

Name of collection

Why mothers post about their children on social media

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So there seems to be similarities with the way in which mothers manage family-related material and photos both on and offline. So in the research that I've been doing, I've been interviewing mothers about their uploads of family photos and status updates to social media, and it seems that their postings respond to particular relational concerns and practices about doing family in everyday life. So for example, in Western culture, the notion of togetherness is really central to the way in which we understand and do family. And this was reflected in how women were talking about their general uploads to social media.

So for example, they chose photos that reflected family togetherness, so all members of a particular family were in the frame. And what was important to this is that it was the notion of togetherness that was prioritized over other things that we might worry about when we're posting photos online, so for example, how we look. So what was being prioritized is a genuineness or authenticity about the closeness of that family unit.

And what was particularly interesting is that the mothers-- some of the mothers reported that their children were asking for family selfies. And what this seemed to point to is that doing family selfies were not just a reflection or a representation of family togetherness but was an actual practice of doing familial intimacy. What the mothers also talked about was the way that social media can generate quite negative judgment.

And in contrast to how the phenomenon of sharenting is generally positioned, the upload of family material, the mothers talked about the photos or happy family photos and status updates as a relatively safe thing to post about and seemed to mitigate the idea of negative judgment about these postings. So the women discussed kind of the happy family photo as quite resistant to criticism and they talked about the number of likes. So family photos generally what they saw as a high number of likes and positive comments compared to other kinds of postings. So it seems that the posting of this kind of happy family material was, in some respects, a defensive reaction to ward against accusations of showing off.

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