MIGRANT FAMILY DISPLAY: A STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION IN THE HOST COUNTRY

Abstract

This article draws on the narratives of ten migrant families living in a predominantly white British northern UK city, Hull, and brings together the typically distinct fields of the sociology of family, transnational family studies and migration studies. By uniquely applying the lens of family display to migrant family accounts, this article offers a timely new way to understand the strategies migrant families employ when negotiating recognition and validation in an increasingly globalised world. Existing applications of family display focus on what might be referred to as unconventional families: same-sex couples; dual-heritage families; single-parent households; families living in commercial homes. Further, previous migration studies consider the strategies employed by migrant *individuals,* sometimes within a family, but do not do so through the lens of family display. The concept has not, then, been applied to migrant families and their everyday lives, and with a specific focus on understanding the influence of audience in family display. This article, therefore, contributes to migration and transnational family studies by providing a new way of understanding migrant family lives, and also advancing the concept of family display in three clear ways: by showing that migrant families *do* display family to audiences beyond the family – including the State - so as to present as a 'legitimate' family; by expanding understanding of how family display is enacted; and by arguing that broader narratives influence those related to 'family' and impact on how and why migrant families engage in family displays.

Introduction:

This article offers a timely new way to understand the strategies migrant families employ when negotiating recognition and validation in an increasingly globalised world. By applying the lens of family display to migrant family accounts of how they interact with others in their new environment, this article uniquely shows, empirically, that family display is an important strategic feature of migrant family life. Janet Finch asserts that, if *family* has become a set of 'practices' that must be 'done' (Morgan 1996; 2011), *family* must also be 'displayed' to significant others if family participants are to convey that 'these are my family relationships and they work'; that they are legitimate (2007: 73). Later, Finch (2011) emphasises that, for her, family display is primarily concerned with conveying meaning to 'significant others' within the family and not audiences

external to the family unit. Scholars have, however, called for further exploration of the role of audiences in family display (Dermott & Seymour 2011; Gabb 2011; Carter *et al.* 2015), and also highlight the need to examine discourses that influence display (Heaphy 2011). By examining why and how migrant families engage in family display in a northern, English city, and with whom they aim to achieve familial legitimacy, this article contributes to the sociology of family in three important ways: by expanding understanding of how family display is enacted; by showing that migrant families *do* display family to *multiple* audiences beyond the family, including the State; and by showing that discourses other than those related to 'family' can impact on how and why migrant families engage in family displays.

Vertovec (2004: 973) argues that migrant families can be 'their own agents of change' and have influence in their new lives. Building on this, Bryceson and Vuorela use the term 'frontiering' to describe the 'agency [migrants have] at the interface between two (or more) contrasting ways of life' (2002: 12), and the strategies families employ at this interface between 'their own and the host society culture' (Heath *et al.* 2011: 4.3). As discussion draws on the concept of 'frontiering', the focus of analysis is migrant family displays intended for indigenous populations. Previous studies that consider the everyday strategies employed by migrant *individuals* at this interface, include: Ryan's (2010) examination of how Polish migrants negotiate their identity in London; Lopez Rodiguez's (2010) study of Polish mothers and their focus on the education of their children; and Rabikowska's (2010) analysis of quotidian food practices for Polish migrants (re)creating their home in London. Whilst Heath *et al.* (2011) posit that family display may be a 'way of belonging' employed by migrant families when establishing transnational identities, this proposition is not applied to empirical data. By applying the concept of family display to the accounts of migrant families living in the UK, and arguing that this is a feature of migrant family life, this study also contributes to the field of transnational family studies, and migration studies. By doing so, these typically disparate fields are provided with a new way to understand the lives of migrant families.

Theoretical Framework

Expanding Family Display: Why Display Matters to Contemporary Families

Finch (2007) builds on Morgan's (1996) earlier argument that the modern family is no longer the 'fixed' concept of a nuclear family, consisting of biological parents and their children living in one household, but it is fluid, diverse and multifaceted. The concept of family has, instead, become a set of 'practices' that are 'done' which take on meaning, associated with family, at a given point

in time (Morgan 1996; 2011). Finch, however, expands and argues that families *need* to be 'displayed' as well as 'done', as '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). Overall, Finch argues that, if 'family practices' aim to legitimise contemporary family, 'display' is necessary if family participants are to convey 'these are my family relationships and they work' (2007: 73). For her, family display is not only relevant to those families that might be perceived as 'non-conventional' but is, instead, relevant to *all* families at times of 'intensity'. Finch argues that the reasons display matters are: family no longer equates to household; the fluidity of family over time; and the relationship between family and personal identities (2007: 68-71).

Finch's influential article invites others to refine the concept of family display. In the period following the publication, applications of theory focused on 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 include Nordquist's (2010) study of lesbian parent couples and donor conceived children, James and Curtis' (2010) consideration of eating practices in relation to display and personal life, and Philip's (2013) study of fathering post-divorce. Others give attention to familial contexts that resonate with those discussed in this paper; Hayes and Dermott (2011) consider family display in dual-heritage families (2011) and Carver (2014) applies family display to the ways in which marriage narratives are constructed in immigration applications in the UK. There is, however, a lack of literature focusing on if and/or why family display is a strategy employed by migrant families to achieve familial legitimacy in their everyday lives. As the United Nations estimates that globally, in 2015, there were 244 million (UN 2015) international migrants, it is increasingly salient that scholars understand strategies that foster cohesion between indigenous and migrant communities. This article, therefore: responds to Finch's invitation; addresses this gap in knowledge; and shows why and how, in the context of migration, migrant families *do* feel driven to display family.

Exploring 'displaying families': the role of audience
By showing why and how migrant families display family, this paper develops Finch's concept further by illustrating how migrant family displays are shaped by audiences beyond the family. 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). Scholars argue, however, that there is a need for further research to consider the role of 'audience' in family display particularly in terms of who counts as the 'relevant others' (Dermott & Seymour, 2011; Haynes & Dermott 2011; Gabb 2011; Carter *et al.* 2015). Writing in 2011, although accepting of the need to investigate 'the more public dimensions of display' (Finch 2011: 204), Finch continued to emphasise that, for her, family display is primarily concerned with conveying meaning to those within, and not audiences external to, the family unit. Others have, however, pressed for a consideration of external audiences as influential in shaping family displays (Hayes & Dermott, 2011). Elsewhere, Walsh (2015) discusses the influence of transnational family members as the audience in family displays. This article uniquely examines the multi-layered nature of display, by focusing on migrant families' responses to co-resident audiences *beyond* the family. Those considered, here, were most prominent in participant accounts and include the State and broader indigenous populations.

Family as a discursive construct
Heaphy (2011) argues that the concept of family display is flawed as some family constructs are privileged and perceived to be more 'legitimate' or 'normal' than others. Further, Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards assert, 'every discourse – including the discourse of family studies – represents a view from *somewhere,* understood as a standpoint that then implicates issues of power and inequality' (2011: 59). The argument presented draws on Heaphy's critique, and the premise that *family* is a discursive construct that exists across a vast range of institutions (Chambers 2001). Whilst scholars show that migrant *individuals* emphasise their 'normalcy' when forming identities in the host country (for example, Ryan 2010; Rabikowska, 2010), they do not consider what is seen as 'normal' *family* in the cross cultural context and, subsequently, how migrant families are driven to reflect this in their family displays. In the context of migration this is, however, complex, as the influences that contribute to the production of discourse related to family will differ in each host country and country of origin. What is, then, seen to be an acceptable *family practice*, or family display*,* may also differ dependent on both the family and observer's country of origin (Seymour and Walsh 2013).

Chambers' (2001) also argues that broader narratives can further 'other' those families that are outside of dominant societal norms. It is argued, here, that political and media discourses that present immigration as problematic and require migrant populations to conform to ideals of

Britishness can influence attitudes towards a topic (Mulvey 2010; Greenslade 2005) and, thereby, constitute such narratives. It is necessary, then, to outline the interconnected political and media representation of immigration, black and minority ethnic communities, and Islam during the period in which the study presented was conducted: 2013. At this time, the UK's newly elected coalition government presented *all* immigration as problematic, promoted the imposition of further immigration 'control' – including measures to kerb family migration - and presented migrants as 'worthy' or 'unworthy' (Robinson 2010). In 2012, for example, a minimum income requirement was introduced for UK citizens applying for a spouse, or partner, from outside of the European Economic Area, to join them in the UK (Gov.UK 2014). Further, The Labour Party, in opposition, continued a pro-assimilationist stance on community cohesion (Sharma 2008), by rhetorically promoting 'one nation' without including British black and minority ethnic identities (Uberi & Modood 2013). An expectation that all living in the UK should be competent speakers of English was also embedded within these narratives (BBC 2013).

To add to this, amidst a growing atmosphere of Islamophobia, and Asian communities being presented as problematic (Pantazis & Pemberton 2009; Finney & Simpson 2009), in May, 2013, an off duty, British Army soldier was murdered by British-born Muslims. This event triggered a spike in anti-Muslim sentiment and, around this time, the English Defence League (a far right protest group with extreme anti-Islamic views) held two marches in Hull (Pitt 2013). The article shows how, within a cross-cultural context, discourses related to family, and those related to migration and nationhood influence migrant family displays.

The following section describes the research setting, the choice of research methods and the approach to data analysis.

Introducing the empirical study.

Analysis is grounded in a broader ethnographic study conducted throughout 2013, in a city in the North East of England, Hull. The aim of the study was to explore the role of *family* and 'family display' in this increasingly culturally diverse city. Since 2000, the UK has experienced an era of 'new migration' and, whilst the population of Hull remains typically white British, this change is reflected in the demographic of the city; the 2001 census showed 3% of people (7308) living in Hull to be born outside the UK, whilst the 2011 census showed this figure to have increased to 10% (25610) (Migration Yorkshire 2014). This is because, since 2000, Hull has become a dispersement area for asylum seekers and refugees and there has been a significant increase in

the number of EU economic migrants entering the city (Lewis *et al*. 2008). As a resident mother and, previously, a community development worker in the city, I lived and worked with migrant families as they arrived in Hull and, also, indigenous families as they adjusted to new arrivals in the community. As such, I began to observe migrant families and interactions between communities. The relatively recent nature of this concentrated demographic shift, in this post-industrial, predominantly white, northern city, provided a unique opportunity to examine the role of 'family' in the everyday lives of 'new' migrant families living in the UK.

Migrant Families

The experiences of migrant families living in the city were documented by conducting family group interviews with ten migrant families, followed, several weeks later, by one-to-one interviews with individual family members. Participant families were recruited from the local community by distributing flyers in public spaces and via the researcher's pre-existing networks, developed as a community development worker. Family adults were primary migrants from a diverse range of countries - Kurdistan (1), Slovakia (2), Nigeria (1), Poland (2), Malaysia (1), Bangladesh (1), China (1), Kurdish/white British mixed (1) - and had different immigration motives as economic migrants, refugees, students and asylum seekers. The diversity of the sample was purposive so as to provide an opportunity to examine a range of migrant family experiences. Participant families lived in locations throughout Hull, although more were residents of west Hull, which reflected the concentration of migrant populations. Nine of the families had children under eighteen, and four of these (those over seven) were interviewed.

A mixed qualitative methods approach was developed so as to examine the combined experiences of migrant family adults and children, and to facilitate 'investigations into the tacit everydayness of families' lives' (Jamieson *et al*. 2011: 6). An initial unstructured family focus group was conducted with each family, so as to understand the families' shared view of their migrant experience. Later, one-to-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with family members above the age of seven, to gain insight into their lives away from the familial group. Participatory techniques were incorporated to engage family young; children were invited to complete a family scrapbook to use as an elicitation tool in their one-to-one interviews (Gabb 2008: 40). The scrapbook allowed children to lead the interview, whilst allowing the researcher to explore the children's experience of 'family'. Although the methods employed did achieve their intended aims, there were methodological drawbacks and complexities. There was, for example,

difficulty in ensuring that family young constructed their own family scrapbook, without input from other family members.

All participants, including children, gave their informed consent, although for the latter, parental consent was also required. To ensure children felt comfortable, they also identified an adult to be present, or close-by, during the interview. To protect the identity of those involved, pseudonyms are used and identifying characteristics have been changed.

Initially, focus groups were transcribed and preliminary analysis informed issues explored in the later one-to-one interviews. Interviews were then transcribed and systematic coding processes applied to the full corpus of data. This allowed subsequent thematic analysis, whereby patterns of living and/or behaviour emerged from the data. Conclusions drawn were affirmed via a process of triangulation; data were compared and 'brought to bear on the research question' to test the validity of findings (Richards 2005: 148).

The Findings

Data from the focus groups and interviews reveal that participant families *do* display family, with the indigenous population as the intended audience, so as to engage 'in an interface between their own and the host society culture' (Heath *et al.* 2011: 4.3); as a function of 'frontiering'. Whilst families do experience different incentives to display family, accounts show that, overall, these familial displays aim to achieve positive 'integration' and 'identity creation' in the host community (Bryceson & Vuorella 2002: 11). To support the arguments made relating to the reasons *why* display matters in the context of migration, it is also important to understand *how* displays intended for the indigenous audience are enacted. Data presented, therefore, show new ways in which families display, specifically because they are 'migrant'.

Analysis of the data also revealed three key reasons *why* migrant families engage in displays intended for the indigenous audience and include: to reflect local, State defined familial norms; to minimise their position as 'other' and to signify 'belonging'; and to avoid conflict and promote community connectivity as the 'other'. Four key areas that emerge concerning *how* families enact display, relate to: the naming of children; the selective use of language; being 'neighbourly' and generous; and engaging with culture and faith based festivals. These findings are discussed in the following sections.

<u>Why migrant families display to the indigenous audience</u>

To Reflect Local, State Defined, Familial Norms

Migrant families indicate that they desire to be seen as a 'legitimate' family (Heaphy 2011) by the UK authorities and they engage in family displays in order to project this 'legitimacy' to this indigenous audience. As argued earlier, contemporary institutions produce and maintain the dominant discourse related to family 'norms' in the West (Chambers 2001: 26). Subsequently, the influences contributing to the production of the discourse of family differ in each country and what is seen to be a legitimate norm, or successful family display, also differ (Seymour and Walsh 2013). Indeed, Dermott and Pomati contend that government policy *does* define what is perceived to be appropriate parenting in the UK (2016: 127). For some participants, compliance with these norms is presented as unproblematic. Saman, a Kurdish father, and Magda, a Polish mother, both voluntarily access the support of a local children's centre, and when staff identify that they *should* attend a parenting course[i] to 'improve' their parenting, both do so willingly and adopt these State condoned, parenting practices. These changes are not resisted, and Saman and Magda modify their culturally specific parenting practices to model those promoted and, thereby, legitimated, by this State sponsored programme. This public adoption of new modes of parenting is, then, a family display which shows these UK authorities a willingness to assimilate to the UK ideals of a 'family that works' (Finch 2007: 37).

Other migrant families in the study report that they display family within the boundaries defined by UK authorities, because they feel surveilled by this particular audience. This occurs because participants also understand that these authorities have the power to reprimand familial behaviours seen as culturally unacceptable. Slovakian research participants express this particularly well as a number of fellow Slovaks, based in other parts of the UK at the time of the fieldwork, had had their children removed by UK social services officers[ii]:

> It panicked Slovak families and parents were ringing and texting me, 'what's going on?' […] two or three things happened in one time and it made a big issue, so all really panicked and closed their homes. I don't let the children play outside in case somebody will come and take my children.
>
> (Ivana, mother, Slovakian economic migrant)

Lenka, also Slovakian, recognises that familial norms are culturally specific and she, too, feels 'watched' as a migrant parent:

Sometimes, when Dominik's screaming and shouting, I'm worrying that my neighbours are thinking I'm doing something to him and I wouldn't be worried about it in Slovakia, but I'm worried here, because there was a big case about children taken from families […] Here you are more aware your action might get reaction from somebody else.

(Lenka, mother, Slovakian economic migrant)

Both participants explain that this sense of surveillance has resulted in Slovakian parents modifying their familial displays; Lenka does not leave her eleven-year-old son at home alone although she would do if she were in Slovakia, and Ivana does not 'kiss' her pre-school children in public as she fears this will be interpreted as sexual abuse. Here, Ivana reports how others adapt their public displays of behaviour management to mirror what is acceptable within UK State defined norms:

In Slovakia, you can smash [smack] your child and you can't here, so in public, you can smash [smack] […] It's part how you punish children and you can't do it here, so sometimes people say in Slovak, 'I will hit you at home, when I come home I will smash you'. [mum] knows that because she's in public, she can't do it.

(Ivana, mother, Slovakian economic migrant)

Notably, Ivana states that, 'I don't do it'. In doing so, she displays her parenting to me, as a researcher and white British mother, but also shows that because families are unfamiliar with the local discourse, the high profile removal of a child from the family home has made this group fearful of the power of UK authorities. For Ivana, however, it is not only 'Slovak families' that experience this sense of surveillance, 'but maybe foreign, I would say'. Overall, when the State is the local indigenous audience, the incentives to display in line with the dominant acceptable local norms appear to be 'intensified' (Finch 2007: 72) for migrant groups. Here, research participants recognise that, as Heaphy asserts, 'alternative or critical displays of family are weak displays' (2011: 37) and can have severe consequences.

To Minimise the Position as 'Other', and to Signify 'Belonging'
Families in the study also display family so as to minimise their position of 'other' and to signify 'belonging' in a predominantly white British environment. Throughout the fieldwork period, political and media narratives were anti-migrant in tone, and presented 'Britishness' as white,

thereby excluding Britain's black and minority ethnic and Islamic communities (Uberi & Modood 2013). The message to migrant families was, therefore, that in order to 'belong' (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004; May, 2011) - or to be 'legitimate' (Heaphy 2011) - they must assimilate to dominant, white, Christian, familial typologies (Chambers 2001). Consequently, some families, particularly those that planned to stay in Hull for the long term, felt driven to display family in order to assert their 'belonging' to their new, host country. This is exemplified particularly well in Lenka's reflections on her eleven-year-old son, Matus:

> He asked me if he will be able to change his nationality from Slovakian to English. I don't think he is feeling, really Slovakian […] when he's talking about football match, he will say, 'we won', for England [and] I can remember when he had a period of time when he wasn't liking his name, because it was making him feel different from everybody else.
>
> (Lenka, mother, Slovakian economic migrant)

For Matus and other young participants, signifiers of *other* are undesirable. This resonates with Rabikowska's (2010) argument that migrants living in the UK make claims to 'normality' so as to reject a position as 'other'. Here, however, participants focus their presentation of 'normal' on their *family*; Ruta wants her family to be viewed as 'normal, like, not any different from any other family' (Ruta, age fourteen, Polish economic migrant) whilst her older brother, Lech, wants their family to be seen as 'just the same […] I not feel like different person from Hull' (Lech, age seventeen, Polish economic migrant). Either consciously or unconsciously, for these young participants,

> there are powerful incentives to claim recognition as family, because of the access it affords to full relational citizenship […] [because] those relationships that fail to display 'normal' family characteristics are likely to be constructed as second class families or as *other* to family.
>
> (Heaphy 2011: 33)

Owing to this desire to 'fit in' as 'normal', families that can and do stay, display family in line with what they perceive to be British *familial* norms. Lenka, for example, is affected by her children's desire to 'belong' and, consequently, although children's birthday celebrations are restricted to family members in Slovakia, her children now have birthday parties to which they also invite their friends:

like their British friends [because] I trying to understand my children's needs and I know how important for children it is to feel included. I don't want my children being really, feeling very different from their friends

(Lenka, mother, Slovakian economic migrant).

For families that have an immigration status that allows them to stay in the UK, the decision to stay, combined with the influence of the dominant assimilationist discourse, results in familial displays that they feel mirror those of local, indigenous, white families. These 'family displays' are, as Levitt and Glick Schiller suggest, 'ways of belonging' which, for both intimate family members and the broader audience, 'signal or enact an identity which demonstrates a conscious connection to a particular group' (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004: 1010).

To Avoid Conflict and Promote Community Connection as 'the Other'
The study also indicates that participants construct their familial behaviours in order to avoid conflict between themselves and the host community. As a consequence of anti-immigration and pro-assimilation discourses noted, six of the ten participant families had experienced negative attention from the host population: Sylwia's family (Polish economic migrants) had plants in their garden set on fire; Magda (also Polish) and Hiwa (Kurdish refugee) had experienced verbal taunts, and Saman (Kurdish refugee) and Bai (Chinese economic migrant) had been physically assaulted. In Ryan's (2010) study of Muslim women living in the UK in the post 9/11 and 7/7 era, *individual* women describe themselves as 'normal' so as to avoid negative attention from audiences that are not Islamic. The racism reported in this study, did not, however, have obvious links to a specific migrant status, religion, or country of origin and participants respond by displaying *family* as a strategy to deflect negative attention and show that, despite being 'migrant', their family can 'work' (Finch 2007) within the local community. Bai and Zack, for example, modify behaviours with the aim of avoiding conflict, but they do so by displaying their family's legitimacy within their broader community. Bai explains that his family display that they are 'good' members of the community:

Because if you give a good impression, that impression will be reflected in how they [local people] treat you, [so] just try to show that we are polite to the neighbours.

(Bai, father, Chinese economic migrant)

Similarly, Zack reports that his family's displays are constructed in order to promote harmony within his immediate environment:

> If you are here for your career, you respect the other community and what they are believing and, then, we try to, like, not to interfere […] We like to be side-by-side. Sometimes, we try to help our neighbours.
>
> (Zack, father, Malaysian, spouse to Malaysian international student)

Although these participants do not directly allude to political or media representation of immigration in the UK, their displays deflect the dominant discourse that migrants are 'unworthy' or undeserving of their status in the UK (Robinson 2010); in avoiding conflict by contributing to their neighbourhoods, they show that their families are, instead, legitimate, *deserving* community members that do not warrant negative attention.

How do migrant families display family?

Naming Children

Writing in 2008, Finch argues that 'the naming of children […] represents one set of 'tools' available to assist the process of displaying families' (Finch 2008: 714). Analysis shows that migrant families do use naming as a 'tool' of family display and they do so to display their preferred familial identity to the host population. As argued by Zittoun, they are 'saying to the world what type of child they want to be parents to' (2004: 143). Children born before families made the decision to migrate have, for example, names rooted in the country of origin - Ruta, Lech (Polish) and Matus (Slovakian) - whilst others born after the decision to migrate, have transnational names. For Ella and Zak, their daughter Anna, was born as they were planning their relocation to the UK. As individuals that had lived transnationally for many years, they chose a name that would reflect their cosmopolitan family, which they hoped Anna would perpetuate:

> There's a meaning of Anna[iii] in Islam, so we want name to be Western and then also have some Islamic values […] [because] we are hoping that we try to bring up Anna until university and then she will establish a family and then career internationally.
>
> (Zack, father, Malaysian, spouse to Malaysian international student)

These name choices are a 'tool' of family display, allowing families to express their transnational 'belonging' (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004; May 2011) to both their home culture *and* indigenous communities.

Lenka's account provides a different perspective on naming as she named her second child, Dominik, again a name that expresses familial legitimacy in host and Slovakian cultures. The reason for this, however, was her eldest son's rejection of his Slovakian name: 'I can remember when Matus was little, he was upset about his name. He wanted to be called Josh! [laughs]' (Lenka, mother, Slovakian economic migrant). Matus, at a young age, recognises that his international name reveals his family's identity as *other* and, instead, he wants a name that implies his family is British; in 2001, the year Matus was born, Josh was the third most common name given to boys born in the UK (ONS 2001). For Matus, an eleven-year-old who speaks English, from a white, European family, his name is one of the few signifiers of difference and is, thereby, problematic for him.

It is noteworthy, that using naming as a 'tool' of family display is difficult for some participants; for family adults and children born in the country of origin, naming occurred prior to families having an incentive to engage in cross-cultural display. As a result, their names are an unintended display of their international origin. Furthermore, Chyou and Bai (Chinese economic migrants), like Hiwa and Sana (Kurdish refugees/spouse of), unlike those from European countries, have few naming choices recognisable cross-culturally. Although these families indicate a desire to belong, as discussed earlier, that belonging is contested and conditional.

Using Home Language Selectively
Migrant families in the study also display family by making conscious decisions regarding how and when they use the language of their country of origin. On one level, they use their home land language as a conscious strategy to 'omit' (Gabb 2011) or disguise displays they understand to be unsuccessful within English familial norms. One participant, Justina reports using her own language when her boys misbehave, because this allows her to be 'stronger, with them' (Justina, mother, Nigerian asylum seeker) and this is mirrored by Ivana as she explicitly states that:

They [English] can't speak [Slovakian] and you can say what they can't understand you're your children] yes, we can say whatever, because, you know, they don't understand. I feel silly, but of course, sometimes I do that.

For these participants, language as a 'tool' allows them to manage their children's behaviour within the norms of their homeland, whilst ensuring this does not compromise their familial 'legitimacy' within the context of the dominant model of family (Heaphy 2011).

Participant accounts indicate that those fluent in English also switch between using English and the language of the country of origin to show that their family is 'legitimate' (Finch, 2007) and, again, 'belongs' (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004; May 2011) within the context of UK assimilationist discourses (Kundnani 2007). For Ivana, this is a conscious decision and she proudly reports that her family speak English in inter-cultural, public spaces such as playgroups:

Teresa, she will start to play with someone and some parent will approach speak in English, so I answer in English and, also, I deal with Teresa in English, because communication language in this place in English. There is no reason to speak to Teresa in Slovak, because situation now is the common English.

(Ivana, mother, Slovakian economic migrant)

Here, Ivana assertively displays her family's assimilation by speaking English to both her child and other families present in the setting. Language is a 'tool of display' allowing families to display their family's language competency, and their willingness to assimilate in line with the political expectation that migrants living in the UK should speak English (BBC 2013). In so doing, they attempt to align their family with English attendees in their environment, thereby, differentiating themselves from the discourse of the 'problem' migrant (Greenslade 2005).

As all participants, other that Matus (Slovakian) and Daniella (Polish), speak English with an international accent, they cannot entirely avoid language as a signifier of 'otherness' (Chambers 2001). Matus, however, came to the UK in his pre-verbal years and speaks English with a Hull accent. Consequently, he is not obviously of international origin and he desires to present as English; he only speaks Slovakian 'in the house or when he's on holiday' and Lenka, his mother, reports that, 'Matus, in public, he will tell me, 'don't speak to me in Slovakian'. Matus clearly has 'an awareness of the kind of identity that action signifies' (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004: 1006) and

he recognises the use of the English or Slovakian language as a 'tool' of family display that shows his family as either *other* or 'belonging' (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004; May 2011). As such, he encourages family displays that reflect his similarities to the intended, external white British audience, so as to promote the latter.

Being 'Neighbourly' and Generous

Families interviewed also report that they consciously engage in positive encounters with the host population and/or adopt familial behaviours that promote positive neighbourhood relations. Here, participants do so to avoid conflict as migrant families*,* and to present as a legitimate, 'worthy' migrant *family* (Robinson 2010). Zak and Ella, actively seek indigenous approval; Zack reports that he and Ella 'accommodate our neighbour, like, he want us to call a taxi and we did' (Ella, mother, Malaysian international student) and Bai explains that:

> To show that we are polite to the neighbours, if the weather is bad or snowing, my wife will clean the whole pathway, not just our own, the neighbours too, to be nice.
>
> (Bai, father, Chinese economic migrant)

Both families engage in these acts of goodwill in the conscious hope that they will, 'give a good impression' (Bai) to other members of the community.

Further, Sylwia also displays this generosity in order to connect with her work colleagues as members of the wider British community:

> If people are asking for help, we do. Today, the English person from my work asked me if Lech could help her to fix her laptop, so I say, 'yeah, that's fine. He can help with that'.
>
> (Sylwia, mother, Polish economic migrant)

For these participants with limited competency in speaking English, these actions are strategically employed; Sylwia is able to display her family's generosity and willingness to interact, despite her lacking confidence when speaking English, whilst Chyou and Bai, as non-English speakers, are able to display that their 'family' is 'worthy' without direct verbal interaction.

Adopting Local Cultural Traditions

Many participants also adopt familial traditions associated with UK festivals of Christian origin so as to display familial 'belonging' (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004; May 2011) and present as a 'normal' family (Heaphy 2011) within the host culture. Participant assumption of these ideals is significant, as they reflect the ideals of white, Christian 'Britishness' promoted in the assimilationist discourse that dominated during field work (Uberi & Mommod 2013). Again, for those participants that have an immigration status that allows them to plan to stay in the UK, there is a particularly strong incentive to adopt these traditions. Magda, for example, engages in British traditions as a familial display of 'belonging', via assimilation, and has adopted an entirely British version of Christmas festivities:

> I decided to start doing things more English because we're staying here for good […] so, this Christmas was the second Christmas where I was just celebrating in completely the English way.
>
> (Magda, mother, Polish economic migrant)

Although these family displays may be affected by Magda and Lenka's families being practicing Christians, it is not just Christian participants that adopt these behaviours; Hiwa and Sana, an Islamic family that intend to stay in the UK, celebrate Christmas with their Kurdish friends and Bai and Chyou, as practising Buddhists, note:

> We're thinking, if we're going to stay here, we'll have to merge into the environment […] we anticipate [celebrating] Christmas and Halloween for the kids […] two reasons, one is the nursery and one is the other kids. Mum would also like him to be involved as well […] because he is going to grow up here and live here.

For these families planning to stay in the UK, these modifications are perceived as an element of their parental duty; for the sake of their children's future, it is important to family adults to display familial assimilation in line with the prevalent norms of this predominantly white British city.

Conclusion

The data presented here develops Finch's concept of family display in a number of ways and, in so doing, the sociology of family, transnational family studies and migration studies. By applying the concept to migrant family accounts, this article uniquely shows that family display *is* an important feature of migrant family life and a characteristic of transnationalism. Indeed, migrant

families do feel driven to display family because they desire to be perceived as a family that is 'legitimate' (Heaphy 2011) by indigenous audiences, including the State authorities. As such, this article makes an important contribution by testing Heath *et al.*'s (2011) assertion that family display may be a feature of 'frontiering' (Bryceson & Vuorella 2002) and, thereby, advances understanding of strategies employed by migrant families when negotiating an identity in their host country.

Discussion presented also develops the concept of family display by showing that, in this cross-cultural context, the *reasons* display matters are different from those identified by Finch: family does not equate to household; the fluidity of family over time; the relationships between personal and family identities (Finch 2007: 68-71). Instead, discourses associated with 'normal' and 'proper' family (Heaphy 2011) are influenced by prevalent anti-migration, pro-assimilation narratives and impact on the reasons migrant families display, but also how they enact these displays. Further, whilst Heaphy (2011) argues that family display privileges conventional family constructs – adults are heterosexual and co-resident – it is shown here, that in a predominantly white British city, it is displays that reflect white, British familial norms (Chambers 2001) that are also privileged. This paper, therefore, argues that in these circumstances, migrant families understand that they constitute a new type of 'non-conventional family' (2007:71). As such, they feel driven to display family: to display in line with State defined familial norms; to minimise their position as other; and to promote connectivity, and to 'belong' (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004; May 2011) in the host community.

Arguments made, therefore, respond to scholarly calls to examine the role of audience in shaping displays, and also, who constitutes the audience of family display (Dermott & Seymour 2011; Haynes & Dermott 2011; Gabb 2011; Carter *et al.* 2015). Here, migrant families are shown to modify their familial behaviours to mirror what they perceive to be 'legitimate family' in the eyes of the dominant host audience; an audience *external* to the family. Specific audiences identified are: the UK State authorities; the broader co-resident indigenous community; and myself as a researcher and white British mother. As the influence of the home land audience is examined elsewhere (Walsh 2015), the identification of these additional audiences indicates that family display is a feature of transnational family life. Discussion highlights, however, that negotiating these multiple audiences of display can cause tensions *within* families, and between generations, particularly when family members' motivations to 'belong' to contrasting cultures conflict. Analysis of the research data, therefore, indicates a need to: examine the influence of

further audiences, for example, the co-located home area network; and how (Seymour and Walsh, 2013) migrant *families* negotiate the gaze of multiple audiences.

By showing that, in the context of migration, migrant families perceive white British familial norms to be privileged in family display, this paper shows that not all are equally able to engage in such displays. Families of non-European origin have, for example, less access to names that surmount cultural difference and thereby display 'belonging' to both the host and home country. Further, those with less developed English language skills, or those that speak English with an international accent, are less able to display familial assimilation in public spaces. Those migrant families with Christian heritage may also find it easier to engage in familial displays related to European Christian festivals than those families that are of, say, Buddhist of Islamic origin. As such, whilst migrant families do engage in family display with the aim of achieving recognition and validation in their new communities – and supporting their creation of transnational identities - not all have the same agency to do so. Further, not all families have equal *incentive* to 'display family' in order to achieve legitimacy with the local audience. Those that, at the time of the fieldwork, could and did choose to make the UK their permanent home, had most incentive to create transnational identities, and display family as a 'way of belonging' (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004) in the UK. Consequently, the article identifies 'family display' is an additional strategy employed by migrant families to achieve recognition and validation with the host community, the success of these family displays in achieving their aims requires further examination.

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[i] Triple P (Positive Parenting Programme) is provided by agencies involved with children's welfare in the UK. The programme originates in Australia and, has a western approach to parenting. In the UK, parents that are experiencing difficulties – defined by themselves or practitioners – are able, or required, to attend the programme (Triple P, n.d).

[ii] In 2010, the UK based Slovak family had two boys removed from their family home and placed in foster care after one of the children had presented at hospital with a minor injury. The case was high profile, the circumstances of the removal were controversial, and the parents and Slovakian authorities became involved in a long legal battle attempting to return the children to the family home (Booker, 2012).

[iii] During analysis, participants were asked to select a pseudonym that mirrored their initial naming intentions.