might mean for children, and what notions of children and childhood are produced by visualized child-centredness. To help us explore this, one key question guided the analysis: What kind of adult-child relations are created by adults in blog posts displaying family-like relations after visits to theme and amusement parks?

Contextualizing Blogging and Family Display

Blogging is a widespread practice that started during the late 1990s when the first free software was introduced (Dean 2010). Even though there are no numbers for how many blogs are produced by Swedes, studies from the US claim that there are hundreds of millions of blogs produced every day (Dean 2010: 36, 137–138; Kapidzic & Herring 2011: 7). Like other web documents, blogs can be multimodal or purely textual, and variants exist that feature photos, voice recordings (audio blogs), branding blogs (slogs), and videos (vlogs) (Dean 2010; Kapidzic & Herring 2011).

A number of characteristics of the blog are relevant when relating them to theories of the display of family-like relations. According to Jodi Dean (2010), a blog can contain anything that communicates something; an image, reaction, feeling or event, and it captures oral communication in linear writing. Blogs are also saved, stored, archived and accessible, and they leave traces. They signal engagement and participation, that 'I am participating in the construction and extension of a manner of being together' (2010: 47). We would like to suggest that this perspective on participation is similar to descriptions of how family display is presented. For example, it is similar to Finch's description of how displaying family is done in small, intimate and social everyday practices, where 'the meaning of one's actions has to be both conveyed to and understood by relevant others' (Finch 2007: 66). Finch argues that interaction and feedback, as two markers of acceptance, both in the private sphere and among family members, are critical factors in determining whether a display is successful or not (Finch 2007). As we will show, blogging to create family-like relations after visits to theme and amusement parks is about being seen by others, even though one cannot control who those others might be. The blogs exemplify displays that are free-floating (on the Internet) and at the same time connected to specific public places – theme and amusement parks – where displays of children play a major role in how adults construct their understanding of what being together ought to mean. Previous research on the

display of family-like relations has not addressed how adults make use of children putting them on display with the aim of creating themselves.

The blog posts we studied are part of the everyday and mainstream flow of information on the Internet. They caught our attention more or less by chance, surfacing as a spin-off while we were studying the park websites. The blog posts appeared at first glance to be banal, narcissistic, pointless and even parasitic (adults using children to create stories about themselves). But, as Dean (2010) argues, it is exactly these features that make blogging interesting. The mundane recounting of people's everyday experiences is what makes them attractive. We relate this to how Gillian Rose (2001) theorizes about advertisements. They are not meant to deal with serious business, but part of their power is that they are not seen as serious. The 'reception regime' of advertisements suggests that they are superficial and this is also part of their power (2001: 95). Using this as our starting point, we consider blogs to be a powerful form of communication and hence to have an importance for social notions of family-like relations and, more importantly, for the notions of children and childhood that are constructed in these displays created by adults for an adult audience.

A theoretical starting point for this paper is that social and cultural interpretations of the idea of family-like relations differ between individuals, groups, societies and situations; therefore, the meaning of 'family' is under constant negotiation and needs to be analyzed in its cultural context (Silva & Smart 1999; Halldén 2001; Finch 2007; Dermott & Seymour (eds.) 2011; James & Curtis 2010). The individual blog posts analyzed here exemplify ideas of what a family-like event ought to be as well as what places are suited to the display of family-like relations; each blog post presents a story about how family-like relationships can be lived. This is achieved through the creators' perceptions of a location, a specific place constituted in and through amateur photographic practices (Pink 2011), through the feelings they want to share with others and how they want to be seen by others (Richter & Schadler 2009: 175). The bloggers are the main characters in visually displaying photos and written texts. As will be demonstrated, they undertake different positions as family creators and thereby express different understandings of what a family-like relationship should be. And they use children to create these stories about themselves, and that is what we are particularly interested in investigating further.

Empirical Investigation

The blog posts are analyzed as part of a larger ethnographic study (VR Dnr 2009–2384) of children's and families' use of amusement parks and were 'found' as a spin-off when the amusement park websites were explored. In addition to the ethnographic study, this particular paper is inspired by virtual ethnography addressing the use of the Internet as a social practice in which online and offline practices

converge. What people do online is of importance for their offline activities and vice versa (Hine 2001/2003).

In retrieving material for the analysis, the organizing principle was to search on Google for the names of the Swedish theme and amusement parks concerned, i.e. Astrid Lindgren's World (ALW) and Liseberg. There were 14 800 blog post hits for Liseberg and 12 300 for ALW. We focused on the first page of hits (15–20 hits per park). We purposefully selected blog posts focusing on issues around the display of family-like relationships.

In visiting the blog posts, we decided to focus on the topics discussed, how photographs and texts were presented and whether the posts attracted comments and, if so, what kind. We followed the links from the individual blog posts to the full blogs in order to gain an overall impression of the context in which each post was created. In selected cases, we also explored links to blogs 'liked' by the blogger under study. One blog post stood out as exceptional, prompting 37 comments. As the analytical work could go on forever following threads, people posting images and people commenting on blog posts, when to stop the data collection became a pragmatic decision. Following ethnographic practices, we decided to stop when we felt we had a good understanding of the context of each blog post (Hine 2001/2003). This qualitative part of the analysis is time consuming but necessary in order to gain an overall understanding of the organization and categorization of the material. The analysis generated three key stories which we will elaborate upon further below: one about hegemonic family-like relations, one about extended family-like relations, and a third story about being a single parent displaying family-like relations. In each of the three types of stories, the creator of the blog post stood out as a key figure even though he or she was seldom seen in any displays. The stories are subjective and purposefully made for others to share, and we highlight how children are being created in these self-presentations. But first, more needs to be said about the photographs in the blog posts.

The photographs published in the blog posts stood out as the main communicating element. Although studies have noted the increased publicness of the use of personal photography on websites and in blogs (Pauwels 2008; Van House 2011), Internet studies of blogs have focused mainly on the *practice* of blogging (Dean 2010), the textuality of blogs (Papacharissi 2007; Kapidzic & Herring 2011), or the way in which people actively type themselves into being (Sundén 2009). Luc Pauwels (2008), in his studies of family photography on homepages, observes in his analysis that: 'web-based versions of family albums suggest that text often takes precedence over the image' (2008: 40). Bearing this in mind, we found the prevalence of images in blog posts about theme park visits particularly interesting. In fact, no blog posts on park visits lacked photographs, although some lacked written comments. Amateur photography in this sense becomes a way of visually narrating and presenting oneself via the display of family-like relations when visiting a park, and, as argued earlier, we focus on how children are used in these

displays. The high prevalence of photographs made us analyze them carefully; taking note of body postures, clothing, the environment, and how adult-child relations are created in the photographs. In the next step we related this to the written comments.

To be clear, we analyze blog posts, and this is different from analyzing blogs. Blog posts are parts of a blog that could be part of or connected to one or more blogging communities. This means that we cover a wide range of different blogs connected to various blogging communities. The blog posts also appeared on various blogging sites, for example, *blogspot, wordpress*, and *blog.se*. Conducting research on blogs and, more specifically, the visuality of the blogs, and the fact that children are on display, raises ethical considerations. Since it is not the main topic of our argument, we have chosen not to include images of the blog posts or the people shown in them. Nor do we use any real blog usernames. As mentioned above, we found three key stories, and we will now explore these in more detail.

Blogging Hegemonic Family-like Relations

The personal form of expression influencing individual blogs is demonstrated well in the blog 'In mummy's tummy'. It was created by a woman who wanted to share her experience of pregnancy; described by Kehily and Thomson (2011: 80) as part of 'family-in-the-making'. The blogging woman also maintained and wrote in the blog after her baby – a daughter – was born. She explains that after the birth of her daughter her life has become very different 'in a fantastic and wonderful way', implying that motherhood and family life are positive experiences that she wants to share and circulate within popular culture (cf. Kehily & Thomson 2011). Since this blogger is very specific about why she blogs, and that it is related to her way of displaying family-like relationships, we will describe her blog in more detail before turning to the specific blog post about her visit to Liseberg.

The blog is explicitly addressing her unborn daughter, who might read it in the future: 'Siri, if you ever read this you will understand that I love you and am thankful to all kinds of Gods for sending you to us.' The objective expressed by the blogger is that the blog she has created should be kept for the future. This is an example of how an individual participates in the construction of being together (Dean 2010) and, moreover, uses the Internet to lay the foundations for her future family relationships and her own motherhood (cf. Kehily & Thomson 2011). What makes this blog special in relation to Kehily and Thomson's (2011) study of how pregnancy is used as a resource for women in relation to popular culture, is the way in which the daughter is addressed. The daughter is expected, in the future, to learn more about her early life, and her relationships with her parents, through the use of this blog on the Internet. This blog represents what Van House (2011: 128) is referring to when talking about the 'increased publicness of person-

al images' made possible by digitalization, as both relationship maintaining and memory work. The blogger uses a discourse of intimacy similar to the diary genre, and at the same time deliberately publishes her writing for the public eye, using the publicness as an asset rather than a restraint or negative aspect (cf. Papacharissi 2007). Since this blogger has the explicit aim of uploading photographs and telling us about her family's life, it is plausible to assume that she is a frequent user of private photography for a definite purpose. She has a clear strategy about how photographs ought to be used and disseminated, and this strategy is in play even while she is taking the photographs (Cohen 2005).

This blogger's post about a visit to the amusement park Liseberg starts with a formal written description of who went to the park together, informing the presumed audience in a matter-of-fact tone that the visitors – a mother, father and daughter – are 'the whole family'. In this example the blogger presents, in writing, the constellation as a family and the visit as a family visit. In making these formulations, she is actively generating her own identity as a blogger (Sundén 2009) creating family-like relations through the text. Implicitly, this is a family founded according to a heteronormative hegemonic discourse; she is in a biological, heterosexual relationship (woman-man-offspring/child). The process of making these family relationships visible and possible for others to observe seems to be a significant part of this blogger's making of family-like relations. After this brief written introduction, the remainder of the blog post contains photographs.

All in all, there are four photographs of the daughter in the blog post. In two of these the father is included. The two 'family members' are, however, presented very differently. The focus is on the daughter. She is neither facing the camera nor returning the gaze of the beholder, still she is at the centre of each composition. She is fairly young (about 22–24 months) and in one photograph is presented as moving around on her own without any obvious supervision from adults. She is exploring her environment according to valued norms of child autonomy and activity (Smith 2012). The father, when portrayed, is directing his attention towards his daughter; guarding her or holding her in his arms. In the fourth picture, the girl is sitting comfortably and safely in her pram, eating a waffle. Thus, alongside norms of autonomy and activity, the girl is also presented in terms of norms about the need for protection, a highly valued childhood commodity in contemporary western societies (Canella & Viruru 2004; Smith 2012).

The girl is presented as both active and autonomous, and at the same time in need of care and protection from her close family members; this is the family-like relationship put up for display. The father is giving support and protection and the mother is taking an active part as documenter and blogger. She is constructing both herself and her husband as competent, protective parents who give their baby girl the opportunity to be active in a supposedly culturally rich, challenging a safe environment at the amusement park. The display of family-like relations is thus accomplished by a joint adult activity focusing on the girl and this includes put-

ting the girl on display to attract an imagined Internet audience. In fact, there are no people other than family members in these photographs. These family-like relations are thus being done in close relation to each other and with no intervention from others apart from the blog post audience. The notion of a traditional hegemonic family ideal is perceived through the gender of its members as well as by the presentation of the family as being in a separate, private sphere within the public space. We argue that the Internet audience is invited, by the blogger, to look into a private, supposedly intimate moment played out in public. Both the practice played out at the park in real life and the practice of looking at the display online are about displaying family-like relations and the child plays a crucial part in this adult-created self-presentation.

The next example of how hegemonic family-like relations can be put on display is performed by 'Fibbe'. He is a '23-year-old father with two children' who visited Astrid Lindgren's World (ALW). The blog post about ALW starts with the blog enlistment form that Fibbe had partly filled in and partly made ironic comments about. The question 'number of wives'[1] was commented upon with: 'only one partner [Swedish: *Sambo*] with whom I have two star boys.' He then made a specific comment about the fact that he had the two kids with the same woman. After this comment he states, in capital letters: 'NOW IT IS ENOUGH!' According to this father, the family-like relationship ought to be apparent to anyone without further explanation. He is fed up with having to explain the obvious; that his heterosexual, two-child unit, is – even without marriage – a (hegemonic) 'family'.

Fibbe's blog post about the family visit to ALW includes 13 photographs, 11 of which are close-ups of one of the two sons. Each photograph is accompanied by a written comment of his own. The interplay between photographs and text is used to create a humorous, joyful tone. For example, a picture of the eldest son (approximately 38 months) displays the boy as confidently and determinedly walking along one of the streets in ALW. The text for this photo reads that the boy is 'running around in his own little world,' as though the boy was not aware of what was going on around him. Instead of describing the boy as autonomous and active according to idealized western notions of children and childhood (Smith 2012), this father is mocking the idea of the supposedly idyllic childhood being played out in the ALW park (Lindgren 2013; Lindgren et al. 2014). The joking tone continues. Another photograph of the same boy shows him standing behind a closed barrier in one of the houses in the park. The written comment to this photo reads: 'There came a point when we could not stand it any longer and had to lock him up.' The photograph and the father's comment together connote a jail-like situation in which the boy is behind bars, put there by his parents. The smaller boy (approximately 10 months), is shown sitting in a pram, facing the photographer and trying to get hold of the camera; he gets the comment: 'He was also with us on the trip.' As these examples illustrate, this father, in the blog post,

resists the idea of the idyllic as a necessary ingredient for displaying family-like relationships. Instead of invoking the idyllic, he is using a joking and ironic tone to display – visually and via the written comments – his family-like relationships online. He uses humour to protect his family and himself *against* notions of the idyllic family (Halldén 2001). This is a discourse of fatherhood that Gunilla Halldén (2001) found to be prevalent in the stories of teenage boys writing about their future families in Sweden. In his blog post, Fibbe is using a discourse that makes it possible to joke about the idyllic and at the same time to display family-like relations where his own role as father is emphasized through visualized displays of his children.

As shown so far, photographs of children are the material and virtual foundation used for the actual making of heteronormative, white, family-like relations online. But there are also other stories being produced and put on display, as we will now go on to discuss.

Blogging Extended Family-like Relations

A female blogger visited Liseberg with her partner [Swedish: *Sambo*] and her sister's daughter in December during the annual Christmas bazaar. She created a blog post out of seven photographs with associated written comments. The blogger frames the circumstances of the visit quite elaborately. It was sponsored by her employer, and she arrived together with her male partner and her sister's daughter in the afternoon, and stayed for a few hours. When making the presentation, the blogger explains that her partner's daughter could not join them. Her partner's daughter is named her 'pretend-daughter'. Eventually, when she presents her own sister's daughter, her biological relative, she is named as 'her niece'. By making these distinctions, the blogger presents the niece as a real relative and not something pretended. The blogger creates a close connection between herself and the biologically related child, at the same time as she presents herself as interested in her partner's daughter. In creating this blog story, she is presenting herself as competent in the various practices of social mothering; she makes it clear that she can take care of both socially related and biologically related girls in family-like activities. These activities are also related to having fun; according to the blogger, the three visitors experienced 'great fun' at Liseberg and this is also a reason to 'share some pictures.'

Three photographs of the Liseberg environment visually emphasize that Christmas is close, and this is also reinforced in the written text. The blogger talks about the 'beautiful light' and the atmosphere created in the park. She also points out the presence of live reindeer. After this atmospheric description, the tone of voice changes abruptly. In a humorous tone the blogger encourages the viewer to notice that one of the reindeer 'looks headless'. In the last photograph the partner stands, with 'his silly cap', holding a huge chocolate bar he won in the lottery. In

a joking tone the blogger comments: 'He'd better hide the chocolate otherwise I'll eat most of it.' Several members of the blog community took up the joking tone in their comments by asking whether the chocolate was a teaser for themselves or not.

We will now focus on the three photographs in this blog post portraying the blogger's sister's daughter. Two of them focus on the girl (approximately 24 months) without any adults visible. One is a close-up of her face with a text commenting that she is looking at the partner's 'silly hat'. The other is of the girl playing with a model pig. Both these pictures present her as autonomous, active and independent, similar to the photographs of the girl in the 'mummy's tummy' blog post, and to the boys in Fibbe's blog post above. In contrast to Fibbe's way of using humour to resist the idyllic, this female blogger is instead using the idyllic to display family-like relations. She is in fact part of a blog community that places a strong emphasis on the idyllic, romantic and nostalgic, which could be identified as being involved in struggles to 'sustain the idea of home and family' (Furlong 1995: 185) by blogging about their homes and lives. The blogger is presenting the girl within the context of a hegemonic discourse where nostalgia and imaginative play are key elements in what is defined as a good childhood (Canella & Viruru 2004; Lindgren 2006; Chudacoff 2007; Smith 2012).

The third picture of the girl presents her together with the blogger. The blogger, looking into the camera, is holding the girl in a firm grip around her chest, while the girl is looking in another direction. They are almost cheek to cheek. In this example, the blogger positions herself alongside the child, connecting to her in the position of being looked at by the photographer, even though it is the blogger and not the child who is meeting the camera's eye. Their bodies are close, as is their biological relationship, the photograph communicates. In the written comment to this photograph, the girl is described as the aunt's 'doll', suggesting that the child actually belongs to her. Moreover, she aligns herself with the girl in opposition to her male partner, who is taking the photograph and about whom she is making jokes. This blogger is thus creating a notion of herself and the girl as being connected in a 'we-ness' from which the adult male is excluded. Concomitantly, the female blogger uses the girl and her male partner to create herself both as a (social) mother and as competent in the displaying of extended family-like relations at Liseberg. The blogger received plenty of direct recognition in comments from the blog community she belongs to, indicating that her blogging strategy was successful. One woman writes in a comment that she visited Liseberg in 1979, 'with my boyfriend who later became my husband. We were very young then and had so much fun.' She concludes by commenting that it is probably time to go back again. In saying this, she confirms the blogger's presentation of Liseberg as a place where you can foster different kinds of family-like relationships and it was the displays that made this shared understanding possible. It was the display of the blogger herself together with the girl child that attracted most

reactions from the Internet audience, indicating that, in addition to herself (Dean 2010), the child played an important role in interesting an imagined audience.

Blogging Single-parent Family-like Relations

A blogging father went to visit Liseberg with his disabled son at Christmas time. The father's blog is used to raise questions about how well-suited society, and family homes, are for people using a wheelchair. He is also informing readers and commenting about how private homes can be built in order to meet disabled people's needs and 'people' related to disabled people. 'Anyone' can have a friend or family member who suddenly begins to use a wheelchair or to need one, he argues.

The blog post is a story about how this father, as a single parent, brings his son to Liseberg for, as we interpret it, a 'normal' single-parent 'family' activity. This blog post makes much of a pun based on the similarity in Swedish between the words for Christmas [Swedish: *jul*] and wheel [Swedish: *hjul*]; making his son's disability stand out as both particular and normal at the same time. This struggle to create disability as something that is simultaneously specific and normal is also highlighted in the text commenting on the first photograph in the blog post. The blogger writes under a photograph of his son: 'There were a lot of people at Liseberg today. It was crowded, and people confined to wheelchairs [Swedish: *rullstolsbundna*] were no exception.' There were so many that all the disabled parking spaces in front of Liseberg were taken, and this father and son had to use another car park. This is directly followed by a description of the most essential activity for this specific visit: buying mustard and honey, food related to Swedish Christmas traditions and hence shared by many. In the middle of this process, the father explains, a 'couple' unexpectedly gave the son a supporter's cap (for the local football team). The father then makes a comment explicitly addressing the imagined blog post audience, encouraging their gazes towards the photograph of his son: 'Look how happy he is😊.' In addition to the actual photograph, the father uses a happy smiley in the written comment, thereby adding to the importance of communicating his son's happiness with visual cues.

Three of the five photographs in the blog post portray the son as active, happy and autonomous, in line with notions of a good, normal childhood, as we have discussed in the earlier examples. In the photographs, the fact that the boy is using a wheelchair is downplayed visually; only a careful examination of details reveals the wheelchair. Much like the father Fibbe, above, who was displaying nuclear family-like relationships, this blog post discusses the son, telling in photographs and written comments what happened to him and what he was feeling during the visit. This father also makes jokes. An obvious difference, however, is that this father does not make jokes *about* his son but instead about himself. It is fathers, not children, who cannot resist their impulses, he writes, which is a different way

of presenting children and adults compared to the blogger Fibbe and the author of 'In mummy's tummy'. In addition, as discussed above, this blogger is using different visual strategies to encourage the implied viewer to share his interpretation that his son is happy. The alleged normality of the activity – going to an amusement park – is, we argue, used firstly to create both the disabled son and the father as 'normal', and secondly to display a family-like activity being engaged in by a single, biological parent.

The last example in this analysis is that of a single mother with two biological children of different genders going to ALW. This mother went to the park with her children and her own sister. It is her sister and the children that she tells stories about in her blog. She is also interested in, and supports, the idea that her daughter should develop as a blogger and create a blog of her own. As far as one can see, this woman's blog community is exclusively female. Our interpretation is that this blogger is mainly addressing a female blog community, shared by 'sisters' in line with a feminist discourse highlighting the importance of women and sisterhood, and female community-building and solidarity that has its roots in the late 1960s (Friedan 1976/1998). This female blogger also presents herself in front of the camera with her biological daughter, a strategy similar to that used by the aunt who was creating herself as displaying social motherhood and extended family at Liseberg, as discussed earlier. Whereas the aunt displaying social motherhood was in close bodily contact with the girl she was displaying as part of her extended family, this *biological* mother is standing beside her daughter, in a position where she and the girl face the camera autonomously, as two separate individuals.

The blog post comprises 13 photographs and written text structured as a real-time story with a beginning, a middle and a clear ending. The beginning is the preparation for the trip and arrival at ALW, together with a direct address to the imagined blog community that: 'Now at last the promised pictures will come.' The middle tells about what happened at the park, while the ending of the story addresses the fact that the blog post has now, 'finally', been uploaded. The story-like aspect is also highlighted in the written text by statements such as: 'the day started with…' At the beginning, the pictures are composed as formal portraits of the participants taking part in the story, who are standing directly facing the camera. As in traditional family albums, each picture has a descriptive text associated with it. Hence, the blog post is organized to mimic a traditional display of pictures in a family album (Chalfen 1991; Rose 2001).

In this blog post, several photographs depict the two children exploring specific events at ALW. They interact with each other or experience the events side by side. These pictures stress the notion that the children are siblings, and in that sense part of a 'family', even though it is headed by a single mother. The photographs are part of this female blogger's construction of her perception of the location, the feelings she wants to share with others and how she wants to be seen by

others (Richter & Schadler 2009: 175). We argue that the construction is about her desire to be seen as a single mother who can create family-like relations with her biological relations: her sister and children. The photographs represent more than they depict (Richter & Schadler 2009: 173), in this case a larger story of a single mother's achievement in displaying family-like relationships (Finch 2007). The story tells about a complex process of which she is in charge; that she has planned the trip, paid for it, taken part in it, documented it and, when the blog post is constructed, she finalizes the last but by no means the least important step of the process, namely, investing time after the actual activity to display the visit for others. Both the photographs and the display itself signal the greatness of the achievement she has performed as a female, single parent. She is using *visualized child-centredness* to acknowledge her own achievement.

Concluding Discussion: Blogging Visualized Child-centredness

Our analysis of blog posts about visits to theme and amusement parks confirms the arguments of Finch (2007), James and Curtis (2010) and Kehily and Thomson (2011), that doing family is increasingly becoming dependent on public places for public display, in addition to the importance of doing family at home (Furlong 1995). This paper offers more empirical evidence supporting the argument that there is diversity in what is regarded as family-like relationships. We found both single mothers and single fathers positioning themselves as providers of biological family-like relationships. We also found mothers and fathers as providers of biological, heteronormative families. In addition, one woman created herself as social mother to a girl, using a family-like event to achieve this status. It is, we argue, 'fatherhood' and 'motherhood' (Halldén 2001) that are being displayed in the blog posts, rather than a general 'parenthood'. We argue that the display of family-like relations, and hence also the idea of family (James & Curtis 2010), is used in blogs as an idea that people relate to as a way of conveying oneself as a mother or father by displaying children. What the paper highlights is the prominent part that children play in adults' self-created stories, and we argue that adult displays of family-like relations create a new form of child centredness, a *visualized child-centredness*, to attract an imagined (adult) audience on the Internet, and we will now discuss the implications of this.

Using the Internet means that bloggers combine traditional and new photographic strategies in novel practices. In displaying family-like relationships, the bloggers make direct use of the Internet – as a public medium – to create stories not only for the private sphere, in accordance with traditional activities around creating family photograph albums (Chalfen 1991; Rose 2001), but additionally, and this is new, for an imagined public audience, both known and unknown. This known and unknown audience consists of the people taking part in the activity that was used to create the stories displayed in photographs and written com-

ments, other visitors to the park, a wider community of close or distant friends in a blog community and perfect strangers who want to share these stories that are made available on the Internet. In fact, to have a real audience from whom to gain recognition, confirming that a display is about performing family (Finch 2007), seems in the blog posts we have analyzed to be of minor or zero importance. The fact that the Internet serves as a place for public display, where family-like relations can be watched and shared, seems to be enough. Making the family-like activity public and visible seems to be regarded as sufficient to be accepted as recognized from the blog post creator's point of view, and these displays performs visualized child centredness.

This analysis of blog posts shows not only that photographs are a key tool in making displays about visits to theme and amusement parks but, in addition, that the bloggers choose to use photographs of and comments about children when creating their blog stories. Children are displayed *by* adults as part of the adults' visual stories of family-like relationships. Moreover, the blog stories are re-inscribing notions of 'family' as safe, planned, child-centred and idyllic (Halldén 2001). There are, however, different strategies brought into play to illustrate this notion of the idyllic; we found examples where the idyllic is embraced and used to constitute the family-like state as well as examples of how resistance towards it, expressed with the help of humour, serves as a means of displaying family-like relations. The overall interpretation is that the blog posts are part of a re-inscription of these parks as places where you 'do' a joyful childhood by interacting with supposedly safe childhood culture, in an allegedly positive family-like environment (cf. Lindgren 2013; Lindgren et al. 2014). The adults are the organizers of the visits and the creators of the blog post stories, and hence also of the displayed, supposedly joyful, untroubled childhoods. Being the creators of joyful childhoods seems to create a privileged position that these adults strive to inhabit.

It is important to notice the distinction between the adult actors who are performing the display and the children who are being used for the display, and hence are the ones being put on display. Adults are happy and joyful when accomplishing the display if the children are happy in the visualizations. This supports the emphasis on paying attention to the power relations involved in display practices using technology, particularly when children are involved (Sparrman & Lindgren 2010; Lindgren 2012). In addition to paying attention to differences between the actors 'displaying' and those witnessing the displays (Dermott & Seymour 2011; Doucet 2011), our analysis emphasizes the importance of also taking into account who is putting whom on display and for what purpose when power relations between adults and children come into play. Children are in fact used by adults and are repeatedly put in the position of being looked at; they are put on visual display by adults positioning themselves and other adults as the presumed onlookers (Sparrman & Lindgren 2010; Lindgren 2012). In this way, adults uploading photographs of children onto the Internet position themselves as well as

the imagined audience as adult onlookers taking part in the display of family-like relations. Taken together, they create an adult 'we-ness'. This is a 'we-ness' that is different from the one that downplays generational differences, or creates a narrative of a family 'we-ness' (James & Curtis 2010). The 'we-ness' constructed in the blog posts, and as part of making a heteronormative, child-centred idea of family, creates a gap between generations; the adults constitute a 'we' from which the children are excluded. The specific 'we-ness' performed in these blog posts is, as already mentioned, used by the adults to take the position of being onlookers in relation to children, while the children are given the position of being looked at. Thus, the blog posts use and create what we choose to name a new form of visualized child-centredness in displays of family-like relations. Since this child-centredness enacts asymmetrical power relations, it cannot be taken for granted as empowering the children or notions of childhood in society.

Despite societal efforts to create a sense of equality between the generations, the blog stories displaying family-like relations give adults and children opposing positions, where adults are the ones looking at children and the children are being looked at. The asymmetrical power relations created in these visual practices are similar to what Mindy Blaise (2013: 814) refers to as adults being the 'knower' and children being the 'known', a 'reductionist logic of developmental paradigms' that she wants to move beyond by using a postdevelopmental approach in which these logics become mixed up and rethought. We have shown how such traditional asymmetrical developmental-based power relations are reinforced in displays of joyful childhoods in blogs; the displays are alleged to be fun for both adults and children. From a child's perspective, however, the joyful childhoods might translate into something less positive; to be put on display by close adults who create stories about themselves. We regard this as part of how display, according to Jacqui Gabb (2011: 39), 'with its incumbent audience reinforces a normalising gaze that legitimises certain displays at the expense of others.' It would be interesting to see what children's displays of visits to parks would include and in what unexpected ways their visions may open up new, perhaps messy and unknown perspectives on the display of family-like relationships.

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Notes

[1] This was a question about how many times a person had been divorced and engaged in a new marriage.

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