

Shut up and smile: A study of the attitudes, experiences and practices of photographing and sharing images of children in Ireland

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Thesis Submitted for the Award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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December 2020

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of PhD is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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Acknowledgements

This PhD journey began in the autumn of 2012 and has been both an arduous and enlightening experience. It culminates an educational path that before my 25th year was one most unlikely to have been considered, let alone completed. I am a first-generation graduate from a working-class background whose, like so many others, only career advice from secondary school was to pass the Leaving Certificate and get a job. Third level education was never presented as a viable option.

Successfully getting through the Leaving Certificate brought immense pride to both my parents and a sense of relief to me and my job in a record shop from 1992-1997 provided a stable income for someone fresh out of school. Redundancy presented me with a choice to take a Post Leaving Certificate course in media studies (an area I had developed a keen interest in) or to follow in my father's footsteps and join An Post.

Almost 22 years later, having successfully completed both my BA(hons), MA and established a career in third level education since 2003 it is with immense pride that I submit this research for the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

Across the last eight years I have conducted this research registered as a part-time student, while I worked full time and helped raise two children who were under the age of two when I began this PhD journey. The reality is that there was very little about this experience that was part-time. The many pre-dawn and late-night hours spent reading, writing and editing were difficult and it was only through perseverance and self-discipline that I have got to this stage of completion. Getting out of bed between 4.30-6.00am to work on research before the school run and a commute to work was motivated by the consideration that the pain of the discipline would always be surpassed by the pain of the guilt having not done it. Discipline equals freedom.

Without the contribution of this study's participants the research would never have been conducted. It is with heartfelt gratitude that I thank you for your time and commitment during the data-gathering stage of this research.

To my supervisor Dr. Debbie Ging, I thank you for taking me on as a research student after a challenging first two years in which my confidence in my capabilities as a research student were at a low ebb. I am grateful for the consistent expertise, advice and empathy you provided throughout the process and I hope our academic paths align again in the future.

Thank you to all my colleagues in Dundalk Institute of Technology for their support, with a special thanks to Dr. Ronan Lynch and former colleague Dr. Caroline Ann O’Sullivan for their encouragement, inspiration and guidance throughout.

I would like to acknowledge the support provided around the clock by my fellow researchers and members of the Facebook groups *The Virtual SUAW – Parents Edition* and *The Full Draft Club*. During these extraordinary times of the Covid19 pandemic the importance of having access to such a support network to provide advice, knowledge and humour will always be appreciated. I will continue to reciprocate this support beyond completion of this study.

To my Mam, your time, love and support will never be forgotten. Thank you for always asking with sincerity how the study is going and listening to my numerous reasons for it being ‘nearly done’. To Dad, thank you for the support you gave during the initial stages of this research, it’s just a pity you aren’t here to see its completion. To Leighton, thank you for the continued support and encouragement. To Jenny, thanks also for your support.

To Reg and Ellen, you were barely able to talk when I began this research over eight years ago and you have shown levels of patience beyond your young years during the many heart-breaking times I was unable to spend time with you. From now on at least you will not have to hear the words ‘be quiet, Daddy’s studying’.

Finally, to my wife Caroline. Your encouragement, motivation and enthusiasm was a crutch that continually supported me throughout this journey. Your patient endurance through these most challenging of times will always be remembered. Words of thanks will never equate to the

appreciation and admiration I have for the support and love you have shown, but thank you nonetheless.

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Abstract

Glenn Doyle

Shut up and smile: A study of the attitudes, experiences and practices of photographing and sharing images of children in Ireland

This research responds to changing sensitivities toward the photographing of children. It investigates Irish adults' attitudes toward and practices around the capturing and sharing of everyday images of children across both traditional and social media platforms.

Drawing on previous work by (Cohen, 1972), Higonnet (1998), Holland (2004) and Rose (2010) the study considers how contemporary discourses around childhood, children's rights, paedophilia, privacy, consent and Internet safety are impacting on the practices and attitudes of adults in Ireland around the everyday photographing of children.

Applying a mixed-methods approach, the research is based on surveys and individual interviews. Data was analysed from 360 online and offline surveys. A thematic analysis of this data set generated themes further explored through 12 semi-structured interviews. Supported by field notes gathered during interviews noting the archiving, display and sharing of images of children in participants homes, this design allowed for the triangulation of the data that resulted in a rich and complex analysis of contemporary attitudes and practices in Ireland.

The study finds that a range of contemporary discourses exert a very significant and tangible effect on how people think about and engage in practices of photographing and sharing images of children. Finally, the research considers what longer-term impact this is likely to have on family photography, memories of childhood and attitudes toward childhood more generally.

1 INTRODUCTION

Personal Context

Growing up in the Dublin suburb of Tallaght in the 1970-1980s was a time of always being in the company of childhood friends and cousins. Rarely was time spent alone and there seemed to be a birthday party in someone's house on a weekly basis. It was at these parties that I would become familiar with consistent requests to 'eat up', 'stop messing', 'sing happy birthday' or 'SHUT UP AND SMILE!!!'. This command usually came from my mother at a time when someone with a camera was trying to take a photograph. I would look at the camera and display my default smile before returning to what I was doing before. This was a familiar routine that a lot of children became accustomed to. Personally, this was my only experience of photography when I was a child, taken on special occasions under duress. Very few parents in my social circles had cameras. Those that did would only occasionally duplicate copies of photographs to send or share with others.

Permission to photograph was never sought, nor was it ever expected, and despite the infrequency of the practice it was never a practice considered unusual. For me, as a child it was considered an opportunity to be giddy, pull faces and mess about before being told to stop and 'be nice for the camera'. As I grew older and went to college to study photography in the late 1990s genres of vernacular, street and domestic photography always fascinated me. The capturing of the quotidian specifically. As part of my degree I produced a series of black and white photographs of children playing in the yard of the school I had attended (see Appendix D for sample). Out of courtesy I approached the head mistress of the school and asked if I could photograph the children playing. There were no permission slips, no Garda vetting forms and provided the headmistress received copies of the prints to display in the school there was no problem.

In 2011 I looked back on that series of photographs and I questioned whether I would be able to take them over a decade later. The moral and cultural climate had dramatically shifted, technology had advanced, and social media had been born. Furthermore, I had noted an underlying air of caution, even concern, when the topic of the project was broached among both personal and

academic peers. I found these prudent sentiments intriguing and they proved to be the catalyst for the undertaking of this research project over the course of the last 8 years.

1.1 Introduction

An analysis of relevant media content notes the presence of a normalised protectionist discourse that concerns the photographing of children. Emotively channelled words like ‘creep’, ‘pervert’ and ‘paedo’ dominate both offline and online articles, forums and comment sections contributed to by the general public (Wikes, 2008; Michael, 2015; Edwards, 2015). This research maps the affect such a discourse is having on contemporary practices of photographing and sharing images of children. This study contributes uniquely to an area of photographic culture that is changing under the influence of much wider socio-cultural shifts that relate to the rights of the child and associated discourses. The study provides an original and necessary contribution, from an Irish context to the impact that relevant contemporary discourses concerning children are having within the field of domestic, everyday or quotidian photography.

The research is framed within a wider context conscious of underling negative attitudes and habits of ‘paranoid parenting’ (Furedi, 2013) that align with protectionist discourses concerning children in modern society. Initially the study considers the effect that increased accessibility and mobilisation of still image capturing technology and social media has had on both the practice of photographing children and the storing and sharing of their image. The research provides a comprehensive overview of the attitudes towards and practices of photographing, storing and sharing images of children among the research participants.

Cognisant of conflicting perspectives related to the conceptualisations of children Locke and Rousseau’s countering theories are presented as underpinning their visual representation. Theories related to consent, representation and agency are considered when engaging with their historical and ongoing visual depiction. Such constructions are predominantly presented from an adults perspective with homogenised imaging’s of childhood consistently captured and shared.

Concerns related to the photographing of children have traditionally focused on content. Naked, semi-naked or what appeared to be distressed children have been the subject of debate across

both academic and non-academic texts as far back as Lewis Carroll's portraits of naked children in the 1860s (Lebailly, 1998; Edge, 2004). Over a century later photographs by numerous fine art photographers including Sally Mann (1992) and Jill Greenburg (2012) crossed the cultural divide to be the subject of discussion in academic texts (Edge, 2004) and anecdotally in the media (Glaister, 2006). These relevant fields of commercial and fine art photography are genres of photography far removed from this study's focus on quotidian photography from an amateur perspective. This framework isolates this practice of photography to be suitably positioned as a separate area of study from previous research that has predominantly concerned photographs and images produced for traditional exhibition spaces or commercial purposes.

Batchen (2000) has previously called for an increased focus on the study of 'every day', ordinary or vernacular photography, reflecting that, at his time of writing the category had largely been ignored by the critical gaze of both historical and academic perspectives. This research contributes to this recommendation, with an emphasis placed on the practice of photography and sharing of images. Nonetheless, the context of this research is restricted to the subject of children specifically.

Contemporary concerns related to the photographing of children and sharing of images of children extend beyond the traditional apprehensions associated with naked, semi-naked or distressed children. Since the mid-1990s protectionist discourses concerning children have intensified, becoming so risk conscious that photographing a child has become a contentious issue, often activating accusations of deviance toward the photographer (Pierce, 2009; Armour, 2013; Weckler, 2015). Furedi (2013) theorises the emerging presence of 'paranoid parenting' as being a consequence of a much wider discourse within society that attributes a disproportionate risk to the safety of children. This results in photography being positioned as another 'new crime against children' (ibid: 8).

Acknowledging the ubiquity of the camera phone and online connectivity the research considers the migration of both the practice of photographing children and the sharing their images from a physical world to a digital virtual space. The emerging practice of 'sharenting' is presented as a paradoxical process in which parents weigh up the benefits and perceived risks associated with their online social media sharing habits.

Traditionally, the sharing of photographs of children took place within the controlled environment of the private space, often the family home in which a selective process of inclusion was considered regarding who photographs were shared with. Photographs were stored as tangible objects out of sight in boxes, occasionally shared through album viewings or on permanent display within frames; they were treated as possessions. Previous studies have explored the traditional practices of storing and displaying photographs (Chalfen, 1987; Rose, 2003). However, the photographs analysed were not captured, nor shared beneath the influence of the homogenised discourse of concern that surround the same practices today. This research engages with this seismic shift from a practical, technical and socio- cultural perspective.

While appreciating the breath of protectionist discourses concerning children the research is framed exclusively on its presence within research participants' attitudes toward and quotidian practices of photographing children and the sharing of their images online. Unpacking previous studies into 'moral panics' (Cohen, 1972; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994; Critcher, 2009) the research frames contemporary anxieties related to the photographing and sharing of images of children as being encompassed within the positioning of the virtual world as a platform for a 'perfect moral panic' (Jewkes and Wynkes, 2012). Similar to these previous moral panics the cultural construction and conceptualisation of appropriate folk devils (Cohen, 1972) upon whom the media and society apportion blame are detailed and discussed in detail. Both the validity and proportionality of their actual threat are considered as the research progresses.

The scope of this wider protectionist discourse is not exclusively evidenced through the emerging public attitudes, but additionally in the implementation of associated policies and legislation. Official restrictions, policies and related legislation are detailed, clarified and given context appropriately across the study. However, the key concern for this research remains related to the socio-cultural attitudes and everyday practices of participants concerning the quotidian photographing and sharing images of children.

1.2 Research aims

The research questions for this study initially developed from my unique position as both a photographer and lecturer in the area of media and communications studies. An observable cultural shift had occurred in the quotidian practice of photographing children that aligned with a notable escalation of media focus on the dangers of the Internet. Following a comprehensive

review of associated academic literature, online and offline media texts, blogs, and opinion pieces the cultural reframing of the practice as potentially inappropriate was confirmed. Furthermore, this framing extended beyond the practice of capturing the photographs and encompassed the practices of sharing, which had for the most part migrated online.

Reflecting on this, the key questions the research seeks to investigate are:

1. What are the attitudes among adults in Ireland toward the everyday practice of photographing children?
2. What are the attitudes among adults in Ireland toward the practice of sharing images of children online?
3. What impact, if any, have these attitudes had on the related practices of adults in Ireland?

In addition to these questions the research will also consider broader implications:

1. Have advances in technology and the Internet affected the technical and socio-cultural landscape of photographing children in Ireland?
2. Are we witnessing the emergence of a new moral panic concerning the photographing and online sharing of images of children?
3. What are the implications for the everyday practice of photographing children and the online sharing of their images in the future?

1.3 Definitions and distinctions of key terms

The term 'quotidian' is used as a label for the type of photography at the heart of this research. Reflecting on previous labels it was a challenge to isolate a term that suitably described the area of photography to be studied. The term 'domestic' was considered restrictive connoting a specific location. Whereas, 'vernacular' is distinguished by its association with fine art photographic practices and work produced by artists. 'Snapshot' and 'candid' held connotations of spontaneity and were also considered restrictive. However, 'quotidian' when defined as: 'of or occurring every day'¹ appropriately framed the type of everyday, amateur, non-artistic practice this research was specifically concerned with.

¹ Definition taken from <https://www.lexico.com/definition/quotidian> (accessed: 17.03.20)

The term 'sharenting' is used to label the practice of parents sharing images of children online. The practice has evolved academically as an exciting and vibrant research area in which new theories are emerging as new empirical studies are conducted. Chapter 3 considers the emerging definitions of the term, whereas chapter 6 provides the term with an appropriate context to this study.

Differentiating the term 'photograph' and 'image': The use of the terms 'photograph' and 'image' are exclusive across the research. It was considered appropriate to note a distinction between the two terms that are often used interchangeably. For this study, the term 'photograph' is used in two instances, when used as a verb; to photograph and when referring to a physical visual artefact. The use of the word 'image' refers to the digital rather than the tangible form. A distinction is made both for a continuity of understanding to what is being referred to and each of the terms' differing characteristics and uses.

1.4 Methodology

A sequential explanatory design (Creswell et al. 2003) is used for the data collection phase of this research. The first phase used a qualitatively focused survey consisting of both open-ended and closed questions which had 360 valid responses. The second stage consisted of 12 semi-structured follow-up interviews. It was intended that all interviews would be conducted in the homes of participants, however two participants requested to have their interviews conducted outside of their homes due to personal circumstances.

While acknowledging that the traditional practices of ethnographic research involves extended observation and/or engagement when gathering emic perspectives of a culture (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) it was deemed appropriate to consider certain ethnographic principles given the research design extended beyond the initial survey and interview responses of the participants. Considering this, the taking of observational fieldnotes concurrently and immediately after the interviews sought to document any non-audible behavioural traits of the participants, any observable material culture from the field site and facilitated an analysis of their shared patterns of behaviour and practices.

The fieldwork culminated in the circulation of a follow-up email sent to interviewees approximately five months after their interview, seeking an account of any changes in attitude or practice they may have had following their participation in the research. The research design was significant in a variety of ways. Firstly the inclusive design of the data collection through the use of both online and offline surveys increased the potential for an appropriate sample size and provided a voice to individuals without a social media presence or 'digital social capital' (Murthy, 2008). Such a presence was not considered a prerequisite to having an opinion on the related practices or participating in the research. Secondly the use of manual coding was an arduous but rewarding process. This method appreciated the fluid nature of the codes and facilitated a closeness with the data that may have been absent if a more procedural method had been employed (Braun and Clarke, 2017).

1.5 Chapter outlines

Considering the interdisciplinary approach taken by this research, the diversity of topics covered by the literature include cultural practice and identity, online and offline activity, representation and agency, consent and privacy, childhood, meaning and interpretation, socio-cultural and media discourses. An overview of each chapter is presented across the next section:

To conduct research of any worth it is essential to review and evaluate the appropriate literature. It is only through such a study that any empirical contributions can justifiably be made to the wider research area. Social, cultural, technological, and legal developments are key components to this review and were considered through the following three chapters:

Chapter 2 details the cross-cultural shift of the practice of photography from being a hobby of the affluent Victorian classes to the everyday pervasive practice of contemporary digital society. Exploring relevant social, cultural, and technological progressions the research unpacks and discusses the migration of photographic and image sharing practices from the physical real-world to digital online spaces.

Chapter 3 shifts its attention from the practice to the subject, with the lens of analysis focused on the child. Extending beyond the historical visual documentation of the child, here the research

considers the seminal theories of childhood of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The shifting debates concerning value and agency are explored. The research considers the theories of attachment and authority in the adult-child dynamic (Bowlby, 1988; Ainsworth, 1989), while remaining appropriately aligned with the relevant area of research. Having discussed changing conceptualisations of childhood, a child's positioning as a 'concern of the nation' (Prout, 2008) is solidified beneath the emerging protectionist discourse that surrounds them.

Chapter 4 presents a detailed discussion of the fears and risks associated with childhood. Acknowledging the legislative and social recognition of child abuse in Ireland the chapter maps the cultural framing of those most likely to be perpetrators. A chronological lineage extending from the 'stranger danger' of the 1950s (Finklehor, 1986) through to the contemporary 'cyber-paed' (Jewkes and Wykes, 2012) is presented. Without commenting on the legitimacy of their threat, the research considers the continued disproportionate framing of these folk devils (Cohen, 1972) as a classic characteristic of a moral panic. Mirroring the traditional alignment of new technologies and engendered moral panics related to sex (Jewkes, 2010) the research considers the transition of the private family home as a heteronormative 'safe' environment, albeit misrepresented into an insecure space in which virtual predators are a mere click away. The relevant media discourses concerning the theoretical framing of online engagement from socio-individualist and technological-determinist perspectives (Meyer, 2007) are discussed. The chapter concludes noting the extension of this 'perfect moral panic' (Jewkes and Wykes, 2012) to encompass the everyday practices of photographing and online sharing of images of children and considers a further misappropriation of fears beneath the continued protectionist discourses concerning children.

Chapter 5 deconstructs and discusses the rationale and structure for the research design and theoretical approaches taken for this research, justifying the data gathering methods adopted when conducting the fieldwork and analysing the data sets.

Chapter 6 discusses how advances in mobile technology and popularisation of social media have facilitated a democratisation of photography and the related practice of image sharing. Engaging with the empirical data, the chapter notes the increased level of online engagement and a progressive cultural shift away from the traditional heteronormative positioning of women as the

visual documenters of family history (Smith, 1998; Holland, 2008; Kamal, 2012). Echoing previous studies (Minkus, et al., 2015; Blum-Ross and Livingstone, 2017; Choi and Lewallen, 2018; Lipu and Siibak, 2019) the online sharing of images of children is framed as a paradoxical process in which participants consider the associated benefits and risks of the practice.

Chapter 7 reflects on the continued construction of the child and how participants' attitudes towards the photographing and sharing of images of children influence related discourses around childhood. Here the research unpacks and explores the related anxieties presented among the data and notes an escalation that sees for some, a cognitive collapse between the image of the child and the child itself. Debating issues of permission and consent from a socio-cultural and legislative framework the chapter discloses a widespread misunderstanding of the rights to photograph and share images of children. The expectation of parental permission reaffirms the photographed child as a secondary consideration for most participants. Despite nuances of a changing perspective presented in the chapter the dominant perspective reaffirmed the position of the child as non-agent and in need of protection.

Chapter 8 concludes the findings and discussion section of the research. It presents the key issues of concern that shape the participants' predominantly negative attitudes towards the practices of photographing and sharing images of children. Across this chapter, contemporary fears associated with children are introduced while traditional fears resurface. The chapter discusses in detail the impact these negative attitudes have had on the practices and experiences of participants. The details of both real-world and online confrontations, the management and manipulation of images, the changing of photographic and online sharing habits, and the fears of being labelled a contemporary folk devil (Cohen, 1972) are comprehensively discussed as the chapter presents its findings as evidence of a new emerging moral panic. The chapter concludes by noting how an increased access to relevant information has the potential to broaden perspectives and reshape practices associated with the everyday photographing and sharing of images of children.

2 THE DEMOCRATISATION OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE SHARING OF IMAGES OF CHILDREN

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the associated literature concerning the evolvement of everyday or quotidian photography. From its affluent Victorian origins, through to its pervasive presence across socio-cultural sectors today, the research traces the emergence of photographic practices chronologically. Considering this democratisation from a traditional domestic perspective, the chapter presents the generational positioning of women as the visual documenters of family life. The extended popularity of photographic practice afforded by digital technology and the increased accessibility of online sharing is unpacked and discussed. Whilst questionable attitudes toward the practice are traced back to the turn of the twentieth century. The research presents the implications of these attitudes on the wider practice of photography before appropriately focusing on the subject of children. specifically focusing on the before the specifically on the photographing of children.

Cognisant of technological, economic and socio-cultural frameworks, this study contextualises quotidian photography as another area affected by protectionist discourses surrounding children. This provides a context to a key concern of this body of research; the effects contemporary attitudes towards the photographing of children are having on both the practice of photographing children and the sharing of their images.

2.2 The emergence of photography as a practice – From the elite into the everyday

Given Ireland's colonial history and proximity to the UK, the technical development of photography was mirrored across both regions. Carville (2001) verified that "mimicking of social forms of photography in England meant that Ireland initially did not develop a differential vernacular photographic culture" (p.19). As with other areas of the UK during the mid-1800s, there was an

emergence of commercial studio-type photography, with the possibility of having your photograph taken professionally in a portrait studio in Dublin as far back as 1841 (Kelly, 2008). However, such a service was not an option outside of certain levels of affluence, as noted by Carville “the lack of either a large industrial middle-class or ... a political class in Dublin meant that there was not a large market for commercial photographic portraiture” (2001: 21).

The globally popular photographic process at the time, daguerreotype, was a technically and economically challenging practice. This resulted in photography evolving much more from within commercial and public realms than in the private world. Nonetheless, there is evidence of many individuals being in a position to pursue it privately as a past time. Carville (ibid) noted that within Ireland these individuals came from a privileged background. They were in a position, both economically and culturally, to embrace the possibilities of a new, expensive and technically challenging pastime. The cumbersome practice of photography entailed a learning curve that would not only consume portions of practitioners’ wealth but also quite a lot of their time. Nonetheless, a reduction in the cost of equipment allowed the practice to be a viable pastime for many. Although, the requirement of darkroom facilities to produce a ‘photograph’ remained a fundamental hurdle to the widespread integration of the camera beyond a commercial or professional setting.

Photography had become commonplace within society through the popularity of small photographic images on cards that were carried around or collected in albums. It was a trend in society to swap or exchange these among friends, with the intention of increasing your personal collection. Initially known as ‘cartes-de-viste’, they were succeeded in popularity by ‘cabinet cards’. Additionally, the possibility of having photographs taken professionally became more affordable as the process became popularised commercially. However, it was not until the latter stages of the 1880s that the actual practice of photography was to be embraced outside of the affluent quarters of society, amongst the masses.

2.3 Domesticating the practice of photography

Many scholars have attributed the democratisation of the practice of photography to the work of George Eastman and his company Kodak (Coe and Gates, 1977; West, 2000; Sarvas and Frohlich, 2011). Ultimately it was the marketing of the Kodak Brownie Camera that saw the integration of cameras on a wide scale. Primarily, this was as a result of a combination of technological advances, through the introduction of the interchangeable ‘cartridge-roll-film’, and a well thought out

advertisement campaign. By targeting a younger demographic by a reduction in cost to \$1, Kodak was able to secure itself longevity within the market that would turn out to be unprecedented (Coe and Gates, 1977). The simplicity and technical ease of taking photographs were illustrated through a marketing campaign at the turn of the twentieth century that encouraged parents to 'let the children Kodak' (Figure. 1). Such a marketing process of 'dumbing down' the practice of taking a photograph contributed to the increased popularisation of photography across wider sectors of society.



Figure 1: 'Children Kodaking' print advertisement (1911)²

With the technical ease of taking a photograph established, the advertising approaches developed an emphasis upon sentiment. The marketing of cameras as an essential item that accompanied leisure time in their advertisements helped normalise the practice of photography in the everyday lifestyles of its users. This instilled the notion that photography was a more permanent fixture in the rituals of family and leisure time. West (2000) outlines how Lewis Brunell Jones, the manager of Kodak's

² <https://kodakery.com/?s=children+&submit=Search> (accessed: 22.09. 20)

advertising department at the time of these marketing campaigns, focused on the “idea of photography as a practice that harmonises with all aspects of one’s life” (2000: 24).

At this time, photography was marketed as an essential element of spending quality time together as an idealised family. Photography was being positioned as a tool or a piece of technology that one could use to avoid the potential fallibility of memory. By photographing these experiences, they were captured and could be remembered and possibly shared with others through a re-connection with the physical photograph. Such a practice could encompass the nostalgia of that particular moment securely in a format that could be revisited anytime. The emphasis of Kodak’s marketing approach at the time undermined the capability and reliability of people’s memories in preserving personal or collective life stories, deemed as important milestones worthy of reflecting on at a later time. Rather, consumers were encouraged to commit these life stories to photographs, a company like Kodak could be trusted to capture ‘memory’ with a sense of permanency (West, 2000). Kodak’s ‘Story Campaign’ between the years 1907-1930 epitomised this. It is this practice of photographing what is perceived to be of most value to us — children — that is at the fulcrum of this study and is explored further in chapter 3 when considering the consequential shift in the practice as a result of relevant discourses.

The relevance of memory and the use of photography as a mechanism of activating it are core considerations to this research. The construction of idealised, and yet potentially inaccurate memories through engagement with photographs is similarly important. These areas are theories explored by fine art photographer Jo Spence in her body of work titled: ‘Beyond the Family Album’ (1979). At the time of the exhibition, Spence posited that memories triggered by photographs of her childhood contradict the content and sentiments of the photographs displayed. Spence returned to these themes, concerned with meaning and interpretation when she worked with Patricia Holland in the early 1990s. These frameworks are engaged with in more detail in chapter 3 of this research when considering the visual representation of the child and conceptualisations of childhood.

The concept that photographs are not true reflections of the events they portray, but rather visual statements echoes Charles Peirce’s categorising of specific signs as being iconic; a physical or visual similarity existing between an object and its iconic sign (Atkin, 2010). However, what is less evident is the means by which, and the cultural competencies with which people access the meanings, or sentiments encoded in ‘everyday’ photographs. These visual statements have been constructed from the perspective of the photographer, who in turn has been influenced by their own previous experiences or lived culture. Chalfen notes that “we are seeking to understand the meanings people

build into their photographic renditions of their own lives” (1987: 6). Steiner and Zelizer (1995) consider the technological influence on these construction processes of memory, claiming that in the contemporary age “memory has come to be seen as depending on an array of media technologies... externalising memory outside the human brain has thereby endangered diverse alternatives for its embodiment everywhere” (ibid: 233). Commenting upon this, Chalfen (1987) believes that family photographs have been overlooked as a serious site of such embodiment and traditionally ignored from the perspective of worthy analysis. This concern is reflective of the formative work of Geoffrey Batchen (2000), in which he calls for a better interrogation of the complexity and breadth of photographs with a specific focus on the pervasive, but understudied category of photography that he describes as ordinary photographs. This concern is supported by Zuromskis (2013) asserting that they are “... the photographs that preoccupy the home and the heart, but rarely the museum or the academy” (ibid: 114).

The broader concern here is that in addition to Chalfens’ contestation that the genre of family photography has been academically overlooked in relation to the context of externalising memories (2008), Batchen (2000) and Zuromskis (2013) believe the whole area of vernacular photography has been under-researched and underrepresented. The result of this has been a blind spot within the study of photographic history (Batchen, 2000). It is my contention that these concerns legitimise further research into this broad area of photography.

The marketing approach of companies like Kodak normalised the use of cameras to tangibly archive memories. This encouragement, accompanied by the affordability, portability, and ease of use, allowed for the integration of cameras across vast sectors of society to an extent that had not been witnessed previously. Holland (2004) notes that as the practice of photography became more popular, the cameras began to point, more so than ever, in a familial direction. This was attributed to a conscious re-alignment of women in the domestic setting and their subsequent repositioning as the fulcrum of domestic life (Holland, 2008). Continuing the tradition of women being considered as the ‘record keepers’ and being morally obliged to keep a record of their family’s histories (Smith, 1998; Kamal, 2012), Holland (2015) also commented on the photographic capturing of the safer domestic environment, as opposed to the unpredictability of the world outside, in which smaller families aimed to lead “pleasurable, rather than dutiful lives” (ibid: 165). Holland further noted that the general decline in the birth rate increased the attention that children in smaller families were receiving. This was witnessed through the practice of photographing specific milestones, deemed by parents to be special occasions worth documenting. This practice of documenting events and implying a validation

of occasion became normalised as a family practice. Slatter (1995), Chambers (2003), and Sarvas and Frohlich (2011) emphasise the social acceptance, expectation, and importance of photography amongst families:

“... whether the purpose of a photograph is to communicate love, friendship, camaraderie, or even mere acknowledgement, domestic photography’s important function is to strengthen relationships”

Sarvas and Frohlich (2011: 9)

This practice has continued today, with photographs being taken and shared as a means of maintaining and strengthening relationships (Mc Daniel et al., 2012) among those within society who may have previously been hindered by barriers of time and location.

2.4 Vernacular photography and an emerging concern

It was not until the years following WWII that photography began to represent Ireland from a perspective that emphasised a sense of “universalism, taking as its subject matter the ordinary, the commonplace and the routine” (Carville, 2011: 47). At this time, the practice of documenting ‘Irish life’, by individuals or staff photographers emerged and soon became common. Colman Doyle and Fr. Frances Mary Hegarty Browne were two photographers who would independently travel Ireland documenting everyday life, often working through themes, notably: work, childhood, leisure and/or family (ibid: 48). Such a practice of everyday photography was not restricted to the stereotypical depiction of rural areas of Ireland. From the 1930s up until the 1980s the public photographing of people in Dublin City Centre was also a common occurrence. The area of Grafton Street through to O’Connell Street was known as ‘The Photographic Mile’³ with approx. 60 photographic studios located there at one time or another. Photographers, like Arthur Fields would photograph people as they crossed O’Connell Bridge going about their daily business or socialising on a weekend.

Within the context of this research, it is appropriate to consider that there is no evidence of permission ever being sought when this popular form of public photography was being practised. Furthermore, there was no change in practice or perspective if the subjects were children, with both adults and

³ Reference from Orla Fitzpatrick Photography historian – Man on Bridge Quote Dublin Tales (2018) *Man on Bridge*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voH7wmeJyKQ> (accessed: 05.09.19).

children photographed freely. An absence of reference to any concern with regard to photographing children within the literature of Carville (2011) or in the documentary 'Man on Bridge' (2014) can be attributed to the fact that there remained a sense of an 'event' associated with having one's photograph taken outside of the traditional context of a professional portraiture set up, until the mid to late 1960s. Consequently, the novelty of having one's child photographed in public may not have raised any of the concerns that we are more accustomed to today. Holland (2004) discusses the evolution of this practice of photographing children across various sectors, both publicly and privately. This work, aligned with the previous literature of Higonnet (1998), is further engaged with in the next chapter, considering the conceptualisation of the child.

In exploring the practice of photography from these particular periods of time there is evidence of a passive acceptance of having one's photograph taken in public. In Dublin alone, there were thousands of individuals being photographed as they went about their daily business. However, such practices may not have been free from hostility, despite often being recalled from a nostalgic perspective. Both Bill Jay and Davis Lindsay mention confrontations being encouraged in the Amateur Camera Magazine as far back as September 1885. They noted that some publications would ask members of the public to be conscious of "a figure called the Camera Fiend" (Lindsay, 2000). These warnings occasionally encouraged the use of violence as a deterrent, should the opportunity arise:

"There is but one remedy for the amateur photographer. Put a brick through his camera whenever you suspect he has taken you unawares. And if there is any doubt, give the benefit of it to the brick, not the camera."

Jay, (2008: 5)

It is important to acknowledge the documentation of confrontation and suspicion associated with public photography as early as the Victorian era, given the presumption that these negative attitudes towards photographing children are a recent phenomenon. At a presentation of his photographic work in Belfast, the photographer Martin Parr, when questioned about concerns he may have had when photographing both adults and children in public during the 1980s claimed that confrontations have happened for over 25 years but as a consequence of the "scare stories about paedophilia... the concerns around children have become super inflated" (Parr, M. 2014, personal communication, 13 March). These 'concerns around children' are further unpacked across chapter 3 of this study, providing a platform on which the empirical research further expands. Nonetheless, despite this presence of negative attitudes towards the public photographing of both adults and children

historically, these attitudes were by no means homogenised, they were in fact in the minority. Yet, as evidenced in the later sections of this research such attitudes of suspicion and concern surrounding the photographing of children have evolved and become a social norm within today's society.

In practice, there are no laws to prohibit anyone from taking a photograph of another person in a public space — adult or child — unless the individual has a legitimate expectation of privacy. Generally, those that take the photographs retain the copyright of the image, and they are free to publish or share the photograph physically or in the virtual world. The limits legally imposed on this are threefold, with legitimate objections only being allowed if: (i) the photograph is untrue or has been manipulated, (ii) the photographs are interfering with the person's commercial endorsement business, or (iii) the photographs are tortuously violating the subject's privacy. Additionally, under the Data Protection Act in Ireland (1988) individuals have a right not to have their personal data collected, published, or otherwise processed without their consent. This is inclusive of your image. However, this does not apply to "personal data... kept by an individual only for recreational purposes" (ibid: 15). Therefore, personal photographs taken without intentions beyond recreational purposes are not subject to these data protection policies.

Within society, there is a misconception regarding these laws. Often the presumption being that a child or more specifically a child's image is protected more than an adult's image. When considering the photographing of members of the public, concerns centre on privacy. However, the laws that pertain to the privacy of an individual in public places do not differentiate between a child and an adult. There are some exceptions to this lack of legislation concerning public photography, notably when some public places apply house rules that members of the public implicitly agree to obey when entering a premise. Therefore, if you are requested to stop taking photographs within privately owned publicly accessible spaces, an Art Gallery that may be free to enter, for example, you should comply or possibly face a separate charge of trespassing. Essentially, you can only be requested to cease taking photographs, but the charge of trespassing is used as a deterrent for individuals who do not adhere to the request. Nonetheless, such 'house rules', again do not differentiate between adults and children being photographed.

Sectors of society are oblivious to this lack of legislation and the often-confrontational encounters that follow suit are explored in chapter 4 of this study, in relation to the construction of the palatable folk devil. These misconceptions can be understood as a consequence of a discourse of paranoia and

worry surrounding children (Furedi, 2013). The normalisation of this discourse is often used as a barometer of moral integrity by wider society and the resulting homogenised attitudes towards the photographing of children and the sharing of these images often dominate any engagement with the actual laws concerning the practices.

2.5 Digital practices of everyday photography and social media use

The true democratisation of photography would eventually culminate in the omnipresence of the camera within society, ultimately in the form of the camera phone. However, it was the normalisation of the camera within the domestic setting through advertising that initiated the process. Slater (1995) maps this continued process of integrating and normalising photography into family life, referencing the approach taken by advertisements to appeal to consumers' desires to relate to the 'ordinary' people featured within adverts. The newly popularised activities of holidaying and tourism that society began to embrace would often feature in advertisements, with the use of the camera depicted in relation to other consumer leisure goods such as cars and bicycles. The popularisation of non-professional camera ownership contributed to this process of the "aestheticisation of everyday life" (ibid: 137) and continued to grow consistently given the affordability and technological advancements of cameras.

The popularity of camera ownership increased during the 1960s and early 1970s with more homes than ever before in possession of their own family camera. Yet, the practice of producing physical photographs had not evolved and the process was still very much one of patience that relied on a third party for production. Crawley (1989) and Cameron et al. (2002) document the emergence of the Polaroid camera that would eliminate this inconvenience. The camera was introduced to the market by Edwin Land in 1948, with the technological capabilities of producing a physical photograph in approximately 60 seconds. However, the cumbersome nature of having to apply a protective chemical layer over the photograph and the expense of the camera meant that they were not available to the majority of the public. However, following the introduction of a more affordable camera in 1963, and then a fully automatic model in 1969, society was now in a position to fully embrace the practice of photographing without the necessity of waiting for the photographs to be produced by a third party. The camera truly became a piece of technology that was naturalised across almost all sectors of society, as was evidenced through the meteoric rise in camera sales over the 1970s and 1980s. The Wolfman Report, established by Augustus Wolfman to provide an accessible source of objective,

accurate data on the American photographic market produced consumer figures that showed 44.3% of US households had an instant camera from 1983-1984.

The Polaroid camera's instant production of a photographic image provided the ultimate privacy for personal photographs. This gave Polaroid an advantage over traditional film-based cameras while providing an early insight into an affordance that was adopted by digital camera technology. This technology provided for the first time private photographic practices that were free from "the minority gaze of the photo chemist... what might have been taboo now becomes picture-able" (Buse, 2010). It was these notions of the 'gaze of the photo chemist' that initially brought to the public forum discussions concerning the everyday photographing of children 'inappropriately'. During the 1990s the media highlighted numerous instances of photo-chemists notifying relevant authorities over concerns of inappropriate images of children being submitted for developing and printing. The most infamous case at the time concerned the UK newsreader Julie Somerville and her partner being questioned by police having photographed her daughter, aged seven at the time in the bath. Such occurrences reflected the climate of concern that surrounded children within society at the time. The reasoning and context for this are explored in more detail within chapter 4 of this study when dealing with the construction of the palatable folk devil (Cohen, 1972).

Associations with the use of technology and sex are not limited to these examples of allegation within the 1990s media. There has been a tradition of technology being adopted for purposes considered outside of their everyday function, and increasingly towards sex. Furthermore, such associations have also often contributed to the emergence of cross-societal concerns related to sex. For example, if one considers the previously discussed concerns surrounding the 'Camera Fiend', at the turn of the 20th Century, the accusations of suspicion centred upon the use of the camera close to beach resorts, to capture female bathers unaware.

Not just restricted to photographic technology, moral concerns regarding sex have often evolved simultaneously with technological advancements. However, as technology became more pervasive, research into this area tended to shift towards an emphasis on how media technologies, and exposure, may not only be affecting society but specifically affecting children (Davis, 1976). Remaining within the context of this research, this can be seen through the various visual and print-based media technologies, initially with photography and the production of pornographic images during the mid-19th Century. This was followed by the emergence of film, in which research indicated that children were exposed to screen experiences far beyond their years, that might "corrupt the morals of

children” (Mitchell, 1929, in Wartella and Jennings, 2000). As technologies moved from public locations into the privacy of the home, through television, so too did concerns surrounding sexuality on the screens. Thompson (1998) writes of the concerns raised by movements such as the anti-permissiveness movement in Britain since the 1960s, with its moral campaigns against representations of sexuality on screen, aligning the effects upon children as one of its core principles. The elevation of these concerns into panics is an aspect of a wider discourse surrounding the protection of children from the world of adulthood. Traditionally, sex and sexuality have been presented as a core differentiation between the worlds of adulthood and childhood with the protection and sheltering of children from all aspects of sex and sexuality championed as a means of maintaining the innocence of the child. This area is explored in detail within the next chapter when the research addresses relevant literature associated with the conceptualisation of childhood.

2.5.1 The omnipresence of the digital camera

Sarvas and Frohlich (2011) culminate their research on the democratisation of photography focusing on what they refer to as the ‘digital path’ (ibid: 21). Having previously engaged with the ‘portraiture path’ and the ‘Kodak path’ they highlight the contribution made by the personal computer (PC) to the integration of photography into the domestic space. They chronicle the technological progress towards an economically accessible digital camera for domestic and everyday practices, while also acknowledging the contribution made by two other technological developments. Both the camera phone and the World Wide Web were simultaneously evolving, at differing stages of development, and would combine to significantly impact the practice of digital photography. The camera phone outsold stand-alone digital cameras for the first time in 2004. This trend continued, with statistical data from 2014 indicating that worldwide ‘new’ sales of cameras totalled 1.8 billion units, with 95% of those being camera phones (Ahonen, 2014)

Initially, it was the ease of use, convenience, affordability, and the marketing of cameras that normalised their everyday use within society. However, convenience is no longer a marketable selling point. The reliance on a camera being brought to an occasion, in the way that it once was, is now redundant. With the ubiquitous presence of camera phones, we see an authentic democratisation of photography. Most people have a camera on their person at all times, in a position to take photographs every moment of their lives (Hand, 2012). This results in more photographs being taken than ever before. This dominant practice of photographing and sharing of images has flourished as

technology has progressed. Conscious of this, Sarvas and Frohlich (2011) specifically focused on the dominance of photography from the perspective of a 'technological path'. Contesting the ideas of Ron Norman (2010) regarding the social shaping of technology, they challenge his preference for a technology-driven approach regarding development, in which "inventors will invent", and "the needs will follow" (Norman, 2010: 42). Sarvas and Frohlich (2011) consider such a perspective to lack any recognition of the influences that might shape inventors. Therefore, distancing themselves from any technological deterministic position. They criticise this position as a restrictive manifestation of reductionism that fails to consider the other factors influencing and shaping the evolvement of technology "the superiority of a technology...is relative to time, place and actors" (ibid: 18). Contesting positions regarding technology resurface throughout this research. Specifically, within the context of online technology, when used for sharing images and/or the inhabiting and use of virtual spaces by different demographics. The research returns to these areas when considering the medias portrayal of both the perceived perpetrators and victims of online abuse in chapter 4.

2.5.2 Sharenting and the online sharing of images of children

Digital technology allowed photographers to capture an innumerable amount of images, without the requirement of having to rely on a third party to process film or to print photographs. The field of photography also saw a seismic shift in the practices of sharing photographs and digital images. Chalfen (1987) categorised the tradition of taking everyday photographs and sharing them as 'home mode' photography; a pattern of interpersonal and small group communications centred on the home. He differentiated photographs taken and/or shared outside of the traditional domestic environment as 'mass mode'. This separation needs reconsideration given the contemporary sharing and photographing habits of society, given that the age of mobility has shattered the borders previously presumed to be domesticity's defining features. This transition has become naturalised within society and photography has become yet another part of a contemporary eco-system that consists of computers, networks, hardware and software.

Such a relocation has manifest itself nowhere more so than within the habits of sharing photographs. The traditional practice involved a monitored process that was overseen within a private space. This was usually accompanied by a commentary clarifying any potential misunderstandings or uncertainties for those viewing the images. Alternatively, concerning photographs shared, short notes would be juxtaposed alongside the photographs if they were stored within a hardbound album or scribed on the back of the photograph if they were stored in a box. Within these locations, photographs would also often be prominently displayed in frames. This contributed to the maintaining

of the preferred memory associated with the photographs shared. These practices and environments are well documented within the literature of Chalfen (1987) and Rose (2010). Similarly, in the relevant findings and discussion chapters of this research, the study considers the continuance of these habits among research participants as documented through the notes taken at the field sites of participants interviews. However, the migration of the practice of sharing from the physical and more manageable 'private' space of the family home to the virtual semi-public space of social network sites has rendered elements of this previous research as 'dated' or reflective.

Boyd and Ellison (2008) refer to social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to, amongst other things, construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system that allows them to view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (ibid: 211). Additionally, these sites allow simultaneous one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many communications via text, photos, direct messages and videos. The most used site for photo sharing is Facebook, with over 1.59 billion active daily users, and over 300 million photographs shared daily (Noyes, 2019). Yet, changes in visual communications have resulted in photography becoming even more networked due to the prevalent practice of sharing photographs immediately after capturing them through instant messaging tools or social media applications. The affordances granted by having a conveniently mobile camera and mobilised online accessibility results in 'Networked photography' (Lister, 2013) that has become a pervasive, routine, communicative act that represents a widespread and natural activity in current highly mediated societies (Lobinger, 2015). Within the context of this research, this accessibility and the pervasive possibilities of photographing and instant sharing of images platformed a practice that has progressively evolved and been researched in recent years.

Initially labelled by Time Magazine as one of the words of the week in February 2013, the practice of 'sharenting' was popularised by the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health (2015). However, the practice of sharing images of children across social media is a contentious issue, with concerns associated with the practice populating news stories and debates (Meakin, 2013; LaFrance, 2016). Brosch (2018) presented various definitions of the practice as vague and general before concluding that a "fundamental risk of sharenting is associated with losing privacy by the child" (Brosch, 2018: 78) and presenting her own definition as "making public by parents a lot of detailed information about their children in the form of photos, videos and photos through social media, which violate children's privacy" (ibid: 78), cognisant of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (article 16) and European Union General Data Protection Regulation (article 17) children are entitled to an autonomous privacy that is ungoverned by their parents. Furthermore, Brosch reflectively

questioned any categorising of the practice when associated with frequency or the number of images shared, citing the first judgement on 'sharenting' in Poland. This case saw a father sentenced to three months in prison for sharing a single image of his naked 2-year-old child with a bottle of beer in one hand and his genitals in the other (Szczurowska, 2017).

The agency of subjects and questions concerning relationships of power in the adult-child dynamic are prominent among debates on 'sharenting', with previous research considering a dichotomy that has evolved with the practice (Brosch, 2018; Choi and Lewallen, 2018; Marasli, et al., 2017; Wagner and Gasche, 2019). This conflict involves parents balancing the benefits and the imminent right to share images with the right to privacy attained by the photographed child (Wagner and Gasche, 2019). These benefits include parents expressing affection for their child (Duggan, et al., 2015), achieving confirmation of their parenting (Brosch, 2018; Steinberg, 2016), the utilising of the convenience of social media to establish and maintain relationships (Ellison, et al., 2007; McDaniel, et al. 2012) and the deepening of familiarity through the "reciprocal process of self-disclosure that increased intimacy between users" (Brosch, 2018: 77). Krasnova et al. posit that "Facebook and other online social platforms offer a new and promising platform for mothers to enact and receive validation of good mothering" (2010: 109-125). This activates concerns related to the sharing of images of children to gratify particular needs or to accumulate or enhance social capital for the sharer (Ellison, et al., 2007; Choi and Lewallen, 2018).

These benefits are countered by the potential compromising of the child's privacy. The establishment of an unauthorised and often non-consensual online digital presence limits the child's ability to hide their online presence should they wish to later and potentially involves both privacy and 'face-risks' for the child at the time of sharing and into the future (Minkus et al., 2015; Wagner and Gasche, 2018).

"When a parent shares a child's information online, the child is exposed to non-negligible privacy risk without receiving the attendant benefits of social networking... it can also reduce a child's privacy agency later in life when the main online service providers are already aware of their presence, personal information and familial ties"

Minkus et al., (2015: 783)

This dichotomy is further complicated when the perspectives of the photographed child are considered. Parents oversharing can not only subject children to potential risks but also jeopardise the parent-child relationship (Blum-Ross and Livingstone, 2017; Moser et al., 2017; Brosch, 2018; Lipu and Siibak, 2019). Discrepancies between the views of parents and children regarding permission to share and the content shared can lead to frustration, conflict and 'privacy boundary turbulence' (Petronio, 2010). 'Interfamilial privacy' is often overlooked during the sharing of images of children (Steinberg, 2017). Awareness amongst parents is crucial as children require negotiation of sharing terms and respect for their views (Lipu and Siibak, 2019). However, such negotiations are rarely considered by parents in their role as the gatekeepers of the personal information they share about their children (Marasli et al., 2017). Particularly given the pressure on mothers to participate in the ubiquitous practice of sharing images of children in today's digital society (Bourke et al., 2013; Moser et al., 2017) where sharers' pride and viewers' envy have been found to drive parental sharing (Wagner and Gasche, 2018). Furthermore, parents when aware of their children's concerns either did not take them as seriously as the children did themselves (Cranor et al., 2014) or considered the benefits derived from 'sharenting' to outweigh the potential risks (Bourke, et al., 2013).

Literature suggests that changes in the practices of individuals and the affordances of social media platforms should be considered as a way of addressing the dichotomy facing those seeking to share images of children. Wagner and Gasche cite cost-mitigating strategies employed by sharers to avoid perceived costs for children, notably the non-disclosure of identities, a consideration of the content and a reduction in the frequency or number of images shared (2018: 983-986). Whereas both Minkus et al. (2015) and Moser et al. (2017) suggest privacy-preserving mechanisms be employed by the social media sharing platforms, adopting a 'nudge' protocol to encourage potential sharers to consider more private sharing behaviours with regard to children. Furthermore, Choi and Lewallen (2018) conclude by echoing Guernsey's calls (2014) for a form of collaboration between journalists, researchers, health and media organisations to provide credible public statements concerning the risks involved in exposing children to digital media. These suggestions would provide access to and clarity of related information, potentially providing a platform for future more child-centred considerations related to the sharing of children's information. Recent research in the broader area of online parenting has commendably positioned the child as a prominent consideration (Livingstone and Blum-Ross, 2020; Steinberg, 2020). Future studies in the field of sharenting would equally benefit from adopting a similar approach.

2.6 Conclusion

When considering the emergence of photography as a quotidian practice, the ubiquitous presence of the camera phone and the migration of the practice of sharing images from physical spaces to online platforms within modern society this chapter provides an appropriate unpacking of the democratisation of photography. This aligns with the theoretically framed focus of the thesis concerning the effect that the mobilisation of still image capturing technology and social media has had on the everyday photographing of children and the sharing of their image. The chapter has presented a fitting platform for chapter 3 to progressively further unpack and discuss the popularity of photographing children and visually documenting childhood.

Debates regarding the online activity of children often relate to concerns about their safety. It is only in recent times that the focus of research has somewhat shifted to consider any kind of authority for the subject of debate, the child. This research has predominantly focused on children's interaction and behaviour online. The EUKids Online project seeks to enhance the knowledge base of European children's "online opportunities, risks and safety" (EUKids Online Report, 2014). This project engaged with children and adults to consider their perspective beneath various themes including adopting a qualitative study of young children and digital technology to gain their perspective. Furthermore, in an attempt to emphasise the rights of the child, the Council of Europe when making recommendations to the committee of ministers to member states on guidelines to 'respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment' clarified that states must:

"... respect, protect and fulfil the right of the child to privacy and data protection... ensure that relevant stakeholders, in particular those processing personal data, but also the child's peers, parents and carers, and educators, are made aware of and respect the child's right to privacy and data protection" (Section 3.3: 27, 2018)⁴.

Additionally, other studies have considered children's perspectives of the practice of information disclosure on social media (Moser et al., 2017; Lipu and Siiback, 2019) in which their concerns and opinions regarding 'sharenting' were accounted for. This emerging child-centred focus is to be welcomed. However, notwithstanding this, the traditional positioning of the child as a vulnerable entity, lacking agency and dependent on the protection of an authoritative adult remains a homogenised perspective across society, with concerns for their wellbeing continuing to dominant

⁴ Recommendation CM/Rec (2018) 7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment July 2018. Available at: https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016808b79f7 (accessed: 06.09.19).

protectionist discourses. The non-agentic positioning of children is discussed in more detail in section 3.8 of the next chapter within the context of their role as photographic subjects. This discussion is further expanded across chapter 7 where the research unpacks and explores empirically participants perspectives and practices concerning children's rights and notions of childhood agency within the context of photographing and sharing their images.

Anxieties related to the perceived vulnerability of children may have intensified following their extension to online spaces, however apprehensions regarding their wellbeing have a lineage that traces back to ancient times. Nina Funnell, an Australian media journalist presenting at the Wheeler Centre⁵ on 17th November 2011 attributed the following quote to Plato, speaking of his concern with regard to children:

“They riot in the street, inflamed with wild notions; their morals are decaying, what is to become of them?”

Such disquiet regarding the morals of children is but one manifestation of the overarching concerns for their welfare. The evolvment and normalisation of concerns for children, and for childhood innocence among society are explored in the next chapter of this research where relevant literature concerning the conceptualisation of childhood and the imaging of the child is comprehensively unpacked and explored.

⁵ WheelerCenter, 2015. Lunchbox/Soapbox: Nina Funnell on the Teen Sexting Panic Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQJOXRIZZu4&t=5s> (accessed: 21.10.18)

3 CHANGING CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF CHILDHOOD AND HOW THEY HAVE INFLUENCED THE PHOTOGRAPHING OF CHILDREN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter progresses the focus of the study from the practice of photography to the relevant subject being photographed. Cognisant of the context of this research, engagement with theories concerning the evolution of childhood as a concept, the emergence of the modern child and the development of social practices related to the visual representation of the child are appropriate. While this research's focus is on the quotidian or everyday photographing of children, pictures, photographs and images from within the domains of fine art and commercial photography are also of significance when acknowledging the influence such content has had, and continues to have, on shaping photographic practices among the public. The key theoretical areas considered across this chapter concern the differing conceptualisations of childhood and the child.

3.2 The emergence of childhood

The practice of visually representing children and childhood predates the earliest photographic practices of daguerreotype and can be traced back to pre-medieval times. However, a consistent debate within the literature surrounds the notions of childhood, and what it was perceived to be through the intervening centuries. Previous research has positioned the concept of childhood as a recent phenomenon with contemporary interpretations and understandings less than 150 years old (Ariès, 1962; De Mause, 1974; Postman, 1994). *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (Ariès, 1962), a key text for studies of childhood describes the years 1850-1950 as a time when parents developed an intellectual capacity that allowed a full measure of empathy, tenderness, and

responsibility towards their children. It was a watershed period of time that witnessed the birth of the modern child (Ariès, 1962; De Mause, 1974; Postman, 1994).

Postman (1994) posits an awful existence for children prior to their recognition as something other than the miniature adults they were considered to be at the time. As far back as the Greeks and up to the mid-19th Century, there was oppression towards being a child. The non-agentive life of a child was far from equal to that of an adult. Postman notes that among the Greeks, up until as late as Aristotle's time there were no moral or legal restraints against the practice of infanticide (1994: 6). De Mause (1974) similarly details that throughout history hundreds of generations of mothers impassively watched as their families and children suffered from one discomfort to another, as a result of them "lacking the psychic mechanism necessary to empathise with their children" (1974: 16). Progressing his writing through Roman times, Postman further comments that the first laws prohibiting infanticide came into practice in 374 A.D., extending the idea that "children needed protection and nurturing, and schooling, and freedom from adult secrets" (1994: 10).

It was during the Roman period that the concept of shame was considered a crucial step in the evolution of the child into an adult "without a well-developed idea of shame, childhood could not exist" (ibid: 10). Influenced by the work of Norbert Elias (1969) through this suggestion of a conspiracy of silence amongst adults concerning sexual urges when in the presence of the young, Postman (1994) argues that such traditions are a feature of a civilised society. He also reflected on the invasions of the Northern Barbarians and the collapse of the Roman Empire as a period of time that saw the disappearance of such ideals from society. A similar faith was bestowed on aspects of literacy, education and any ideas of shame. Consequently, the disappearance of any recognition of childhood soon followed suit.

Literacy was one of the prevalent contributors to the emergence of a more contemporary perception of childhood, with Postman believing it to be the point of distinction between an adult and a child (1994). However, its contraction during the Middle Ages was to such an extent that the majority of society evolved from a culture of social literacy to a practice of craft literacy. A consequence of this was that the art of reading was restricted to a minority, who would form a scribal class which in turn would become a privileged class (Havelock, 1976). Therefore, it was the re-emergence of mass literacy, thanks to Johannes Gutenberg's printing press (circa 1460) and the advent of a print culture

that saw a new definition of adulthood based on reading competence evolve. Simultaneously, a new concept of childhood based on reading incompetence also evolved. Prior to the emergence of this new environment it was considered that infancy ended at the age of seven and adulthood began straight away, with the age of seven being recognised as the age that children had a command over speech and furthermore as the age of reason, as recognised by the Catholic Church at the time (Postman, 1998: 14-18). Literacy thrived in this print culture and with it evolved an increased awareness of the self. The ability to reflect, think and process information intensified the consciousness of the self and such development of personal identity was not limited to the adults within society.

From the emergence of the print culture onwards that adulthood had to be earned, it became a symbolic, not a biological achievement. Postman emphasised that “the young would have to become adults and they would have to do so by learning how to read” (1994: 36). This process could only be developed through education and consequently, through reinventing schools. This re-development of schooling and education meant that children were considered to be of a different nature and to have different needs to adults. Children were no longer perceived as miniature adults. Given that the nature of education and literacy was a measure of achievement, they were thought of more so as “unformed adults” (ibid: p.41). During this period, infancy was no longer attributed to age and it ceased at the point that command of speech was achieved. Thus, childhood began with the task of learning how to read. Additionally, Postman noted that the word ‘child’ was used to describe adults who could not read, adults who were regarded as intellectually childish (ibid).

The contrast between adults and children was not restricted to levels of literacy. From a visual cultural perspective Sixteenth-century painting differentiated children from the adults they were presented next to through a difference in their dress and their physical features. Despite the subjectivity of the individual artists, these visual differences in appearance was representative of the relevant sentiment towards them at the time. This specific area of the visual representation of children and its rise in popularity is engaged with in more detail in the next section of this chapter, considering the popularity of such practices.

3.3 Childhood; Alternative perspectives and conceptualizations

“The idea that between the 17th and 20th century there took place the construction of a distinctively modern conception of childhood remains a powerful one”

Alan Prout (2008: 23)

Cunningham (1991); Hendrick (1997); Heywood (2001) and Orne (2001) challenge Ariès' (1962) locating of the contemporary concept of childhood in the post-industrial age. These critics of Ariès focused on his assertion that there was an absence or disappearance of childhood between the post-Roman and pre-Industrial periods of history. They countered this opinion with claims suggesting that parents and children bonded long before the 18th Century enlightenment. Orne (2001) refers to historical research as a means of documenting how childhood was regarded as a specific phase of life and that during the Middle Ages “parents treated children like children... with care and sympathy and that children had cultural activities and possessions of their own” (2001: 5). Furthermore, Messenger Davies (2010) acknowledges Ornes' concerns that Ariès' (1962) views on the perception of childhood had become considered fact within society. Higonnet (1998) also critiques Ariès' findings suggesting they may have relied too much on sporadic statistics that have been portrayed as social evidence.

Reflecting on these countering positions, a differentiation between Ariès' concept of modern childhood and what was considered to be evidence of childhood activities during the historical period referenced by Orne (2001) could be drawn. That is, if childhood as a concept is classified as a cultural or social construct. If considered as such, Ariès (1962) may indeed locate the emergence of childhood to the 17th Century, but this does not consequently result in its absence prior to this period. Rather, as Orne (2001) has commented, the concept of childhood itself may have been different. Therefore, childhood, as a cultural or social construct is subject to change under the influence of historical, geographical and cultural contexts. Smyth (2003) refers to this notion of the conceptualisation of childhood as being in flux and interpretations of it being based on context and time, with it changing alongside social developments (2008: 161). Walsh (2004) referenced this polysemy of interpretation, stating that “there is no static universal conceptualisation of childhood” (2004: 2).

Through his deconstructive approach to historical notions of childhood Prout engaged frameworks concerned with the conceptualisation of childhood (2008) across three specific fields of thinking. Initially acknowledging the Darwin-inspired Child Study Movement and the re-emergence of an evolutionary biology of childhood, Prout then examines the relationship of paediatric medicine to

child psychology and its concern with the social conditions of children's lives, and finally discusses the development of the Social Constructionists' accounts of childhood at the end of the 20th century (2008: 22). Given the context of this study, the strand most relevant is the emergence of a Social Constructionist account of childhood.

Prout asserts that what started out as "essentially a biological project, locating childhood as a natural phenomenon was marked by a growing awareness of the social and cultural ramifications of childhood" (2008: 25). Developing this strand, he emphasises this consideration of childhood as a social construct, under the framework of Social Constructionism. This framework is contextualised through the understanding that childhood is dependent on conditional aspects of our social selves. Prout expands on this when positioning a rhetorical question as to whether had we been a different kind of society, with different needs, values or interests; would we have built a different thing or built the same thing differently? This concept of Social Constructionism is based on the assumptions that reality is made within specific social circumstances, that it varies across both history and culture, and ultimately that reality is open to change, both intended and unintended (ibid: 29). Therefore, if applied Social Constructionism emphasises the variable, culturally relative and pluralistic character of childhood while simultaneously destabilising the taken-for-granted previous concepts. This is further engaged with later in this chapter when considering literature concerned with contemporary understandings of what can be classified as the modern child.

Despite having his critics regarding the presence of a concept of childhood during earlier periods of history, Ariès' (1962) thesis on the development of a modern child during the post-industrial period of history is substantiated by Cunningham (1991), Prout (2008), Higgonnet (1998) and Postman (1994). Cunningham (1991) details a transformation of the concept of childhood within society from the 17th-20th Century:

"... there occurred a major and irreversible shift in the representations of childhood, to the point where all children throughout the world were thought to be entitled to certain common elements and rights of childhood"

(2001: 7).

Du Boulay (1970) recognised that a key element of the intensifying consciousness around children was the emergence of a more affluent class. This sector of society would invest their wealth in larger homes, in portraits of themselves and their families and in their children through education and clothing. In this sense, their surplus money made it possible to use children as objects of conspicuous consumption (1970: 90-91). Relevance can be drawn here to the accumulation of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977) with the representation of cultural status not isolated to one's own symbolic representation, but additionally with the use of visual representations of children.

Both Du Boulay (1970) and Postman (1994) outline their idea that improved economic conditions played a role in an intensified consciousness around children within society. This in turn made them more socially visible, thus positioning the origins of childhood as a middle-class idea, with it being another century before the concept would filter down to the lower classes in a comparative way. During the evolution of childhood as a concept, the treatment of children from lower-class backgrounds continued to be brutal, with them predominantly used to fuel the industrial machine. In comparison, those families from the emerging middle or capitalist classes were not reliant on selling their children's ability to work. This position acknowledges the classic Marxist theories regarding an individual's relationship to the means of production, influencing their place within society not only for adults but also for their children.

Postman (1994) provides some context to a child's status within society, citing laws that were passed as late as 1814, making it an offence to steal a child for the first time. Indeed, the picture he paints for the existence of the majority of children at this time is not a positive one. It is also worth noting, that despite legislation being introduced to protect children as far back as the 19th century, it was not until the 1980s that the term 'child abuse' was used within an official governmental report. Concerns regarding the continued abuse of children throughout the centuries are engaged with in the next chapter of this research when considering the construction of threats towards children.

Prout (2008) proposed that most children growing up during the emergence of the modern child did not in fact experience childhood as "distinct, protected and an extended period of growing up... this kind of childhood was confined primarily to aristocratic children and those of the emerging middle-classes" (ibid: 22-23). Nonetheless, the concept of childhood evolved and eventually extended across

the class divide of Western societies with one of the vehicles of literacy – education – having a fundamental role to play in this process.

3.4 The modern child: A 19th century invention

Two prominent theories of childhood emerged from within the 18th Century, elements of which are still recognisable within contemporary frameworks. Both John Locke (1632-1734) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) contested that education was a primary influence on childhood while positioning its impact and purpose from alternative standpoints. Locke proposed a theory of childhood as an opportunity to potentially produce a well-rounded citizen. This position considered the mind to be a blank canvas at birth, that through literacy, education, reason, self-control and shame could be made into the mind of a civilised adult. Contesting this was Rousseau's more romanticised view. He believed a child was important in themselves, rather than a means to an end, as in the Lockean sense of a moulded model citizen. For Rousseau, it was the deformed adult rather than the unformed child with the problem. The core consideration here is the role the child plays within society. Was the child considered to be in the process of 'becoming' an adult, as Locke would have positioned it, or was the emphasis to be placed on the child being an agent in themselves and therefore being a child in their own right?

Gianoutsos (2006) posits Locke and Rousseau's' different positions on education as "(resting) on how they construe the relationship between nurture and nature and what the role of the educated man is in society" (2006: 1). Further considering the countering perspectives, Postman emphasises that the child from birth "possess capacities for candour, understanding, curiosity, and spontaneity that are deadened by literacy, education, reason, self-control and shame" (1994: 59). Postman also aligns the thoughts of Freud and Dewey on this issue. Taken together, "...they represent a synthesis and summation of childhood's journey from the sixteenth century to the twentieth" (ibid: p.62). Postman emphasises that Freud simultaneously refutes Locke through his assertion that "in their efforts to achieve mature adulthood, children must overcome, outgrow, and sublimate their instinctual passions", while also refuting Rousseau in claiming that "the earliest interactions between child and parents are decisive in determining the kind of adult the child will be: through reason, the passions of the mind may be controlled; civilisation is quite impossible without repression and sublimation" (ibid: 62-63). Postman proposes that "the psychic needs of the child must be addressed in terms of what

the child is, not what they will be... only in this way... will the child become a constructive participant in the social life of the community” (1994: 63). From this we are presented with the classic dichotomy of childhood, mirrored in the frameworks of childhood studies today; the child whose individuality, capacity for self-control and logical thought must be preserved and somewhat controlled by nurturing adults. Yet, also this same child must not be restricted from their own rules for development, nor have their own curiosity or their own charm stifled by the agent of adulthood.

If we are to consider contemporary discourses related to childhood, we must deliberate similarly opposing frameworks that centre on questions of self-efficiency, freedom and agency positioned against dependency, protection and vulnerability. These approaches are juxtaposed to the opposing theories of Locke and Rousseau amidst the continuing paradigm of childhood and agency within society. Section 3.6 of this chapter discusses this in more detail when considering the agentic status of the child.

The recognition of the child as something other than an entity in the process of becoming an adult that is of relevance for this study. Emphasising the change in mindset more toward a sense of responsibility towards children, Prout references that one of the developments to grow out of the Child Study Movement, between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was the “construction of the child as a concern of the Nation” (2008: 28). He further referenced the development of paediatric medicine as an indicator of this developing conscience within society. This sense of care towards children was by no means replacing something that was absent from society previously. Rather, it was extending the notion of responsibility from a private space, traditionally within the family, into much more of a public discourse concerned with the wellbeing of children. This perspective continues today with the normalised protectionist discourses concerning children. However, such a social norm can have consequences. Chapter 4 engages with the modern-day fallout of an overprotective society. A society in which there is a trepidation concerning engaging with children unknown to you for fear of presumed perversion.

Higonnet (1998) acknowledges this previous sense of concern for childhood, referencing the ideas of Rousseau and the separating of the ‘innocent child’ from “adult faults, social evils and sexuality” (1998: 26). Specifically within the field of fine art, she considers how paintings represented childhood. She emphasises that these paintings were an adult’s interpretation of what childhood should look like.

It is within these paintings that there was an element of innocence being romanticised by the painters. These paintings portrayed an idealised childhood that, when presented in isolation, appeared unconscious of adults and their desires for childhood. This is a key concept for Higonnet (1998) concerning why images of children are considered so attractive and appealing to adults. Images of a romantic child replace what we have lost as adults and know that we can never re-capture. This innocence of childhood is romanticised through the apparent disengagement of the painted child with the reality of the viewing adult, “the child is presented for us (adults) to look at, and to enjoy looking at... they are absorbed by a childhood that we cannot reach” (1998: 28). This longed-for, yet ultimately unattainable innocence of childhood is considered a reason by Higonnet for the continued tradition of acquiring or producing images of those children closest to us. Again, this is a key area of interest to this research and will be further explored in section 3.6 of this chapter titled ‘The Photographed Child’.

Higonnet also believed that depictions of a romantic child represented the innocence of a child that could be considered in a way frozen. That is a child that does not age or die. This interpretation has a level of substance. Considering the mortality rates and life expectancies of children at this time and for decades to come, this idealised and ever-present child was also something that was longed-for yet unachievable. However, a visual representation could be returned to without any fear of it passing. Evidence of this can be seen in the popularity of portraits of children who had previously passed away but were depicted as sleeping. These practices were not isolated to paintings of children who had died and there is a long tradition from this pre-Victorian era of memorialising the dead through paintings. However, at this time these romanticised portraits of children through sculpture and paintings had a very limited and restricted audience and it was not until the middle of the 19th Century that the audience grew much wider. With photography emerging as an accessible platform of visual representation, this tradition continued and crossed the class divide, with the popularisation of the practice of Mori or post-mortem photography.

3.5 The imaging of the child historically

The tradition of imaging children preceded the emergence of photographic technology. However, unlike art during the Renaissance through to the Impressionist periods, photography eventually provided a medium that truly democratised the practice of visually representing those that had become the most cherished within society.

Higonnet (1998) and previously Postman (1994), locate the emergence of the contemporary imaging of childhood to the middle of the 18th century without denying the existence of a concept of childhood previous to this period. However, the concept and the representation of the child was different prior to society's recognition of them as something other than "unformed adults" (Postman, 1994: 41). Higonnet (1998) outlines that prior to this time children only "appeared in paintings and sculptures in order to indicate their future adult status" (1998: 17). However, there are traces of children in visual art as far back as the 13th century, *Madonna and Child* by Duccio di Buoninsegna for example. Nonetheless, it was the 17th Century that first saw the emergence of paintings of children on their own in portraits. According to Higonnet (1998), the change in the artistic representation of children is signalled as beginning with the production of paintings similar to Sir Joshua Reynolds' 'Age of Innocence' (1785) (Figure 2). In paintings such as this the children "enable us to forget many aspects of adult society" (Higonnet, 1998: 23). Classified as the 'romantic child' these representations of children "make a good show of having no class, no gender, and no thoughts – of being socially, sexually, and physically innocent" (ibid: 24).



Figure 2: Age of Innocence - Joshua Reynolds (c. 1785)

Paintings of this style proved immensely popular amongst affluent sectors of society; the class divide during this period of history meant that only those of a particular social status would ever get to view such artwork. However, with growing affluence and advancements in print technology the audience for these types of paintings grew through duplication and art history books. The appeal for this style of painting was in its depiction of everyday life inclusive of family life and that “children became a sub-speciality within this domestic-genre” (Higonnet, 1998: 31). Furthermore, this style of painting appealed to the “newly monied middle classes and all over Europe and the US paintings of children proliferated... these paintings became the stuff of ordinary budgets and households” (ibid: 32).

The predominant portrayal of the innocent child was represented in a variety of ways. From children dressing up in special costumes or with pets to children being painted as winged tykes or angelic figures (ibid). The latter of which makes the child seem less human, more innocent and/or at one with nature. Similar representations are immensely popular within contemporary society through photographic portraits. The photographs in Anne Geddes’ ‘Until Now’ collection (1999) as depicted in Figure 3 and Figure 4 are classic examples.



Figure 3: Until Now Collection. Image 1 - Anne Geddes (1999)



Figure 4: Until Now Collection. Image 2 - Anne Geddes (1999)

Another example of the portrayal of childhood innocence Higonnet refers to is the representation of children unconsciously pre-figuring adult gender roles. Paintings of this nature predominantly represented boys at work or being active, with girls observing.



Figure 5: Children with Toy Boat - Henry Lejeune (c.1875)

These representations of children in social circumstances as shown in Figure 5. fulfilling recognisable gender-dependent roles continued without much change for decades, even centuries, to come across most visual platforms. In modern society, the trend continues both commercially and through the sharing of everyday images. Children's advertisements are more likely to show boys engaging in competitive or outdoor play (Kahlenberg and Hein, 2010; Hendriyani et al., 2012; Blackwell et al., 2014) and focus more on teaching spatial skills and preparing them for STEM⁶ related careers. Whereas for girls they are centred on domesticated activities (Smith, 2015). In their content analysis of 510 uploaded photographs to Instagram, Choi and Lewallen (2018) acknowledged that parents continue this replication of stereotypes with images predominantly conforming to society's standards (2018: 156).

The concept of the romantic child was transformed by the mass duplication and distribution of prints during the latter period of the 19th and early part of the 20th Century. Improvements in print technology and society's appetite for such imagery of childhood innocence, saw its mass marketing for commercial purposes immerse across all sectors of society. A prominent example of this was the duplication of the Joshua Reynolds painting of *Penelope Boothby* (1788) by John Everett Millais as a centrefold in the *Graphic* newspaper in London in 1880. Millais renamed his illustration *Cherry Ripe* and it proved so popular that the printer could not keep up with the orders with an excess of 500,000 of the *Graphic* Newspaper sold (Reis, 1992). This image was then sold on to the Pears Soap Company to be used in advertisements and calendars, further extending its circulation.

⁶ Careers in the areas of science, technology, engineering or mathematics

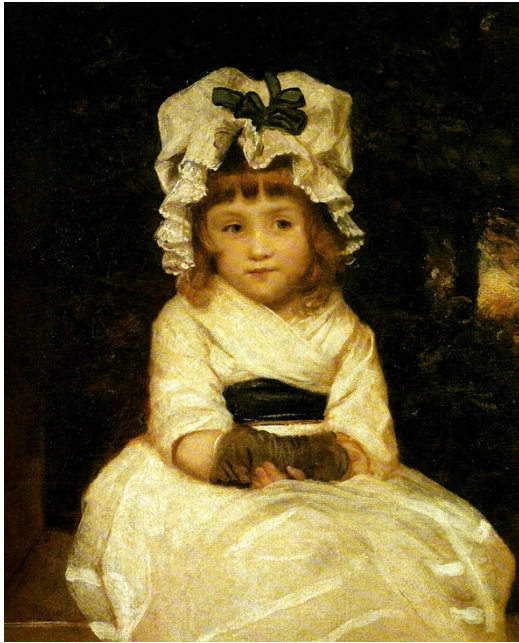


Figure 6: Penelope Boothby - Joshua Reynolds **Figure 7: Cherry Ripe - John Everett Millais**
(c.1788) **(c.1880)**



Distinguishing between the two original pieces of art, it is interesting to observe that Millais' *Cherry Ripe* (Figure 7) illustration is not a duplication of the original painting. Rather, it is an illustration that has more so been inspired by the Penelope Boothby painting (Figure 6). The differences include the relocation of the child from a mid-shot composition to a full-frame composition with a greater emphasis placed upon the presentation of the child.

The practice of illustration became extremely popular and Higonet (1998) and Messenger Davies (2010) comment on the opportunities that arose within the field for women illustrators. The golden age of illustration (the 1880s-1920s) was a period that provided new publishing markets, providing huge incentives for talented women to specialise in the subject of mothers and children. Higonet (1998) emphasises how difficult it was for women illustrators to find work in anything outside of magazines and books aimed at women and children at the turn of the twentieth century "the more illustrative the subject matter of the child or maternity became, the more women were encouraged to specialise in it... commerce and femininity together entwined the subject of childhood" (1998: 56). The relevance of this alignment of women with children across numerous spheres within the visual imagery production cycle became normalised culturally. Women were aligned with children artistically, commercially, and ultimately encouraged to be the capturers, keepers and sharers of images of children and the family. This practise continues today, yet as presented and further

discussed in chapter 6 the empirical findings of this study show a more gender balanced cultural shift may be unfolding.

With the popularisation of these practices of visually documenting the child growing at the turn of the twentieth century, a normalisation process was occurring in terms of what childhood was 'meant' to look like. This was a subjective representation perceived by adults, in which this "innocent child had gained an audience deeply invested in it socially emotionally and sensually" (ibid, 1998: 60). Despite this popularity, progressive photographic technology at the time meant that subsequent generations of illustrators dwindled in numbers, as did their publishing opportunities.

3.6 The photographed child

As discussed, representations of childhood have been produced through the various forms of visual artistic expression and the emergence of photographic technology was no different. As a medium of visual representation, it not so much replaced illustration as replicated its conventions (Higonnet 1998, Holland 2004). A key theorist in this area is Patricia Holland, both as a co-author with photographer Jo Spence (2000) and through her own research concerned with the everyday image (1992, 2004, 2009). Her research considers publicly circulated images of childhood, with an emphasis on consumer culture, advertising or institutional imagery used as academic records within nurseries, schools and clinics. These studies also extended to images emerging from outrage within the popular press and images of children from the past. Using her collection of images gathered over many years as a method of research analysis, her work has made a worthwhile contribution to the overall field of study. However, by limiting its focus to images used for publication or circulation within society, her framework differs from the concerns of this study. Notwithstanding this, when framing her analysis from a socio-cultural perspective Holland's research is concerned with similar areas of interest, notably the intended audience and the reasoning for their initial production and circulation.

Holland's locates the emergence of childhood images for commercial purposes in Victorian lacy greeting cards and illustrated prints. As photographic technology emerged, Holland argues that there was no reason for it to refurbish the concept of the romantic child previously established. Here Holland introduces a key theoretical framework for this research: the viewing of an image activates a memory

of a previously experienced image that with which meaning has been associated. Therefore, we experience public images in two senses. The first of these are the images that we are physically presented with, whereas the second experience is conceptual. Thus, what we have formulated within us is a mental “image bank” (2004: 4) that constructs a concept. In the context of this study, such a concept would be the preconceived visual associations with childhood constructed through an individual's previous experiences and lived culture. When accessing these images, we engage with them through a process of reference to this cultural image bank. Therefore, non-photographic visual representations of childhood through their circulation and engagement within society provided a visual template of childhood that photographs could build upon. This cultural perception of how childhood should be visually represented had been previously established. Furthermore, as technology progressed the visual representation of childhood did not change, rather it was extended across wider sectors of society.

Holland (2004) comments on this growing perception of childhood outside of the traditionally affluent classes. This concept of innocence associated with childhood dominated the widespread reproductions of classic paintings and the postcards that were extremely popular at the time. Emphasising the growing consciousness of the child within society Holland saw this mass circulation as a way of “expressing a longing for a better world, and part of a more indulgent attitude towards real-life children” (2004: 11). With an increased presence of images of children in advertisements, there was an increased exposure to ideals of childhood. It was the homogenised presence of these versions of childhood, aligned with an innocence that influenced sentiment towards ‘actual’ children across all sectors of society.

This increased use of childhood imagery in advertising at the turn of the 20th Century, meant that the “image of innocence was becoming an eminently exploitable commodity” (ibid: 12). Again, it was this appeal of innocence that was engaging the public. As Higonnet (1998) had previously considered, these images of innocence were gratifying a need for engagement with experiences that were ultimately unattainable when reaching adulthood. This process of maturing left a sense of yearning for the more innocent times of childhood left behind, and still perceived as being free from the world of adulthood. Considering this, Fulkner (2010) engages with the concept of childhood as being representative of a mode of existence that is “recognisably human, but unaffected by the conditions associated with adult life: obligation, compromise, work and morality” (2010: 112). The appeal of these images of childhood was recognised as a marketing tool within growing consumer culture, with

representations of an idealised childhood being embraced by wider society through their engagement with advertisements.

Two main concerns grew from this process. The first was related to the use of children to promote products and idealised concepts of childhood. The custom of advertisers using children has been studied at great lengths since its origins (Kinsey, 1987; Levin and Kilbourne, 2012). As visual advertising increased through the decades so too did consumer images of children. This has escalated to the contemporary culture of today in which consumer images of children are used to sell commodities *en masse*. Furthermore, these consumer images “have invaded institutional spaces of schools, hospitals, and welfare advice as well as expanding the possibilities of childish play, fashion, food and other pleasures” (Holland, 2004: 17).

Modern society has also seen commodified images of children being used by contemporary social media ‘influencers’. This practice of commodifying photographed children as part of the process of ‘sharenting’ is noted in the research of Blum-Ross and Livingstone (2017) within the context of online parent-photography blogs. The creation of these type of blogs is adopted for numerous reasons; as an outlet for creativity and voice (Lenhart and Fox, 2006), chronicling their lives for an extended community (Stefanone and Jang, 2007), establishing supportive practical and emotional communities (Webb and Lee, 2011) or gaining financial resources (Doucet and Mauthner, 2013). These blogs consist of individuals documenting their parental routines beneath the expectations of being a ‘blogger’; authentically representing themselves while meeting the professional standards of the blogging community and commercial interests (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017: 4). The consequence of this practice is the simultaneous visual documentation of aspects of the lives of the children they parent. Many of these blogs have acquired phenomenal numbers of followers. The promotion of products and/or services by both the bloggers themselves and often their non-consenting children has resulted in huge commercial success in some cases. This practice adheres to the practices of other social media influencers, who are often commissioned to promote products. However, unlike these other influencers promoting various aspects of lifestyle, the practise of including children, often their own, opens their behaviour to wider ethical concerns and questions related to consent, permission and the possible exploitation of the children by those ‘blogging’. Such accusations, accompanied by the Bailey Report’s previously established recommendation to prohibit the employment of children as brand ambassadors and in peer-to-peer marketing (2011: 17) led Clemmie Hooper, a reputable Instagram blogger with approx. 500,000 followers to remove her account in 2018 (French, 2018).

Prior to this contemporary practice, research in similar areas initially concerned the static images of print advertising (Goffmann, 1976; Reis, 1992; Higonnet, 1998; Levin and Kilbourne, 2012) before extending to the moving images of television and film (Reis, 1992; Higonnet, 1998; Zuromskis, 2013). These studies provide worthy case studies of the contentious area of the conceptualisation of childhood through the moving image and engage in frameworks concerning meaning, interpretation and sexualisation. Furthermore, related research has been commissioned by national bodies here in Ireland with the Department of Youth and Children supporting the publication 'The Commercialisation and Sexualisation of Children in Ireland: An Exploratory Study' (Kiely, E. et al., 2015). The primary focus here was on the sexualisation and commercialisation of children within society. However, the focus of this study is with images produced and shared in everyday non-commercial practices. This is not to say that the findings and recommendations related to the sexualisation and commercialisation of children are of lesser importance. Nonetheless, the issues the aforementioned report raises are outside the scope of this research but may form core considerations for future studies.

The second area of concern arising from the mass circulation of images of children and childhood related to the normalisation of this idealised version of childhood. Across society, such representations became a measure of what childhood should resemble, despite it being skewed and misrepresentative. The true representations of childhood were and continue to be embedded within the everyday activities of children being children in the real world. However, images of real childhood or aspects thereof were and continue to be anomalies. Society engaged with an idealised representation of childhood that was presented as innocent and attractive to the viewer. Sontag, citing the literature of Feuerbach proposed that "our era... prefers the image to the thing, the copy to the original, the representation to the reality, appearance to being" (1977: 153). In context, society places an element of expectation on images of childhood being "coveted substitutes for first-hand experience" (ibid: 153). Consequently, the circulated and accepted visual representations of childhood influence the expectations being placed upon real children.

C.S. Peirce's theories on the construction of the sign are a worthy consideration here. Considering the indexical potential of some signs, here these constructed images are perceived as evidence of what childhood should resemble, despite them often presenting an idealised version of reality from an adult perspective. Furthermore, the influence of this is evident in the pressure being put on children by

those taking the photographs to present themselves in line with the social norm of how a child 'should look'. In this situation, the photographer's conceptual image bank (Holland, 2004), representative of childhood is populated by images they have experienced previously. When taking a photograph, they encourage their subjects to reflect this concept as it allows them to produce their own version of a homogenised visualisation of what childhood should look like. Here, they seek to produce a 'qualified' image of a child that is accepted among society. Furthermore, images of children are constructed and framed in a certain way without reliance on media professionals due to the technical know-how of those capturing the images (Choi and Lewallen, 2018).

Questions arise when these images are shared. Previous research (Minkus, et al., 2015; Choi and Lewallen, 2018; Lipu and Siibak, 2019) has questioned who benefits from the practice of sharing of images of children. This area is explored further in the next section of this chapter when the research considers the practice of sharing images of children by parents. Previously discussed in section 2.5.2 this is a practice often labelled as 'sharenting'. The study presents real world examples that align with theories of permission, performance and pre-conceived ideals of how childhood should be captured and shared.

3.7 The impact of the innocent child

As the conceptualised innocent child became normalised in society it is of merit to re-emphasise that this representation was from an adult's perspective. Fulkner (2010) stresses that the concept of what is being presented is subjective. The visual representation of childhood from the perspective of an adult very much positions the child as a passive entity within a hierarchical relationship between the image-maker and the subject.

Conceptualisations of childhood have traditionally been born out of the hierarchical relationship between the adult and the child. The minds of adults were the source of the images of childhood circulated through fine art paintings, the mass duplication of illustrations and prints, and finally through the medium of photography. Connotations of innocence were rarely omitted, with children often aligned with a matriarch or depicted with a vulnerability associated with innocence (Higonnet, 1998; Holland, 2004; Prout, 2008; Fulkner, 2010; Zuromskis, 2013).

This 'photographer-subject' relationship exists across the photographing of all subjects. Both Sontag (1977) and Zuromskis (2013) emphasise that the relationship between the subject and the photographer is one of power. Notwithstanding this, adult subjects often retain the power to reject the expectations of the photographer and choose not to adhere to their passive instructions. Whereas for children there is an emphasis on their lack of agency. If representations were not reflective of the actual childhood what concern was it of the child? Historically, children were perceived as innocent subjects who made no attempt to shape their own image (Holland, 2004). Furthermore, with the power residing with the producer of the image, it is unsurprising that the least powerful of all social groups — children — made ideal subjects. Accordingly, children were positioned to conform to this accepted visualisation of how childhood should be represented. This practice was further homogenised as photographic technology became integrated across wider demographics of society.

Borrowing from Goffman's dramaturgical concepts regarding the presentation of the self in everyday life (1956), rather than the imaging of oneself, this practice empowers those capturing images of children to present the subjects appropriate to the expected representative social norm. Mirroring the ideas of Barnhart (1994: p.1) when citing Goffman, attempts are made to present an idealised version of 'the child' compatible with society's norms, making prominent the aspects of childhood that are socially endorsed.

In her writings on snapshot photography, Zuromskis recalls the popularity of small children as subjects amongst those photographs studied, emphasising that "the snapshot may not document reality so much as performance" (2013: 31). Classifying this convention as a hegemonic social force, Zuromskis continues that "conventions dictate the subject then cooperates, smiles, and poses for the camera, collaborating with the photographer and corroborating her impulse to document the moment for posterity" (ibid: 49). Zuromskis (ibid: 66) cites the image shown in figure 8 as an example of such an accepted 'performance'. The image, titled 'The first Day of School' was used by photographer Nick Kelsh as a successful visual reference for visitors to his photographic website of a child's first day at school. The yellow bus, the lunch box and the girls shuffling stance combine to present the intended narrative without a need for accompanying textual explanation (ibid: 68).



Figure 8: The first day of school. Nick Kelsh (2015)⁷

Kelsh's website provides examples of how not to photograph the traditional moments from a child's childhood and provides examples of how it can be done 'better'. Such content reemphasises the established performance of childhood from an adults perspective opposed to the reality of what actually occurred at the time. This reality that is rarely considered as worthy of capture was presented on a more personal section of the photographers website. Figure 9 provides an appropriate example of the minutes prior to a similar situation being staged and photographed. Whereas, figure 10 shows the acceptable image possibly being stored for future posterity.

⁷ <https://www.howtophotographyourlife.com/back-to-school-photos-first-day-of-school-portraits/> (accessed: 21.09.20)



Figure 9: Untitled. Nick Kelsh (2017)⁸



Figure 10: Untitled. Nick Kelsh (2017)⁹

The practice of visually documenting childhood is often accompanied by implications of potential consequence if the photographer's instructions are not adhered to by the child. Thus, this appearance

⁸ <https://www.howtophotographyourlife.com/how-i-photographed-the-first-day-of-school-2017/> (accessed: 21.09.20)

⁹ Ibid (accessed: 21.09.20)

of innocence is demanded from the non-agentic child subject, serving to gratify the expectations of the adult gaze, echoing the premise for the title of this research; 'Shut up and smile'.

Sontag (1977) previously considered the agency of the photographed individual. Asserting absence of agency for all photographed subjects, she identified an element of aggression implicit in every use of the camera and suggested that the practice of taking a photograph is the mastering of the subject. This viewpoint is interesting when considering the different perspectives from which photographs can be taken. The level of engagement with a subject can vary from a level of open observation, within which the subject acknowledges the presence of the camera. Alternatively, photographs can be taken from a more discreet observational standpoint, where there is an absence of any acknowledgement of the presence of the camera by the subject. This approach has been used within documentary projects, where a photographer has established a relationship over time. Photographs taken present subjects appearing to be unaware of the camera's presence. However, the truth may have been that the subject has become so accustomed to their presence that the cameras no longer affect the ways in which they present themselves.

Notwithstanding these concepts and returning to the context of this study's primary focus on the photographs of children in everyday type situations, Holland (2004) considered the impact digital technology has had on these relationships of power that Sontag had constrained to the capturer of the image. Holland concludes that power has extended beyond this initial engagement and is maintained long after the camera's shutter has been pressed. Traditionally, in a pre-Web 2.0 social networked era, this extension of power was limited by the restricted possibilities of sharing photographs at the time. Physical photographs would have to be shared in-situ or posted to a receiver unless forwarded as unsuitably large email attachments. Web 2.0's technological and economic advancements provided individuals with the capability of sharing content beyond their immediate physical situation and eroded the hurdles of geography and time. The popularity of social media as a platform to share images of children is a contentious issue and as discussed previously in section 2.5.2 of chapter 2, the practice of 'sharenting' has emerged as a vibrant area of research in which the benefits and risks associated with the online sharing of images of children are engaged.

These discussions are of relevance to this research and play an active role within contemporary discourses that concern the agency of the photographed child and the concurrent protectionist discourses surrounding them. Often, these debates concern images that adhere to the homogenised

representation of childhood; images that are deemed acceptable to share across social media and other online platforms. However, they represent a pseudo-childhood constructed by adults who select and choose images in line with what has become expected when photographing and sharing images of children. As shown previously seldom is the permission of the child considered. This is despite their right to privacy being protected beneath article 16 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNRC)¹⁰ and article 17 of the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)¹¹. Predominantly the parents of the child are attributed with an authority over the capturing and sharing of their child's image. Steinberg elaborated on the area of 'interfamilial privacy' (2017: 856) that is overlooked when paternalistic permission is often sought or presumed ahead of children's consent when the capturing and sharing of images of children by parents is concerned. Notwithstanding this, progressive steps have been introduced in some sectors to address this.

Early Childhood Ireland's policy encourages seeking the consent of the child when taking their photograph: 'If possible, you should ask children how they feel about their image being used. Ask them if they feel positive about it and try to elicit the reasons . . .'¹². However, these policies govern specific facilities rather than the everyday practices considered by this research. Contemporary debates concerning the consent of the photographed child being requested prior to sharing their image on social media have begun to emerge publicly, both nationally (Harris, 2017) and internationally (Gillard, 2017; Saner, 2018; Tierney, 2018). These discussions indicate that attitudes in society may be progressing.

This can also be seen here in Ireland with ongoing debates concerning the digital age of consent among parents, children's charities and other parties of interest¹³. In Ireland, the digital age of consent has recently been set at 16. Debates in the area centred on the alternative position of it lowering to 13, as recommended by the government and as it is set in other EU countries and the United States. Countering positions claim that the age of 13 is too young for a child to register to and access specific online content without prior authorisation from a parent or legal guardian¹⁴. Alternatively, other

¹⁰ The United Nations Convention on the rights of the child. Available at: https://www.childrensrights.ie/sites/default/files/submissions_reports/files/UNCRCEnglish_0.pdf (accessed: 30.05.19)

¹¹ General Data Protection Regulation. Available at: <https://gdpr-info.eu/> (accessed: 01.09.19)

¹² <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/work/operating-childcare-service/guidelines-on-using-imagesvideo-of-children/consent-for-taking-imagesvideos-of-children/> (accessed: 13.06.19)

¹³ <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/how-making-13-the-digital-age-of-consent-protects-children-1.3486143> (accessed: 29.06.19)

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/parties-call-on-government-to-raise-digital-age-of-consent-to-16-1.3475746> (accessed: 29.06.19)

¹⁴ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/common-sense-has-prevailed-on-digital-age-of-consent-1.3482066> (accessed: 29.06.19).

entities believe that a child should have more online independence at an earlier age and that the retention of an age of 16 will see the continuance of unauthorised access and registration to content, predominantly social media platforms who have a minimum age requirement of 13¹⁵, as noted by Choi and Lewallan (2018).

Nonetheless, despite the notion to have the age of digital consent reduced to 13 being defeated here in Ireland the issue continues to be deliberated internationally. These debates directly concern children's access to and engagement with online content and extend beyond the scope of this research. However, public dialogue related to the digital age of consent in Ireland can provide a platform for broader discussions concerning the non-agentive child to be considered, specifically for this research within the context of their consent to have their image shared.

3.8 The absence of the other child

As discussed, traditionally visual representations of children are skewed with sharers practicing a form of self-censorship, mostly choosing not to share negative images of children (Kumar and Shoenbeck, 2015). The origins of this practice predate photographic imaging. Historically, images of childhood have predominantly been representations of children from a particular social background. Very few families outside of the upper to middle classes were in a financial or cultural position to have portraits painted of children. Furthermore, there was an absence of demand for images of children outside of this demographic during the previously cited era of illustration. Notwithstanding the popularisation of photography as an affordable and accessible means of visual representation, the presence of children from lower socio-economic backgrounds was notable by their absence among the images circulated. Commercially, it must be considered whether there would have been a demand for such imagery from collectors. Furthermore, in what context could images of children outside of the established, acceptable impression of childhood be marketed? Nonetheless, these conceptualisations of the innocent child were not representative of most 'real' children (Higonnet, 1998; Holland, 2004; Dortner and Livingston, 2008; Prout, 2008; Fulkner, 2010).

Considering the impact that photographic technology had on the documenting of social conditions Higonnet debates the visualisation of true childhood. Stating that the conceptualisation of a romantic childhood belongs to the affluent West, the pervasive emergence of photography as a technology could be representative of visually representing an alternative to the idealised childhood (1998: 115).

¹⁵ <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/how-making-13-the-digital-age-of-consent-protects-children-1.3486143> (accessed: 29.06.19).

The photographic work of Fr. Brown, here in Ireland as well as Dorothea Lange and others within Europe and the United States during the early to mid-20th Century documented a reality that existed for most children, very much opposed the concept of childhood constructed and circulated previously. These photographers photographed children within their natural surroundings, actively engaging with the practice of being a child. They were not concerned with representing an idealised childhood. Rather, their intention was to reflect the reality of childhood, ultimately found wanting in the romanticised construction dominant in society at the time.

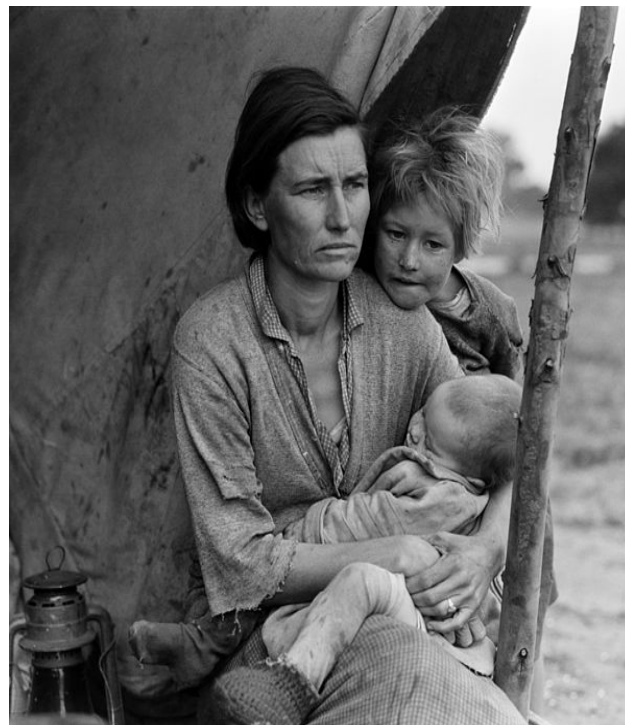


Figure 11: Image from 'Migrant Mother' series – Dorothea Lange (c.1936)

Bodies of work similar to the photographs documenting Florence Owens Thompson and her children, by Dorothea Lange in 1936 (Figure 11) showed the reality of childhood in lower socio-economic backgrounds. These types of photographs portrayed the true childhood omitted from the images normalised through commercialisation and imitation within Western society. This was a childhood that featured tears, loneliness and ill health within the same circumstances as a childhood that featured play, laughter and mischievousness.

This practice of depicting a more honest visual representation of childhood continued through the 20th Century into contemporary times, with excellent work by numerous photographers all challenging the traditional stereotype of the child. The publications 'Look at Kids' (Berg, 1972) and 'I

Spy: Representations of Childhood' (Fehily et al. 2000) document the natural lives of children, from a passive observational perspective. Photographs were taken from the perspective of a neutral camera; whose presence goes unacknowledged for the most part by the subject. There are plenty of smiles among the everyday activities being photographed, but they are sincere and in no way the result of an instructing adult. Berg asks the reader to act out her title and let the children develop in the "rhythm and style of their own needs" (1972: cover copy). Similarly, the photographs featured in the collection provided by Fehily et al. (2000) are accompanied by text. Rather than being directly related to the specific photographs featured, both texts supplement each other to communicate an alternative approach to the representation of childhood. Visually, what is produced is an excellent collection of photographs that neither endorses nor adapts to the romanticism of the constructed and inherited ideal of childhood. These images of children acting out and playing in the streets, reflecting a more authentic image of childhood had been neglected in childhood imagery.

Despite the emergence of these types of photography projects, issues of agency and power remain as long as there are a photographer and a subject (Sontag, 1977). Furthermore, the presence of the adult photographer would always impact on the agency of the child and the representation of childhood. An alternative approach adopted to neutralise this has been the removal of the adult photographer. The practice of allowing children to use cameras to photograph childhood has been adapted by numerous photographers including Jim Hubbard (1994), Kamina Walton (1995), and Wendy Ewald (2000). Within these projects, the emphasis is placed on the visual representation of the space of the child that can never be revisited once adulthood has been reached. This is a space that can only be observed by adults and occupied by children. These projects have successfully provided visual representations of a childhood that is exclusive of any adult influence. As Ewald (2000) stated:

"to ask children themselves to participate in exploring their world is to acknowledge that it is their experience, and that rather than being made to 'mind their place' children might be helped to find ways of illuminating and sharing their inner lives"

(2000: 17).

This practice approaches visual representation from the perspective of the "knowing" telling (Higonnet, 1998) and has been used as a qualitative community-based participatory research method previously. Known as 'Photovoice' the method is an empowering and adaptable process combining photography with social action and is used across areas of community development, international development, public health and education (Wang and Burris, 1997; Nykiforuk, et al., 2011). This

practice is possibly unique in imaging a true visual representation of childhood. Without directly citing the practice of putting cameras in the hands of children Holland (2004) proposed, as a means of appropriately documenting childhood for future photographers to “consider more respectful observational photography, approached from a low profile, in wait for when the magic movement of the child is revealed” (2004: 97). This suggestion is reflective of a social and cultural climate that is different from today. At the time of writing, 2004, the levels of suspicion and paranoia concerning children were not at today’s levels and any recommendations to discreetly capture children at play are now redundant. Such a cultural shift is unpacked and explored in detail in the next chapter when the research considers the conceptualisation of a palatable folk devil amidst a contemporary moral panic (Cohen, 1972).

3.9 Conclusion

Progressing on from the democratisation and domestication of photography as discussed in chapter 2 this chapter focused on the relevant photographic subject; children. Unpacking the changing conceptualisation of childhood the chapter took cognisance of the established countering perspectives of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. These positions consider whether a child is regarded as being in the process of becoming an adult or as an agent in themselves; a classic dichotomy of childhood that persists in the frameworks of childhood studies.

With a specific focus on imagery, the evolving visual representation of children were presented. The chapter noted as artistic platforms changed and extended their catchment, traditional representations of children were replicated rather than replaced with established visual characteristics of children and childhood often duplicated and maintained. Such conceptualisations can be considered skewed, misrepresentative and even lacking authenticity given their construction from an adult’s subjective perspective. Children’s continued positioning as obedient, non-agentic subjects is maintained as their images continue to be constructed and circulated. Yet, some professional institutional policies have begun to consider the consent of the photographed child, most notably Early Childhood Ireland. Alternative methods that provided an element of agency to children through the practices of the ‘Photovoice’ method (Wang and Burris, 1997; Nykiforuk, et al., 2011) were also discussed as were more respectful observational practices of photographing (Rose, 2004).

The focus of this study is not directly concerned with this practice of passing the camera on to children to visually represent their space. Nor is it empirically concerned with photographs of children captured with the intention of being published in the traditional sense of the word. Rather, the research is

specifically framed around quotidian photographic and sharing practices. Nonetheless, a key question considers the impact that contemporary attitudes towards photographing children are having on the capturing and sharing of images of children. Reflecting if it would be practical or possible to take photographs similar to those published in the previously mentioned texts is an area considered when concluding this research. Considering the changing legislation and attitudes regarding the practice of photographing children, the study deliberates whether or not it is realistic to consider the suggestions of Holland (2004) to successfully capture photographs of contemporary childhood. Furthermore, in contemporary times is it socially acceptable or safe to try and capture photographs of children in everyday life? The emergence in modern society of a moral panic regarding the photographing of children has positioned the practice as taboo. The next chapter unpacks this and considers the positioning of the practice of photographing and sharing images of children as one of concern and a trigger for anxiety. This despite it being a normalised habit practised for generations previously.

4 THE CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF A PALATABLE FOLK DEVIL

4.1 Introduction

The sexual abuse of children has a history that predates contemporary society and new communication technology, yet there has never been a time when children were portrayed as being more at risk from being sexually abused as they are today. Across the media, children are positioned as being subject to potential abduction and abuse from both the physical 'real' world and the virtual world of the Internet. This chapter initially maps the contemporary evolution of concepts of child abuse, acknowledging its resurgence in the public psyche following the research of Dr Henry Kempe and the publication of 'The Battered Child Syndrome' (1962). The review of the relevant literature focuses on the emergence of ideas around child sexual abuse (CSA) within contemporary society, taking cognisance of the media's role in constructing a normative representation of the perpetrators of such 'heinous' acts, beneath the guise of being protective of children in society and signposting the dangers contemporary society poses to them. This narrative is interrogated from a feminist perspective, bringing into question the heteronormative positioning of such dangers outside of the locations that statistics would indicate they should be focused.

The chapter proceeds to draw upon society's 'othering' of child abuse from an Irish perspective, through an engagement with the relationship between the clergy and child abuse, as normalised through the media, and its fallout among the public. Acknowledging the extension of the perceived threats beyond the real world, the chapter examines the logical progression of the child abuser into the virtual space of the Internet. Considering the legal, policing and social implications of this progression, the reaction of society is examined from the perspective of both the physical and virtual world. Contextualising the literature of Cohen (1972), Goode and Ben-Yehunda (1994) and Critcher (2009) on moral panics the chapter considers how the perception of deviance and perversion has become a normalised association with the practice of photographing children. This framework

platforms the empirical research being ultimately concerned with the impact that such attitudes have on the everyday practice of photographing children and the sharing of those images.

4.2 Child sexual abuse and the cultural construction of the paedophile

Any contemporary understanding of CSA should consider that it was not until the early years of the 20th Century that the act of incest was outlawed here in Ireland. This was a result of pressure to pass the Punishment for Incest Act of 1908 by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), who had set up branches in Dublin, Cork, Belfast and Waterford between the latter part of the 1880s and the mid-1890s (Powell and Scanlon 2015). Prior to this the rights of a child, within or outside of a family, were almost non-existent. Kitzinger (2004) refers to early UK feminist and 'social purity' campaigners trying to highlight how working-class girls were being trapped into prostitution during the late part of the nineteenth century. She aligns the emergence of legislation and the raising of the age of consent from 13 to 16, to public uproar following coverage of these type of incidents within the Pall Mall Gazette. However, Kitzinger (ibid) writes that despite the evidence of media coverage, and reaction to it from both societal and legislative perspectives, the abuse of children as society understands it today "was not invented until the 1980s...(and) for most of the 20th Century it was a well-kept secret and a little bit of father-daughter seduction was subtly tolerated" (2004: 34). Powell and Scanlon (2015) also engage with this perspective, commenting that child abuse, as a significant social problem, somewhat vanished from the public arena between the two world wars and only re-emerged during the 1960s (2015: 29-31).

The research of Dr Henry Kempe (1962) brought concerns relating to child abuse back into the public mainstream again. His research centred on the recognition of 'Battered Child Syndrome'. This research acknowledged that often abuse of children would not be reported due to the denials of the parents and/or the child's reluctance or inability to disclose details. His approach claimed that the examined bones could tell the story that the child was too frightened to tell. When this innovative approach was first published it received widespread national and international media coverage. Powell and Scanlon (2015) acknowledge the importance of the technology that accommodated such medical assessments,

but they also recognise that there was a significant shift in the social climate during this period that also had an influence. Independence of families and affluence allowing quality time with children leading to greater empathy towards them were influencing factors in this re-emergence of cases of child abuse within the public psyche (Corby, et al. 2012). Additionally, at this time from a wider context in the United States, a conscience concerning child abuse was part of a larger social current, pushing issues of equity during the 1960s (Nelson, 1984).

Here in Ireland, and in the UK, the public conscience towards child abuse was slower to emerge, yet it was still influenced by the changes occurring within the United States. Initially, Griffith and Moynihan's (1963) published work in the *British Medical Journal* stirred interest concerning 'Battered Child Syndrome'. This paved the way for debate upon the issue within the various sectors of the medical world. Ultimately, it was the publishing of articles by the NSPCC's 'Battered Child Research Unit' that brought the attention, first of the media and then the government between the years 1969 and 1973 (Parton, 1985). However, it took the death of seven-year-old Maria Colwell in 1973 and the consequential media coverage to ignite any significant public or political concern regarding the social problem of child abuse.

The fact that prior to 1990 there were no child abuse inquiries in Ireland since the inception of the state in 1922, despite many children dying at the hands of their parents or other carers reflects the lack of a societal discourse of concern for children's welfare within the state (Powell and Scanlon, 2015). The Maria Colwell case was an incident that occurred in the UK. With the omission of any official inquiries into child abuse in any guise prior to 1990, it is of no surprise that the first reference of any kind to CSA was made just seven years prior in 1983, in the Department of Health's Guidelines (Department of Health, 1983). Lalor (1998) considers the prospect of CSA being a phenomenon that only emerged in the 1980s, given its (lack of) representation in official documents. However, he dismisses this through a chronological mapping of documented historical incidents of child sex abuse, concluding that there is "nothing to indicate that child sexual abuse is a novel phenomenon of the late 20th Century" (Lalor, 1998: 40). Such documentation of the abuse was often misrepresented and often recorded and treated as 'neglect', due to it being easier to process through the courts. Additionally, not all cases were believed to have happened and often those who alleged abuse were the ones who would receive punishment (Scanlon and Powell, 2015). However, somewhat tragically, Lalor (1998) concluded that as a consequence of the lack of recognition of CSA's existence within documented Irish history, the true magnitude of its occurrence will never be known.

From an international perspective, Angelides (2005) and Jewkes and Wykes (2012) present paedophilia as a decidedly Western invention of the late 19th Century. Yet for Victorian sexologists paedophilia was so seldom discussed and such a rare occurrence that it was scarcely construed as a separate ontological category, sexuality or psychic identity. Rather, Angelides (2005) re-deploys Michael Foucault's terms regarding homosexuality, labelling it as a 'temporary aberration' during this period. Angelides (2005) believed that the alignment of CSA with paedophilia occurred in the 1970s as a consequence of consent arguments (heterosexual versus homosexual, or those centred on age differentiation) and the perceived sanctity of marriage. In turn, he believed this attributing of CSA to what became normalised as a 'stranger danger' type figure, or even gay men at the time, was heteronormative distancing from the family-man or the father figure. Similarly, Jewkes and Wykes (2012) identified the 1960s as a time of great social and cultural change in which the liberal movement objected to what Foucault called the 'monogamic conjugal cell' (1979) of the heterosexual family, through its promotion of feminist and gay activism. This feminist perspective of the positioning of CSA outside of the traditional familial environment shall be engaged with more appropriately when considering the media's conceptualisation of the perpetrators of CSA later in this chapter.

Finkelhor (1986), Jenkins (1998) and Critcher (2003) assert that it was in the US that CSA made the transition from a 'social problem' to a 'public issue'. Brown (2013) cites the earlier work of Finkelhor (1979) when he claims that it changed from a situation recognised by some sectors of society into a "situation that was recognised by a broad sector of society and most notably policy-making elements" (1979: 7). Notably, the backlash against sexual liberation positioned paedophilia on the news agenda and by the 1990s child sexual abuse narratives were becoming commonplace within news and dramatizations in the UK, Europe and the US (Jewkes and Wykes, 2012).

Reflecting on this emergence into the public psyche, Critcher (2003) mapped the key phases in what he termed the "paedophile narrative" (2003: 100). The period of 1976-1982 saw the emergence of the 'paedophile' with the term being mobilised through links with child 'pornography', paedophile rings, conspiracies among upper-middle-class and political elites who knew of CSA going undetected. Following this, between 1983-1989 high-profile investigations in to missing and murdered children culminated in the 1988 Criminal Justice Act in the UK. This act criminalised the possession of 'child pornography' which additionally led to the establishment of the Metropolitan Police's Child

Pornography Squad. Critcher (ibid) claims that CSA became somewhat a dormant issue between the years of 1990 to late 1994 until the focus shifted to cases in Ireland and Belgium from 1994 to 1997. He emphasises that by this time the unique threat posed by paedophiles was well established (2003: 103). Legislative changes became the focus from 1997 through to the middle of the year 2000 following the occurrence of public protests and vigilante incidents. Publishing in 2003, he concluded the narrative in 2001 with the murder of Sarah Payne initiating the 'name and shame' campaign in the UK. Across these key phases that Critcher catalogues the dominant influence of the media, through its presentation and construction of the paedophile is evident.

4.3 The influence of the media in the 'othering' of the paedophile

"If paedophiles are literally evil personified, then such evil can be exorcised by exclusion of these individuals from society"

(Kitzinger, 2004: 156)

It is clear to see the influence that the media's representation of child abuse and paedophilia has had upon society. Kitzinger (2004) notes that the public's perception and the media's portrayal of abusers often mirror each other. This area shall be further explored when the research explores the reaction of the public to such media representations. However, Kitzinger also notes that the media are rarely isolated as society's only source of information. Rather, audiences actively interpret and consume the media for their own purposes. Despite this perception of autonomy, the contradiction lies in the fact that the media can still have a very powerful role affecting the way we see the world, with Greer (2003) referencing the media's ability to reinforce societal attitudes and McQuail (2005) claiming that the media re-establish the credibility of a story. These theoretical perspectives are classic positions concerning the production of meaning. Kitzinger (2004) is critical of both perspectives; be it from the position of an active audience, or an audience that is affected by text mediated to them. Ultimately, she feels that the production of meaning is so dependent upon what people bring to their engagement with the media, that any attempts to generalise about the impact of media coverage are misguided. Rather, Kitzinger wishes to move past the polemic differences between the active audience theory and the effects paradigm. Kitzinger positions an audience's engagement with mediated texts as being paradoxically influenced by both their own lived cultural experience and the media's ability to "define, maintain and even transform the way we see the world" (2004: 24–27).

Related to this, McCartan (2010) echoes the work of Greer (2003), stating that the media are the main disseminators of information, shaping public perceptions and reinforcing social attitudes. McCartan further engages with Howitt's (1998) perspective of how the media affects public opinion through one of three models - (i) cause and effect model, (ii) uses and gratifications model and/or (iii) the cultural ramifications model. Essentially, McCartan (2010) confirms that depending upon a person's perspective, the media can shape individual attitudes through a series of psychological and sociological processes, for example, Stereotyping, Group Processes or Norm Reinforcement. Therefore, he believes that there is a 'symbolic-relationship' between the public and the media. The public choosing the media based upon its content or approach, and the media circulating stories or stating opinions their perceived targeted audience wants to engage with. This leads to the suggestion that the media has a dual function of reporting and creating the news (Cohen and Young, 1981). McCartan positions the media as influencing or shaping societal attitudes through sociological processes like "Reflexivity, Modernisation and Social Constructionism" (2010: 251). He states that society is a socially constructed reality that changes with cognition of the individuals involved and that is why it changes over time.

Comparisons can be made to modernisation, with there being a constant re-evaluation in relation to new information being produced. The importance of this is the media's positioning of themselves as producers of relevant news in the interest of the public, with new information being produced and attitudes constantly changing. This research is predominantly concerned with one such change in societal attitudes; towards the quotidian photographing of children and its impact on the practice of taking and sharing those images.

4.3.1 Child sexual abuse in the media

The media's attention turned towards child abuse following the Maria Colwell case in 1973. Powell and Scanlon (2015) categorised the coverage of this incident as the first example of a 'media outrage campaign' concerned with the abuse of children. It was not the first case of child abuse to have been reported by the media, but the coverage initiated a discourse of moral outrage and condemnation within the media that has continued in similar cases since then. Notably, the language and the reportage used in the Cleveland Case (1987), Orkney Case (1992), Victoria Climbié Case (2003) and

The Baby P Case (2007) have all followed suit. Prior to the 1980s media coverage of the problem of child abuse, on the whole, was not presented as a social issue (Kitzinger, 2004). However, with the change in coverage came a refocus by the media from individual tragedies to public scandals. This was emphasised 1983 with Time Magazine declaring that “unspeakable crimes are being yanked out of the shadows... the wall of silence is breaking down” (Kitzinger, 2004: 35).

In October 1986, in the UK, Crime Watch broadcasted a special edition dedicated to the launch of ChildLine. This was a pivotal moment regarding the public becoming aware of the magnitude of child abuse. When ChildLine was launched it received 50,000 calls, with a continuing 8,000-10,000 a day after that. The extent of media attention dedicated to child abuse rose by 300% between the years 1985-1987 (Kitzinger, 2004). This seismic change in coverage was not unique to broadcast media. Critcher (2003) and Kitzinger (2004) noted the increase in UK print media coverage of CSA during the 1980s and 1990s.

Commenting on his analysis of the Daily Mail, Critcher (2003) concluded that at the time they were “less reporting paedophilia than creating it” (2003: 105). Brown (2013) unpacks this comment, acknowledging that one of the key ways in which an understanding of CSA has been distorted has been through the dominance of the paedophile discourse within the media. He writes “... as a key site of representation, the mass media, and the print media, in particular, have played a key role in constructing and mobilising this discourse” (ibid: 32). In a study of the UK News media and their role in the constructing of the perpetrators of CSA, Meyer (2007: 69) identified four major discourses relied on by journalists; ‘Evil’, ‘Perversion/Pathology’, ‘Violence/Destruction’ and ‘Cunningness’. Meyer states that child sexual abusers are not only portrayed as “marginal, evil others but excluded from humanity by being associated with and placed within the realm of satanic” (ibid: 70). Critcher previously engaged with such a perspective when he stated that as far as the media are concerned, they (child sexual abusers) are “sub-humans who should be permanently removed from society” (2003: 111). One discursive function of this construction of the paedophile is that journalists and policymakers can prescribe equally limited and constrictive punishments (Brown, 2013). Consequentially, the process of a simplified explanation, through the normalisation of a stereotype, allows for a similarly simplistic solution. Brown (ibid) continues that if paedophiles can be easily identified through ‘their’ mediated representation, then they can be easily identified and removed from society.

Jewkes and Wynkes (2013) reference 'catalysts' for the emergence of a paedophile discourse within society, from which the relevance of the media is evident. This perspective echoes Kitzinger's sentiments that the sexual abuse of children has a long history of attracting front-page headlines (2004). Chronologically, Jewkes and Wynkes (2013) reference the 'Paedophile in the community' theme that swept across the UK during 1996, reports of abuse occurring in care homes and within the clergy, the Fred and Rose West case receiving widespread media coverage, the passing of Megan's Law in the US and the passing of lenient sentences causing unrest among the public in the UK. All of which contributed to the popular press and the reading public being on what Kitzinger referred to as "Paedophile Alert" (1999: 213). Ultimately, this escalated to its prominence with the News of the World launching a 'Name and Shame' campaign, as a reaction to the abduction, sexual assault and murder of Sarah Payne in July 2000. Kitzinger (2006) provides some context to the social climate in the UK leading up to this media focus during the mid-1990s. The origins of this began with the due release in the UK of some of the most infamous child sex murders from the previous 20 to 30 years. The high-profile serial offenders Myra Hindley and Robert Oliver were presented as the personification of sexualised violence for many years in the UK. They were due for release and legally free to change their names and live anywhere they wanted, without being required to let their neighbours know.

Kitzinger (2006), writes that at the time the media coverage initially followed routine media practice, usually influenced by high-status official sources. However, sections of the media began to agitate for the public's access to a register that had previously been legislated by the then Home Secretary, Michael Howard. This register documented the details of convicted sex offenders released back into society but was not publicly accessible. The media drew attention to comparable legislation in the US that did make the names of sex offenders publicly accessible. This was introduced following the rape and murder of Megan Kanka by a convicted sex offender who lived across the street from her. Calls for a similar policy in the UK were given added stimulus following Sarah Payne's murder by previously convicted paedophile Roy Whiting. The News of the World's 'Name and Shame' campaign was accompanied by their call to introduce 'Sarah's Charter' which incorporated 13 changes to policy related to sex offenders. This was supported by the parents of Sarah Payne and was inclusive of what the newspaper called Sarah's Law. This emphasised the call for a full public disclosure of all registered sex offender information in the UK (McCarten, 2010). Jewkes and Wykes (2012) write that at the time of this law being called for by the press, the coverage of cases was framed to indicate that there was

some kind of 'child molester pandemic'. It is important to note that the specifics of 'Sarah's Law' indicate that if the law were in place, it would not have prevented Sarah Payne's abduction and murder. As her abuser was not actually from the area the incident occurred, he would not have been registered there, therefore this was actually a crime of opportunity. None the less, the 'Name and Shame' campaign was carried out by the News of the World on the 23rd and the 30th of July 2000.

The media's reporting of these events emphasised the danger that existed within society concerning its most vulnerable members, children. Given the manner in which the coverage was framed there grew a discourse of related fear that went far beyond the discourse of caution that surrounded the 'stranger danger' campaigns during the 1950s.

4.3.2 Stranger danger

The concept of 'stranger danger' originated from a public service film produced by Sid Davies in the post-WWII United States titled 'The Dangerous Stranger' (1949). It was part of a number of public service films produced with the intention of warning younger prepubescent children of the dangers of accompanying strangers. Even during this period, the concept of danger associated with a stranger was not original. There is a long history of folk and fairy tales in which potential dangers to children are presented as coming from those that are not known to them. The continuance of this position was evidenced through the production of such films as this and the presence of the term 'stranger danger' within children's culture. Similarly, this message was presented in British public information films during the 1970s and 1980s that featured an animated cat named 'Charlie'. One such feature aired in 1973, titled 'Strangers', and specifically carried the message to 'never go off with strangers'. Clips of this nature reflect that at the time it was perceived as normal for children to be approached by men that were strangers to them (Baker, 2014). Additionally, they provided information on how to correctly deal with the situation across a platform that children found accessible. These texts and others contributed to the suspicion that surrounded 'strangers' during the 1970s and 1980s. Findings from empirical studies by Finklehor (1984) evidenced that 1 in 3 parents surveyed considered the 'stranger' to be the most likely perpetrator of abuse towards children. These findings are also evidenced in the research of Furedi (2001) and Pain (2006), as cited by Stokes (2009) when writing that the primary fear for British parents was the abduction or abuse of children by strangers (2009: 7).

Criticism of this approach arose at the time and remains today. Condemnation surrounded the externalisation and misrepresentation of the threat to children, as it encourages the normalisation of the extended family as a place that is safe from the perceived harms presented by the 'stranger' (Baker, 2014). Ahmed eloquently presents these sentiments, stating that "a reduction of the danger to the stranger conceals the danger that may be embedded in the familiar" (2000: 36). Additionally, this was also presented through the findings of the SAVI Report (Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland) which indicated that "abuse of children typically occurred in children's own homes or familiar environments and it typically involved people known to them" (Mc Gee et.al., 2002: 279).

Alternatively, Pain's (2006) research highlighted that children were more fearful of known individuals as opposed to unknown strangers. Pain's studies were conducted from a social and cultural geography perspective, conducted through both qualitative and quantitative methods with 1069 children between the ages of 10-16 from deprived areas of North East England. They concluded that the contemporary culture of fear and anxiety is paradoxical to the actual reality of risk to children in society. Children are targeted by 'stranger danger' campaigns, but the intensity of this is inappropriate given the low incidence of actual assaults perpetrated by strangers (Furedi, 2001; Stokes, 2009). Furthermore, the research of Pain (2006) showed that the children surveyed from lower socio-economic groups were concerned less with a fear of the unknown, than fear of the known, with a more negative imagination being attributed to more affluent parents from certain neighbourhoods involved in the research. This results in Pain (ibid) presenting a concept that positions the fear of strangers more so within the thoughts of the parents, rather than the children themselves. Pain (ibid) also recognised that parents from differing socio-economic backgrounds have different levels of fear, with those from higher socio-economic backgrounds having a greater fear of their children being at risk outside of the sanctuary of the home.

Pain (ibid) engages with themes that evolve from this mismatch between the levels of fear and the levels of risk for children. The literature divides these themes into three areas of concern. Initially an emphasis is placed on the reality that fear is out of kilter with the actual levels of harm inflicted upon children. Secondly, consideration is given to fear being viewed as incongruent with locations of risk, through an emphasis placed upon public places. This is despite feminist concerns focusing on the most dangerous place being within the family home. Finally, parents are accused of over-parenting (Furedi,

2001) which materialised through a new culture of parenting in which there exists a fear of supporting or assisting with other people's children, for fear of allegations. Consequently, when 'stranger danger' is understood as being the possibility of abduction, there is little danger to actually fear due to the improbability of such an event occurring. However, if understood as socially constructed in the context of risk, society and an already fragmented neighbourhood, 'stranger danger' poses realistic threats for children, parents and the integration of contemporary urban communities (Stokes, 2009: 23). Thus, we are presented with the withdrawal of children from public places by (paranoid) parents, fearful of an ever-increasing range of dangers that are highly unlikely to happen (Furedi, 2013). Contemporarily, such fears have also been fuelled with exaggerated stories related to online dangers to children in the guise of the infamous 'Momo' and 'Blue Whale' challenges¹⁶. Debates related to children's engagement online extend beyond the scope of this research yet have potential for future exploration.

4.3.3 The media omitting the ordinary

The majority of CSA cases are perpetrated by 'ordinary' men who are known to the victim. In 2015 Denis Naughten, as a member of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health, Children and Youth Affairs made reference to research that indicated that 1 in 3 cases of CSA involved close family members, while statistics from the Rape Crisis Network of Ireland (2015) indicated that only 1% of girls under 13 years of age and 10% of girls aged over 13 who had suffered abuse had been assaulted by a stranger. However, the media continue to construct a representation of the perpetrators of CSA in accordance with the 'stranger danger' trope. This process continues the distancing of CSA from the culturally acceptable, heteronormative familial setting, despite the figures being contradictory to the media's construction. It is important to remember that most CSA receives no publicity, predominantly because it occurs within the private sphere (Saraga, 2001) and is not newsworthy enough to generate interest among potential views or readers. This is not to say that there is a blanket ban within the media of 'ordinary' cases of CSA, but in the UK instances have rarely made the news since the 1987 Cleveland cases when two paediatricians diagnosed sexual abuse in 121 children from 57 families.

¹⁶ The 'Momo challenge' was an online 'game' that purportedly challenged participants to complete a series of increasingly dangerous tasks, escalating to self-harm or suicide. Failure to complete these tasks would result in their personal information leaked online. Similar to the previous 'Blue whale' viral challenge children were reported to be the primary targets.

When such instances of 'ordinary' abuse feature in the media, it is often presented in 'extraordinary' ways. Jewkes and Wykes (2012) use a comparative analysis of two specific cases to illustrate this point. They compare the coverage that Joseph Fritzl received within the press - being 'othered' through language such as "An Incest Monster with Nazi Associations" (Patterson, 2008) because he was Austrian, with the coverage received by a 56-year-old man from Sheffield, convicted of raping his two daughters who had 19 pregnancies between them, simply labelled as 'The British Josef Fritzl'. Jewkes and Wykes conclude that "this underlines Fritzl's perversely iconic status and yet again deflects from patriarchal sexual abuse within the family" (2012: 937).

This process of framing constructs a depiction of the paedophile that is based upon the media's representation of it, resulting in the normalisation of an extreme and unflattering attitude. In essence, the public's view of 'the paedophile' is that of a homogenised group with rigid or fixed personality traits. The consequence of this attitude is witnessed through the common response both in the media and society that advocates incarceration or castration rather than any discussion of treatment. This is unpacked further within the next section of this chapter, when engaging with the various alternative understandings of paedophilia. However, it can be concluded that the general public has a poor understanding of paedophilia and that this was developed through their exposure to the media (McCartan, 2010).

McCartan (ibid) considers the social responsibility of the press when dealing with such constructions, believing that the media has obligations to society and in achieving these obligations they have to be truthful, fair and relevant. Here in Ireland, the press are accountable to the Press Council of Ireland and the Office of the Press Ombudsman and cases of 'untruths' can be taken against publishers. However, the Press Councils complaints process requires the complainant to be personally affected by what has been published and only they can make such a complaint, specifying which protocol has been broken and how it has grounds for a case.

McCartan (ibid) dismisses alternative perspectives that argue that the media cannot be held to account for the actions of an individual or society. When stating that "the media has contributed to an increase in the public perception of stranger danger, the promotion of paedophile myths and a lack of real insight into the issue" (2010: 17) he confirms the media's contribution to the unrealistic social construction of paedophilia that exist in modern society. Furthermore, it is through this use of

derogatory labelling that the media perpetrate a belief that paedophiles are a separate species, reinforcing the issue of 'othering' and further excluding CSA outside of any framework linked with male heterosexuality and the family (Kitzinger, 1998). This represents a 'cultural hypocrisy' (Jewkes, 2010) related to the sexualisation of the child; society simultaneously positions the paedophile as 'not of society' while at the same time fetishizing young bodies (Kilbourne, 2012). The media presents a construction of CSA that ultimately leaves intact the very institutions so often implicated in those crimes with reporters and journalists not critically engaging with the part that these institutions play in CSA.

Reflecting on this, it can be noted that since the reporting of the Cleveland Case in 1987 three cultural discursive shifts have orientated concern away from real crime and context according to news values, patriarchal ideologies, commercial and governmental priorities. Examined individually, the first blames CSA on paedophiles. The second has seen the target for legislation identified as 'child pornography', a term which Jewkes and Wykes (2010) believe disguises the often-incestuous sexual violence depicted. Conversely, the final shift places the paedophile and pornography in virtual rather than real space to create and further elongate a media moral panic. Again, this shift shall be unpacked more within the appropriate section of this chapter concerning the cyber-paed. However, prior to engaging with literature that engages with such an extension of the constructed perpetrator of CSA, we must consider why there has been such a deflection away from where the majority of CSA occurs; in the home.

4.4 The paedophile in society

"Immediately the word *paedophile* appears we have moved away from recognition of abusers as 'ordinary men' – fathers, brothers, uncles, colleagues – and are returned to the more comfortable view of them as 'other', a small minority who are fundamentally different from most men"

(Kelly, 1996: 45, original emphasis)

The positioning of the paedophile as the folk devil (Cohen, 1972) at the fulcrum of a moral panic related to the continued protection of the child from sexual abuse has been facilitated through the

normalised regurgitation of emotive terminology across the media: 'stranger danger', 'vile monster' and 'evilness personified' are such examples. This has been further emphasised by the media's construction of a stereotypical profile of what a child sex abuser looks and acts like. Nonetheless, to fully appreciate the impact such a construct has had from a cultural and societal perspective it is appropriate to map the emergence of the term 'paedophile' within the lexicon of the general public.

4.4.1 The rights of the paedophile

Angelides (2005) deals with the cultural and historical conditions within Western society in the latter part of the 20th century that allowed the category of 'paedophilia' to emerge. He claims that this formation of the 'modern' construction of the 'paedophile' is inextricably linked to the rise of gay activism, feminism, the child emancipation and paedophile liberation movements. This is also in addition to the anti-child pornography and CSA movements of the 1970s and 1980s that followed suit. Together these social movements issued profound challenges to notions of normative, or hegemonic, masculinities and male sexuality specifically. Angelides concluded that the category of the paedophile functioned as a way of demarcating 'normal' from 'pathological' masculinities and male sexualities (ibid: 2005). The emergence of the 'paedophile' within the public domain was an outgrowth of social and political power struggles around questions of normative masculinity and male sexuality (Thomson, 2013).

During the 1970s there emerged a conflict with the perceived danger of CSA. This stemmed from a more professional 'psycho-social' perspective that believed that families and the media were proportionally over-concerned with the dangers posed to children. The previous more liberated moral tendencies of the 1970s, in parody of Gay and Feminist Liberation Movements, wanted to reclaim the paedophile's identity. The intention was to use the term paedophile to differentiate between; 'Child Love' and 'Child Molestation'. This period of time was a time when the legalisation of homosexuality and the age of consent, in relation to both homosexual and heterosexual sex, were important issues in the UK. Across society there were different attitudes regarding the lowering of the age of consent. Some of these sentiments stemmed from a more liberated environment concerning child sexuality. Thomson (ibid) details research that indicated that some children involved in adult-child relationships often reflected positively upon their experiences as a source of love, affection and security, with the research finding little evidence of any long-term trauma. From this, it was suggested that it was the

prudent attitude within society that had the most negative effect upon the children involved, and that child sexuality was natural and normal. In such a liberated environment it was its repression that was considered abnormal.

Thomson (ibid) again proposes that such debates concerning the lowering of the age of consent could be attributed to the fall in rates of conviction between 1960 and 1977 for men who had unlawful sex with girls aged between 13 and 16. It fell from approximately 5000 in 1960 to 3,681 in 1977 (2013: 171). Ultimately, it was this debate that helped open the door for a broader discussion concerning adult-child relationships. However, it was the disdain felt for the inequality in this area by the homosexual community that was crucial for the emergence of a campaign centred on the rights of the paedophile. At this time in the UK there was a differentiation between the age of consent for homosexual and heterosexual intercourse; 21 and 16 years respectively. Therefore, the Homosexual Liberation Movement was at the forefront of debates concerning the age of consent. This created the context from which the campaigns for rights for paedophiles formed. As conservative moral objectors shifted their focus from homosexuals to paedophiliacs, some support, or at least some understanding began to gather for paedophiles. It was from this that organisations like the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) and Paedophile Action for Liberation (PAL) felt more comfortable discussing their issues and agendas within more public arenas.

However, the backlash against such organisations was immense once the wider public became aware of their existence. This shift of awareness from being traditionally professional and academic into the public sphere eroded the little support that was gathering for the rights of paedophiles. This support was extremely limited even within previously mentioned academic and professional circles. PIE Chairman Tom O'Carroll was ejected from the Love and Attraction Conference, hosted by the University of Swansea, following protestations from other presenting academics. Yet, to have been invited to talk initially does provide evidence that some support existed.

Publicly, the media's exposure of these groups as the 'Vilest Men in Britain', running front-page headlines such as "They want sex with children made legal" (Sunday People, 25 May 1975)¹⁷ was

¹⁷ Front page image available at: <https://i.guim.co.uk/img/static/sys-images/Guardian/Pix/pictures/2014/2/20/1392889996693/phpxJZHmSAM.jpg?width=445&quality=85&auto=format&fit=max&s=6a597bbf3673b3bbf7b95bd2291c8216> (accessed: 21.10.17).

testament to a media that would bring out issues more explicitly, were keen for sensational subject matter and were seeking the perfect villain. Additionally, at a time when the tension of maintaining, in the face of social change, an idealised family was high, this focus on an outside danger was an attractive alternative for the media to focus on. Such a focus ultimately led to the disbanding of organisations like PIE, however they remained active until 1984. Furthermore, during their existence PIE had been affiliated with the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL), with political representatives for the Labour Party among its members. Such affiliations have led to serious questions concerning former members of the Labour Party from this period of time and sympathies they may have had towards policies and values held by such an organisation. Nonetheless, such questions extend beyond the scope of this body of research.

4.4.2 Challenges to the heteronormative child sexual abuser

Feminist critiques challenge several normative assumptions about the nature of CSA. Drawing attention to the perpetrators being predominantly male and believing patriarchal social structures and male socialisation were to blame, rather than dysfunctional families (Brown, 2013). Categorising it as a gendered crime Kitzinger (2004) writes that “one of the few things that distinguish people who commit sexual violence from people who don’t, is that the former are usually male” (2004: 126). Thus, CSA is not necessarily an issue of individual pathology but rather it is an issue of gender. Kitzinger continues that through a process of refocusing from the differential individual pathology of the perpetrators of CSA, as well as their removal from society to a focus upon the social construction of masculinity suggests that the “real battle exists in making fundamental changes in society that allows for and even encourages child sexual abuse” (2004: 159). Such a perspective is often marginalised when discussions concerning CSA are activated. Kelly writes that the terrains of ‘abnormality’ are safer locations for discussions concerning CSA, rather than demanding that we look critically at the social construction of masculinity, male sexuality and the family (1996: 45). The consequence of this is that CSA continues to be perpetrated by ‘normal’, well-adjusted men who are often known and trusted by the victim. Whereas, the media’s focus remains on the constructed folk devil (Cohen, 1972) of the paedophile, ‘othered’ as being sick and vile, among other things. This position is represented through calls for such individuals to be removed from society. Such a call simultaneously neutralises any alternative perspectives that may require an examination of broader foundational societal issues. These issues are more challenging to deal for the general public than simply finding ‘someone’ to blame.

Notwithstanding this, there has been evidence of more feminist approaches to awareness campaigns in the UK. The Zero-Tolerance campaign was one such initiative, aimed at challenging social attitudes towards assaults against women and girls, led by local government in Edinburgh in December 1992. Miller-Perrin and Wurtle (1988) are cited in Kitzinger (2004) positioning the campaign as addressing the view that the sexual abuse of children is an inherent condition of society. The campaign's aim was to re-align child abuse as a continuum rather than being considered as isolated incidents by 'others'.

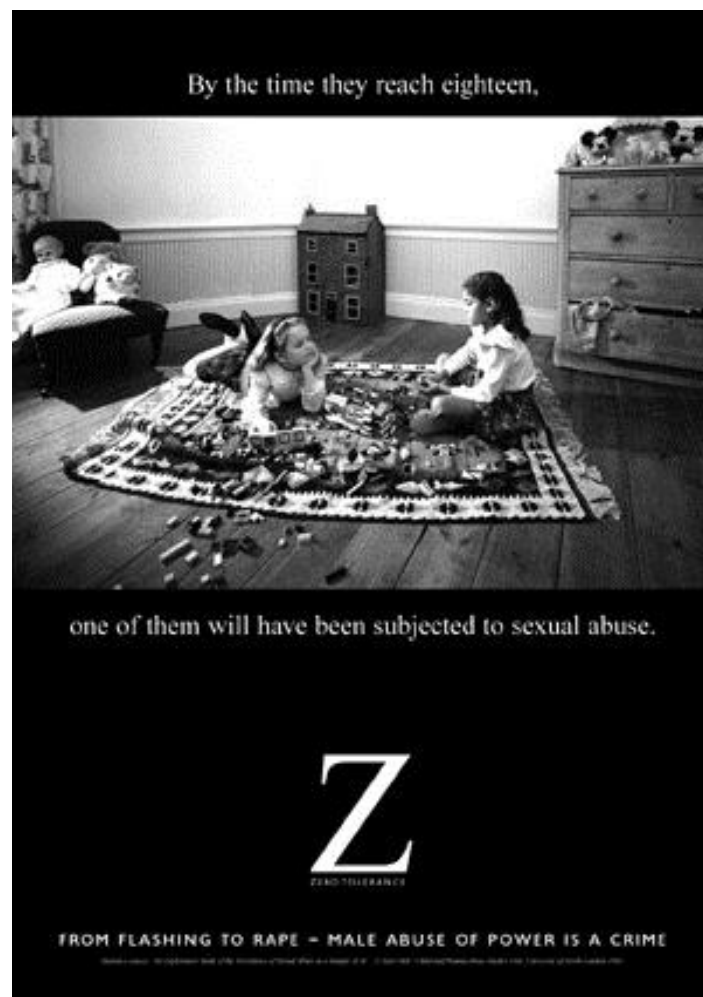


Figure 12: Zero-Tolerance Campaign Advertisement (1994)¹⁸

¹⁸ Image available at: <https://www.heraldsotland.com/resources/images/6593531?type=responsive-gallery-fullscreen> (accessed: 21.10.17)

The photographs used (Figure 12) served to position the attention more on the normalised environment within which the abuse occurs, rather than an emphasis upon the victim or the 'constructed' profiles of the perpetrators.

The media's reaction to the campaign evidenced the discomfort surrounding the magnitude of the debates they were hoping to stimulate within society. Kitzinger noted that *The Times* (9th October 1994) lambasted the campaign as being anti-male, poisonous, and a Goebbels-style exercise in hate propaganda. However, when reflecting on the impact of the campaign Kitzinger (2004) noted the difficulty that exists in competing with pervasive mainstream imagery and the impact of a single campaign or image cannot compete with the influence of the mass media. Cognisant of this, Kitzinger reflected on the challenge for individual alternative messages to be understood or even 'seen' (ibid: 179). This further emphasises the power of a mass-mediated image or representation.

4.5 Moral panics and the guises of predatory 'folk devils'

The collective labelling of a perpetrator of CSA as a paedophile is a normative practice across the various vehicles of the media. Approached from a moral perspective this provides an echo chamber that the general public consent to, holding CSA up as being the most heinous of crimes.

The preoccupation with 'celebrity', or the extraordinary event overall, existing in the media is evident as far back as Boorstin's (1962) examination of the pseudo-event in the US and the popularisation of the conscious media image. The media's coverage of paedophilia continues this trend, with the framing of perpetrators of CSA done in extraordinary ways. Campbell (2015) writes of a 'theatricalization' of incidents of paedophilia, the exaggeration and emphasis of the threat of stranger danger and ultimately the popularisation and consumption of CSA in the form of voyeuristic infotainment. This all dilutes the true 'ordinariness' of paedophilia and its embeddedness within the everyday domestic settings of the patriarchal family home. However, in line with the elements that constitute a moral panic, the media's positioning of the represented paedophile as a more palatable folk devil maintains the practice of attributing blame, as opposed to unpacking an issue.

Citing the approach of Cohens' (1972) somewhat processual model (Critcher, 2009) McCarten writes that moral panics are overblown social concerns relating to the negative or anti-societal ideologies of

a certain event, group or sub-group by society (2010). He argues that the consequential actions of the groups are perceived as being destructive to modern life, with an emphasis being placed on relevant folk devils (Cohen, 1972) branded as deviant by society, who suffer a form of societal exclusion. This is reinforced through a process of 'deviancy amplification' (Wilkins, 1964), a term adopted by Cohen (1972) to describe a process in which anything aligned with the threat is perceived to be part of the threat, often leading to extreme social responses to that overshadow the threat of the actual problem. McCarten concludes that there is a resulting need for a solution or a response, often emotionally constructed without being well conceived, that leads to repercussions for these folk devils.

Reflecting on Cohen's (1972) seminal research concerning moral panics, it took an interactionist perspective on subcultures within society and the inherent panic that ensued among the wider public. A key element of this perspective concerned the representation of delinquent subcultures by the media. Cohen positions the media as providing an ideological framework upon what may have actually been a relatively simple collection of individuals. As a result of this, the media became a socialising agency that reacted to an occurrence of unrest among a minority within society and disproportionately associated it with part of a wider phenomenon. Cohen emphasised that the media's reporting of certain 'facts' can be sufficient to generate concern and ignite fears and anxieties across wider sectors of society. Such disquiets can leave informal, sometimes institutional legacies. Cohen's studies were more concerned with the social and media reaction than the actual deviant and delinquent behaviour itself. Similarly, Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) noted the influence of the media in the mid-1890s. It was during this period, in Brazil, that the press populated the newspapers with coverage of the Canudos Conflict, in which 30,000 settlers were posited as being a threat to Brazilian society. This created a disproportionate state of public panic that was ultimately calmed by the news of the communities' destruction. This episode showed a perceived threat, responsible for the public anxiety, in a disproportionate light. From the perspective of media coverage, this was limited very much to a descriptive position and it was not until the events concerning the Mods and Rockers subcultures, as documented by Cohen (1972) that any analytical approaches were articulated.

Considering a more attributional model, Goode and Ben-Yahuda (1994) outline specific criteria they see as characteristic of a moral panic. Initially, they believe that there must be a heightened level of concern over the behaviour, or supposed behaviour, of a group or category of people, and the consequences that that behaviour causes for the rest of society "...evil does pose a threat to society and the moral order as a consequence of their behaviour" (ibid: 13). There follows an increased level of hostility towards the category of people seen as engaging in the threatening behaviour, who are portrayed as the enemy of respectable, law-abiding society. A consequence of this is the

dichotomisation between 'them' and 'us' – generating 'folk devils' and 'folk heroes', or a morality between 'good' and 'evil' (Cohen, 1972: 11-12). Goode and Ben-Yahunda (1994) additionally suggest it is necessary that a consensus within society, not necessarily among the majority, is reached that the perceived threat is real. However, they conclude that the related concern within society is out of proportion to the actual nature of the threat and that moral panics are volatile, yet they may lie latent for long periods of time and may re-appear from time to time (ibid).

In addition to these characteristics, Goode and Ben-Yahunda (ibid) also suggest three possible theories as to the cause of these moral panics within society, with each emerging from alternative perspectives. Initially, the 'Interest Group Model' perceives moral panics as being unintended and unplanned outcomes of crusades scrutinised by moral groups. Alternatively, the 'Elite Engineered Model' positions moral panics as arising from a manufactured campaign designed to divert attention away from an actual crisis. Such a model reflects the thoughts of Hall et al. (1978), who argue that moral panics are mechanisms used by ruling classes to mystify existing crises in society, and as such the media is implicated in disseminating, as opposed to creating the panic. Finally, the 'Grass Roots Model' categorises moral panics as growing from the anxieties of the normal public, which are reinforced or perpetuated by the media or the government; they don't create them, rather they are based upon pre-existing public concerns. Considering these causes, Goode and Ben-Yahunda felt that individually the 'Grass Roots Model' is naïve, and the 'Interest Group Model' is cynical and empty. However, together they help illuminate how "Interest Groups co-opt and make use of Grass Roots morality and ideology" (1994: 168).

Furthermore, Critcher (2009) citing the work of Hier (2002, 2008) positions moral panics as an extreme form of a much wider, more diffuse, and less volatile process of moral regulation. Attempting to re-theorise them, Hier (2008) criticised the traditional moral panic analysis, stating that there was too much of an emphasis placed on media coverage with it often being substituted for the activities of authorities and the dimensions of public feeling. Hier (ibid) also claimed that there was reliability on the untenable capacity to demonstrate that the reaction was disproportionate to the real threat "... we remain short of some reliable indication of what constitutes a realistic level of concern, anxiety and alarm" (Hier, 2008: 178). Hier finally noted an even more fundamental deficiency being the assumption that moral panics are exceptional rather than ordinary forms of action (ibid: 171). Opposed to a concentration on the traditional criteria Hier claimed that what was needed was the missing link between moral panics and more routine processes of moral regulation. Taking cognisance

of this position Critcher (2009) asks how we might consider and analyse the more common moralising of everyday life? Such a question has relevance to this body of research.

Considering both moral regulation and moral panics, Critcher (2009) notes that they share characteristics: they both involve one sector of society acting on the conduct of another and the 'regulators' in each sector confirm their identities even as they try to alter others. Nonetheless, Critcher also clarifies their differences. As outlined by Hier (2002), Critcher states that moral panics do not need any "character reformation of moral deviants" (2002: 329), but rather direct and coercive intervention. Additionally, moral panics clearly differentiate between the perpetrators of harm and the relative victims. This adheres to a moral economy of harm, in that some are injured by the activities of others. Hier (2002) ultimately positions a moral panic as "the volatile local manifestation of what can otherwise be understood as the global project of moral regulation" (ibid: 329), particularly if each 'panic' can be considered from the perspective of the criteria that Critcher (2009) sets out: (i) as a threat to moral order, (ii) as being amenable to social control, and (iii) as involving ethical self-regulation.

Smith and Cole (2016) further engage with this positioning of moral panics as less isolated and rather a result of a wider condition within society. Rather than seeing moral panics escalate from within moral regulation, they consider separate moral panics' capability of contributing to each other, in a constructive manner. Within the context of this research, Smith and Cole categorise the moral panic related to social networking as a singular moment in a continuous overarching panic they refer to as "an emerging technology child sex crime panic" (ibid: 209). They believe it can be seen as a combination of three other intersecting moral panics. First, they refer to a 'child sex crime panic', which has historically surfaced and resurfaced, periodically as a result of political, social and ideological shifts (Jenkins, 1998). Secondly, they mention an 'Internet Crime Panic', which arose as child sex predators became associated with computer technology and the Internet (Jenkins, 1998; Schultz, 2008). Such a panic countered the previous euphoria that surrounded the anonymity and freedom of online chat rooms and communities, with the negative aspects of multi-user domains and the presence of online sexual harassment responsible for "anonymity and amorality in everyday life and incivility in public discourse" (Sandywell, 2006: 49). For Smith and Cole (2016), the final contributing 'panic' concerned the effect computer technology was having on younger generations. These concerns contradict 'techno-optimists', who see technology as a potentially empowering educational tool for younger generations. Rather, there is a more pessimistic consideration, anxieties about the dangers of numerous possible consequences for children interacting with technology:

decline in physical activity; isolation and anti-sociality; exposure to violence, pornography and content promoting behaviours like self-harm, cyber bullying, reinforcement of gender stereotypes and obesity (Buckingham, 2000; Livingstone and Helsper, 2010; Boyd, Ryan and Leavitt, 2011; all cited in Smith and Cole, 2016). These ‘fears’ manifest themselves in exaggerated and misrepresentative stories digested by a public that has the wellbeing and protection of children at the forefront of their minds. Even without sufficient evidence to validate the associated dangers, news stories akin to the previously discussed ‘Momo Challenge’ (section 4.3.3) in 2019 position children as impotent and passive, needing the protection of adults when engaging in online activity.

Furthermore, it is the media’s ongoing coverage of the insidious dangers posed to younger generations that construct social network sites as safe havens for potential sexual predators. Williams (2006) emphasised this approach by the media when commenting that one online news article claimed that “police and school officials nation-wide urge parents to remind their children when they post their private thoughts online, strangers are definitely watching”. Similarly, *Webwisekids* founder Monique Nelson warned that social network sites are “the perfect predators’ playground... (they) don’t have to go to chat rooms, they can trawl through and look for pretty faces that they like and get all the information they want” (Smith and Cole, 2016: 213).

However, as is the nature of moral panics, the threat may be disproportionate to the actual risks posed within social network sites. A study from 2010, referenced by Smith and Cole (ibid: 217) showed adults were the primary users of these online spaces, and the moral panic concerning younger generations’ oversharing of content online had become passé. Instead, the emerging ‘technology child sex crime panic’ had shifted to new technologies, as the younger generations have shifted their primary modes of communicating to mobile technologies. Hoffman (2011) notes that this has prompted another phase of this ongoing moral panic: sexting and ‘digital dating abuse’. Thus, we have a moral panic that is drifting across technological platforms that can be seen as similar to the sort of drifting of moral panics across youth culture (Smith and Cole, 2016).

Nonetheless, a key question articulated by Cohen (1972) concerning the logic behind why one phenomenon may be categorised as a moral panic, whereas a second phenomenon — which may be of more significance — is ignored and may not even be considered as a candidate for moral signification, remains to be answered. Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) position such a question as being representative of a constructionist perspective that traditionally considers the social dynamics behind the creation of conditions as problems. This perspective is contextualised across the following

sections of this chapter as it continues to trace the dynamics behind the construction of the threats towards children.

Having discussed the emergence of the stranger danger awareness campaigns and the evolution and representation in the media of the original 'paedophile movement' the focus of the research initially returns to the 1970s when an abundance of CSAs took place, as disclosed by Operation Yewtree in the UK. The guise of the folk devil within the discourse of CSA then shifts towards the clergy, given its significance within an Irish context before concluding with concerns migrating from the physical world to the virtual and the modern-day 'cyber-paed'.

4.5.1 The celebrity scandal

The fallout from Operation Yewtree (2012) indicated that alongside the social and cultural progress that followed debates and movements towards civil rights and sexual liberation, the 1970s was a time in which CSA was a normalised practice within various institutions, families and among the cultural elite. Following the Police Investigation into Jimmy Saville posthumously, the traditional narrative the media had previously followed had changed and the media now had the challenging task of reporting on itself (Furedi, 2013; Powell and Scanlon, 2015). After its initial public announcement on 9th October 2012, Operation Yewtree followed over 500 lines of investigation relating to over 25 celebrities by December. Furedi stated that "some commentators noted that it seemed that the entire decade of the 1970s were being morally condemned" (2013: 4).

Considering the outrage that ensued within the media and across society, Furedi noted society's fascination with the past and its tendency to reinterpret the 1970s in the light of contemporary values. He claims that this focus gives meaning to some of the problems facing society today and serves as a condemnation of the more permissive and liberal 1960s and 1970s. He claims that this process is "integral to the project of restoring moral order" (2013: 27). Contemporary society is positioned to seek a point upon which to focus their moral judgement and this is done through reflecting on the previous historical occurrence, reinterpreting them through the "prism of present-day preoccupations and values" (ibid: 33). Such a process removes any cognisance of social norms changing within the context of time and a solution to today's problems will not be found in an "archaeological excavation of yesterday's culture" (ibid: 33).

Nonetheless, this practice of moral condemnation and reflective judgement across the media contributes to a societal climate where those who question the homogenised moral standing are themselves subject to ridicule or suspicion. Communities distance themselves from the source of moral indignation by emphasising the values that they themselves hold dear. Furedi cites the consistent condemnation of paedophilia and the institutions that protect the predators among the public as an attempt at this form of moral positioning (2013: 5). Yet, such an emphasis further deflects attention from alternative and more effective problems, through the media's continued othering of the perpetrators of CSA.

4.5.2 An Irish perspective: a case study of the clergy

From an Irish perspective, the role played by the Church as a traditional institution has been greatly affected by revelations concerning CSA. The religious practice of the general public and the influence and reputation of the Church has suffered as a result. Goode, H. et al. (2003) noted that the impact of the scandals was not as effective as it may have been initially perceived, 72% of individuals believed that "priests, in general, had been unfairly judged as a result of clerical child sex abuse" (ibid: 8). Yet the majority of those surveyed by Goode et al. (2003) believed that CSA by the clergy should be made public and that "the media served a useful role in highlighting the issue" (ibid: 6).

Tracing the emergence of CSA among the clergy, Lalor (1998) noted that the earliest documentation was in the confessional manuals used by the clergy known as the 'Penitentials', in the early Christian period where "penance is specified for those that misuse children" (1998: 38). However, discussions related to CSA in Ireland only entered the public arena via the media in the 1990s. A previously ignorant public became engaged through the high-profile coverage of child abuse scandals, notably the X-Case (1994), the Kelly Fitzgerald Case (1996), the Kilkenny Incest Case (1993), the Brendan Smyth Affair (1995) and the Madonna House Affair (1996). McGrath (1998), in referencing a four-page internal departmental report into the deaths of two young children from abuse prior to the media's coverage of CSA cases notes that "The contrast between how these cases were dealt with and later child abuse inquiries in the 1990s couldn't be more marked" (1998: 9). Murphy (1998) emphasised

that it was the political debates that followed the X-Case scandal in 1994, that led to a constitutional referendum in Ireland concerning the issue of abortion, that set the precedent for the Irish media's increase in coverage of a CSA case. The publicity that followed led to unprecedented coverage as documented by Breen's (2003) analysis of the Irish Times between the years 1993-2002. His findings indicated that of a total of 1127 stories that focused upon abuse, only 495 dealt with abuse from within an Irish context. However, 84 of these stories (17%) ran during the year 1994.

Providing this coverage with some context, Jenkins (1996) analysed how the media coverage of the clergy in the US had shifted since the 1970s. During this time, the diocese could prevail on newspapers not to report on uncompromising incidents involving priests and the district attorney's office not to prosecute. In the eyes of the diocesan officials, to reveal a priest's shortcomings was akin to blasphemy (ibid: 61). Yet, from 1989-93 clergy abuse dominated religious news across the various media platforms that extended beyond the borders of the American states. This was predated by a time when media values were in rapid transition, with a move towards more sensationalist coverage, growth in tabloid TV news and prurient talk shows that blurred the lines of fact and fiction. All of this was occurring in a changing commercial, social and legal environment that the media operated within. Furthermore, once the taboos were lifted on the coverage of established churches, the reprisals were not as severe as perceived, and the coverage itself did not conspicuously offend public taste, stories related to the issues featured a lot more frequently. The sea change in media coverage occurred with the National Catholic Review's eight-page report on the 7th June 1985 with the headline "Priest Child Abuse Victimized Families: Bishops Lack Policy Responses". Jenkins (1996) notes that media coverage from this point on was critical, not of individual priests or clergy but rather of the Catholic Church in general, with charges of "systematic corruption and illegality, cynical exploitation of the laity and extensive sexual perversion" (ibid: 53) dominating reports.

Allegations of institutional abuse surfaced in the Irish media in 1980, when a news report in the Irish Independent ran the headline "Fit to raise 'cover-up' in Westminster – Sex Racket at Children's Home" (Mc Kenna, 24 January 1980). This concerned the alleged systematic abuse that had taken place at the Kincora Boys Home in Belfast during the late 1970s. The Church's role in running similar institutions has a long history that extends beyond the scope of this research. However, it was a result of an investigative report by journalist Chris Moore on Ulster Televisions' *Counterpoint* programme (10th June 1994) that disclosed the most infamous cover-up of CSA that had taken place across these types of institutions, not just in the Republic and the North of Ireland, but also in the US. The report

documented the systematic abuse being carried out by Brendan Smyth. Having originally been charged with sexual abuse in 1991 in the North of Ireland, Smyth went ‘on the run’ in the Republic and was moved across different institutions where he continued to abuse children. The Irish Attorney General’s poor handling of the extradition request for Smyth from the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was a contributing factor in the collapse of the then Fianna Fáil – Labour coalition (Kenny, 2009; Powell and Scanlon, 2015).

After eventually pleading guilty to 72 charges of indecent and sexual assault, Smyth died one month into serving a 12-year sentence. However, across the media, the presentation of images from the 1995 documentary ‘Suffer Little Children’ maintained the construction of a preferred representation of a child sexual abuser. Kenny noted that these images of Smyth “became a sort of sickening, electronic anti-religious icon... (Smyth) came to be regarded by many Irish people as the personification of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church” (2009: 65). However, the images used were a result of Smyth reacting to press photographers goading him. This allowed them to capture an image that personified the media’s construction of the monstrous paedophile priest, what Harry Ferguson described in the Irish Times as “by far the most powerful image of sex offenders to emerge from the catalogue of cases within Ireland during the 1990s” (28 April, 1998).

Following the Smyth case, the media’s attention to CSA became more sustained, and numerous additional documentaries were produced and proved to be a catalyst for discussions among political and public arenas. The RTE¹⁹ programme, ‘States of Fear’ broadcast on the 27th April and 11th May 1999 heralded the biggest impact. Following the broadcast of this dramatization, the government could no longer remain mute and on the evening of the last broadcast they issued an apology (Kenny, 2009: 67):

“On behalf of the State and all citizens of the state, the government wishes to make a sincere and long overdue apology to the victims of childhood abuse for our collective failure to intervene, to detect their pain, to come to their rescue”

Bertie Ahern (then Taoiseach)

¹⁹Ireland’s national Public Service Broadcaster, Radio Telefís Éireann

In addition to this apology, it was announced that compensation would be provided from public funds following an official commission to inquire into CSA, chaired by Ms. Justice Laffoy in 2000. This inquiry eventually produced the Ryan Report (2009), which accompanied numerous other inquiries set up to investigate CSA in institutional settings (Madonna House Inquiry, 1996; Reilly Report, 2012) and concerning the clergy (Ferns Report, 2005; Dublin Report, 2009; Cloyne Report, 2011).

Unlike the cases in which the media focused on moral outrage and condemnation, notably the Kilkenny Incest Investigation Report (McGuinness, 1993) the discourse of public inquiries like the Ryan Report 2009 mirrored the media focus within the US (Jenkins, 1996) with a focus more so on the moral paradox of the clergy's involvement (Powell and Scanlon 2015). Kenny (2009) further commented that, despite years of print journalism covering CSA claims to various degrees, it was television coverage that awoke the public and political coverage in Ireland to a level that was warranted.

Notwithstanding this, there was a lack of any serious effort to indicate distortions, misrepresentations or exaggerations of the criticism among the media reports in the US (Jenkins, 1996: 53) or Ireland (Breen; 2003). Jenkins concluded that the media construction of 'Paedophile Priests' distorted the reality through disproportional coverage and the normalised tendency to highlight the drama of the story (1996: 94). Referencing the SAVI Report (2002) Breen noted only that only 3.2% of reported CSA was perpetrated by clergy, whereas an analysis of newspaper reports indicated that they were responsible for 75% of the reports of CSA against boys and 35% of CSA against girls. This evidences the consistent discrepancies between empirical findings and the media reports that sustained the public's focus on media positioning or construction of the 'paedophile priest' as a palatable folk devil to deflect away from the real problem of the normality of CSA.

4.6 Positioning of the 'cyber-paed' and the continuance of the 'othering'

The consistent omission of media stories related to the normality and existence of CSA in the home has positioned it as a sanctuary in which children are less susceptible to abuse. Society has evolved into a space in which 'paranoid parents' rather than manage potential risks to their children, avoid them altogether (Furedi, 2008). The social norm is for parents to consistently chaperone their children

in public spaces. Simultaneously, the Internet has emerged as a space that can be explored from the safety of the home while providing realistic experiences. Jewkes and Wykes note that for these children, “adventure, competitiveness and sexual development all occur in the virtual world” (2012: 938). However, with this withdrawal from society to virtual spaces came the portrayal of the Internet as a scapegoat for numerous deviant activities and disorders like Attention Deficit Disorder, Obesity and Sexual Aggression with children being considered the most vulnerable to potential harm from the new technologies (Jewkes, 2012: 10).

With this privatisation of social interaction, the existing fear of the predatory paedophile and the growing rise in mobile media devices a media discourse evolved that linked predatory strangers to the virtual spaces children occupied. The ‘cyber-paed’ has been constructed as the ultimate predator that can prey upon children perceived to be in a safe environment, through the Internet and its various unregulated chat rooms and social media spaces. Jewkes and Wykes (2012) recognise that the previous guises of the predatory folk devils were deflection enough, but the shift of focus toward the ‘cyber-paed’ was even more insidious, as it threatened the mediatised representations more seriously than the offending realities, legitimised attempts to control and monitor new communication technologies, and ultimately diverted attention and resources from real crimes.

4.6.1 The danger is in the home

The ignoring of a threat of CSA within the family home by the media changed with the episodic, high-profile coverage of online grooming instances at the turn of the 21st Century. Brown (2013) supplies a critical discourse analysis concerning spatiality when focusing on this migration of the paedophile from the ‘real world’ to cyberspace and from the outside into the traditional home. Livingstone (2009) writes that the previously positioned safe place of the home was now threatened by the online predator with the Internet being accessible in over 95% of children’s homes. However, technology has progressed since these figures were presented almost nine years ago. More contemporary studies concerning Internet access for children from the ‘Net Children Go Mobile’ report (O’Neill and Dinh, 2015) indicates that 72% of Irish children use the Internet daily in the home, but this figure changes in accordance with age; 53% of 9-10-year-olds, compared to 92% of younger teenagers. However, the report also shows that 35% of 9-16-year-olds access the Internet predominantly through smartphones, and furthermore these users are more likely to use the Internet every day than children

who don't have access to mobile devices (ibid, 2015). The location of such smartphone usage is more difficult to analyse. Interestingly though, the report indicated that 87% of Irish parents monitor children's online use, which is above the EU average of 77%. The specifics of children and adolescent's online habits extend beyond the scope of this research, but this is not to say that they are not worthy of future study.

Brown (2013) noted that the media's coverage regarding Internet predators escalated during the early 2000s and since then, despite peaks and troughs, online abuse does not seem to be slipping from the news agenda. A characteristic of the media coverage is the imminent danger posed by the 'cyber-paed'. Brown (ibid) references the presence of a discourse of temporal proximity adopted by the media to depict children as being 'seconds' or 'clicks' away from an Internet predator within this reconceptualization of the home as a site for abuse. Through this discourse, the global problem is localised, and the Internet predators are depicted as being even closer to children than the traditional figure of the paedophile. As a result of this, we are presented with the fear of new technology, the Internet bringing fundamental changes to how sexual threats to children should be understood. The combination of these elements positions the Internet predator as the greatest threat of all to our children (Wolak et al., 2008; Livingstone and Haddon, 2009; Jewkes, 2010).

4.6.2 The 'cyber-paed' and the use of the Internet

Both Wolak, et al. (2008) and Hasinoff (2014) criticise previous research presenting case studies of online molesters 'lurking' in Internet spaces that are occupied by children and adolescents. These predators then use information that has been shared on social media to identify potential targets and even use deceptive ways to contact their victims and entice them into meetings before abusing or assaulting them. Media reports previously indicated that such occurrences are at epidemic levels and that sex crimes are being perpetrated by a new type of criminal. However, such a perception sullies the benefits that are available for children and adolescents when they go online. Within the 'Sexualisation and Commercialisation of Children in Ireland Report' (Kiely, et al., 2015) Fiachra Ó Súilleabháin, a social worker, emphasised these positive aspects noting that "reducing social isolation and accessing support and education to help work out sexual identification issues" (ibid: 162) as opportunities that are available online. Yet, such positive aspects are underrepresented within the

media. Debates concerning the online practices of children often focus on the countering positions of 'screen-time' and 'content accessed', but as previously stated, they extend beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, such debates do align with concerns related to the access to images of children shared online and issues regarding the permanency of images and the potential for cyberbullying. These have previously been considered in the research on 'sharenting' and subsequent anxieties for both parents and children.

Turrow (1999), Meyer (2007) and Mascheroni et al. (2010) consider a paradox that exists within the media's narrative of the online predator and their 'victims'. Turrow (1999) summarised the American press coverage as a 'Jekyll and Hyde' type phenomena, claiming that "Your children need the Internet, but if they do go online, be terrified" (ibid: 34). This approach positions the children who occupy online spaces as being vulnerable to the potential dangers that exist. Mascheroni et al. (2010) explored a similar perspective with their study of press coverage from Italy, Portugal and Spain that focused on the potential risk as opposed to opportunities, that online engagement provided for the user. It is noteworthy that the risks they document related to 'aggression' and 'sexual behaviour' more frequently than risks associated with commercial exploitation from advertisements. Ponte et al. conducted a similar study in the UK that indicated that 67% of articles surveyed related to sexual risks as opposed to any other (2009: 164).

A paradox is evident in the alternative representation of users of the Internet. Aligning with tradition, children are portrayed as vulnerable and susceptible to the dangers of the online world. Whereas potential predators are portrayed as astute users of the technology who can use it for their own manipulative and deviant needs. Meyer (2007) criticises the media for presenting the Internet from opposing perspectives; children's relationships with the Internet are often presented through a discourse of technological determinism with it impacting on their lives in a negative way. Whereas the opposing principle of socio-individual determinism is applied to paedophiles' occupation of online spaces, exercising their control over the technology in whatever way and for whatever purpose they require.

This approach by the media adheres to pre-constructed perceptions of the 'vulnerable child' versus the 'evil predatory paedophile'. Meyer notes that "technology needs to control children and be controlled by paedophiles – otherwise the simplistic story of the huge risk could not be told" (2007:

128). Furthermore, it is this continued media coverage of a simplified narrative concerning online risks to children that heightens perceptions about the scale of the problem. Jewkes reiterates that such an approach by the media creates social perceptions that this type of online behaviour is common and amplifies concerns over the associated risks for young people (2010: 13).

4.6.3 A misrepresentation of the dangers posed online

Wolak, et al (2008) and Jewkes and Wykes (2012) emphasise that the reality is more complex and less archetypically frightening than the publicity suggests. Nonetheless, a consequence of this discourse is that the media coverage may engender exaggerated fears that could be diluted through the use of accurate information. These exaggerated fears often align with the normative discourse surrounding the vulnerability of the child. As discussed in the previous chapter, often such discourses remove any aspect of agency from the child in the given situation. However, research indicates that often victims of cases of Internet child abuse are aware that they are conversing with adults online and that they voluntarily meet offline (Wolak, et al., 2008; Crosson-Tower, 2014). This is additionally supported by the fact that offenders rarely deceive their victims about their sexual interests, with most victims going to face-to-face meetings expecting to engage in sexual activity. Wolak et al. (2008) cite statistics from the US-based 'National Juvenile Online Victimization Study' that states 73% of victims who had sexual relations following face-to-face meetings had done so more than once. Furthermore, findings indicated that as youths get older, they engage in more complex and interactive Internet use, which can put them at greater risk than younger less experienced individuals who may use the Internet in simpler ways. Wolak et al. (ibid) conclude that what increases risks for youths online is not their innocence concerning sex, but rather the complex issues that are related to immaturity, inexperience and the impulsiveness with which some youths respond to and explore normal sexual urges (2008: 115-116). Again, this is an area that engages with broader social issues regarding a generation of youths turning to online spaces for support and answers. Such areas of research extend beyond the scope of this study yet have been thoroughly explored from an international perspective through the EU Kids Online study. This study provides an excellent exploration of how the risk associated with online activity may be disproportional to the actual harm. Specifically, it explores what concerns children with regard to online activity, the online risks children encounter and advises on mechanisms of support that parents can implement when their children are active online.

Returning to the context of this study, despite the imminent danger from the online predator who is portrayed as only being a click away, the aspect of time is a buffer. The time between the initial virtual contact and the physical contact that may then follow provides a window of opportunity within which reflection can be made. Taking cognisance of this, indications are that online perpetrators do not appear to stalk victims, but rather continue to seek youths who are perceived as being susceptible to seduction. This supports the research by Ward, et al. (2005) who conclude that online offenders are generally not paedophiles. The use of the Internet to target and recruit young children directly would be difficult as they are not as accessible as adolescents online. Additionally, for those younger children who may be online, they are less likely to respond to propositions from online predators because of their lack of interest in relationships and romance compared to adolescents. Nonetheless, the discourse surrounding online CSA very much remains focused on the 'cyber-paed' and such a concentration carries with it additional implications outside of the home.

4.6.4 Consequence of the proposed solution

Ultimately, society remains one which accepts a discourse of the 'cyber-paed' that is exaggerated. This leaves no space for moral critique of the paradoxical culture that fetishizes young bodies to such an extent that women will starve and shape their bodies to achieve child-like representation (Jewkes and Wykes 2012). Such standards serve, "powerful ideological and commercial interest groups which profit from encouraging the beauty aesthetic" (Wykes and Gunter, 2005: 220). This results in the moral panic concerning 'cyber-paeds' preserving hegemonic masculinity through the continued demonizing of other forms as sick, evil or cyber-bogeymen continuing to safeguard patriarchy within the family home. Jewkes and Wykes (2012) expand the consequence beyond this and conclude that the discursive focus on 'cyber-paeds' reconstructs the reality of CSA in ways that deflect any critical gaze from power. They believe this is done through the focus upon 'cyber-paeds', protecting both commercial markets' use of explicit imagery of young bodies to generate profit and underwriting markets of protective software and network security. Such an impact on society allows the moral panic concerning the Internet predator or 'cyber-paed' to be labelled as the 'perfect moral panic' (Jewkes and Wykes, 2012).

The consequences of this can be witnessed practically as well as through policy if we consider the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in the UK emphasising CSA as an extreme problem of cyberspace opposed

to a common occurrence in familial organisations (ibid: 942). Such a discourse surrounding misrepresented fears influences decisions regarding the prioritising of resources towards preventative measures. The Internet Content Governance Advisory Group (2014) published a report for such preventative measures to develop safer and better Internet strategies. The report made numerous recommendations including that the Safer Internet Ireland project be enhanced to act as the Safer Internet Ireland Centre (SIIC), with an emphasis on the government to ensure that “this vital public service is fully resourced” (2014: 64). Additionally, such misrepresented fears mobilise discourses of ‘otherness’ and ‘danger’ to legitimate further controls over personal freedoms, privacy and human rights. These are activated through initiatives to monitor communication technologies, which concern privacy and personal freedom issues. Ultimately through a focus and push towards the implementation of this type of legislation, albeit important in its own right, there is a consequential under-resourcing of initiatives which can put children at further risk. Such an example came in 2014 when the ISPCC²⁰ announced that its ChildLine service was under threat due to funding pressures. Through this approach to dealing with the situation, emphasis is placed on controlling the technology as opposed to prioritising the rights and safety of the child at the ‘front line’. Such a ‘real-world’ consequence is a measure of the impact that the present discourse concerning the cyber-paed can have, while continuing to ignore the real-world spaces where the majority of abuse still occurs.

4.7 Opposing perspectives and the taboo subject of discussion

The media discuss paedophilia in an inappropriate, generalised, fearful and negative light across both tabloid and broadsheet press without any distinction between the different types of sex offenders (McCartan, 2010; Jewkes, 2010). The label paedophile has become the catchall label for all underage sexual preference. McCartan (2010) references distinctions between paedophilia, hebephilia and perpetrators of CSA as terms that are not differentiated within the media. Rather, the term paedophile is presented as a sweeping all-inclusive term for a child sex abuser. The term is actively used to describe adults who are attracted to children of any age, including pubescents of 12 years and older. These individuals would be more accurately categorised as hebephiliacs (Jewkes, 2010). Furthermore, a common term used within the media, ‘convicted paedophile’ is a misnomer as no such offence exists in law. Ultimately, this practice makes it easier for an increasingly immoral society to focus their

²⁰ Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

attention on one of the final moral pillars, the protection of the child from the most heinous of evils, the child sex abuser.

Predominantly paedophiles are profiled as being male, from a working-class background with a disorganised family system and they tend to be middle-aged (La Fontaine, 1990; Howitt, 1995; Blanchards et al., 1999). Although this is by no means rigid. Additionally, due to their poor social skills, they tend to feel socially isolated (Taylor 1981). However, when examining the causes of paedophilia McCartan (2010) claims that it has been described as a mental illness (Bagley et al 1994), a mental deficiency (Blanchard et al. 1999), a brain deficiency (Cantor et al. 2008), a developmental abnormality (Lee et al. 2002) or a result of a cycle of abuse (Bagley et al., 1994; Howitt 1995; La Fontaine 1990). As a result, it is extremely complex to treat.

In the UK, there is no one, all-inclusive single treatment programme available for paedophile offenders. In Ireland, legislation introduced by the (then) Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald through the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Bill 2015 also failed to put measures in place to help paedophiles deal with their issues before it manifests itself in child abuse. However, to engage with such a concept in the first place is based on the premise that paedophilia is a sexual preference disorder. This aligns with its classification by the International Classification of Disease (ICD), Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders. Adhering to this position is a challenge for wider society given the prevalence of the media's construction of the paedophile as a monstrous 'other', thus crippling any debate on the subject in mental health terms.

In an article titled 'Paedophilia – the mental health issue we choose to ignore' from the Trinity News (6 December 2013), Dr Joyce-Ahern reflects on mental health no longer being stigmatized with open discussions frequently occupying various platforms of society. However, paedophilia is an exception. She continues that once a term has been defined as a medical condition then "it must not be used to describe something nefarious that it can be related to but is not synonymous with" (2013). Thus, the consequence of the pervasive construction represented by the media, regarding the paedophile makes it practically impossible to separate the mental health condition paedophile and the illegal act of child abuse. This is not helped by the lack of structures in place within Ireland to accommodate individuals who seek help concerning paedophilia, until they act upon those urges and commit a criminal act. We, therefore, have a situation that has no means of being addressed until there is an

offence, an offender, a victim and a crime. As such the legislation currently fails to truly address the 'problem' regarding child abuse. As Dr Joyce-Ahern concludes that if we really want to combat the sexual abuse of children, paedophilia needs to be dealt with as a mental health issue, not as a crime (2013).

Discussions concerning the need for structures to provide help and support for individuals seeking support to control their urges can be traced back to previous Dáil debates from 2001. One such debate occurred between Fine Gael TD Dan Neville and the (then) Minister for Health, Michael Martin. The 'debate' concluded with the minister stating that the setting up of such specially designed services could lead to stigmatization and therefore a reluctance to participate as a result. Approaching 20 years later these structures have still yet to be openly discussed at a more progressive level. Thus, we have a situation where the potential stigmatization for paedophiles in seeking help outweighs the potential benefits of providing it. However, within other European countries, such support structures are in place.

In Germany, the 'Kein Täter Werden' (Don't Become an Offender) programme offers free counselling to non-offending paedophiles, while guaranteeing confidentiality. This programme is discussed within a research paper by Pfirrmann (2015), which provides an analysis of the social stigma of paedophiles in Germany; '...ich fühle mich nicht diskriminiert, ich werde diskriminiert' (Social Stigmatization of Paedophiles in Germany). Pfirrmann concludes that there is stigmatization towards paedophilia within German society and the use of negative stereotyping is, similarly to the UK and Ireland, used in the media to construct a preferred representation of the paedophile. A consequence of this is that "the public simply isn't informed enough, there should be more enlightenment and more studies on this topic" (Pfirrmann, 2015: 54). However, it is also of relevance to note that despite these calls for further studies, such a programme is not isolated within Germany. In 2006, the Charité Hospital introduced a programme to prevent lives being ruined, that ran an advertisement campaign of posters and on TV for its paedophile counselling programme. This campaign featured a very ordinary man, sitting on a bus with the question "Do you love children more than you would like?"



Figure 13: Charité Hospital Poster Advertisement (2006)²¹

In the UK, 'Stop It Now!' is a resource that among other things provides access to appropriate support and intervention to help individuals manage their thoughts and behaviours to assist them to “live responsible, fulfilling and law-abiding lives” (www.stopitnow.org.uk). This service extends its reach beyond the UK and into Ireland, facilitating people located in Ireland with access to some support if needed. However, as it is based in the UK, the public awareness of such a service is unsurprisingly very low here in Ireland. Furthermore, being a charity, the service is solely dependent on donations and receives no support or help from authorities here in Ireland.

The consequences of having no official support mechanisms in place are difficult to measure, given the taboo nature of the subject matter. As engaged with previously, the homogenised attitude within society towards paedophilia takes the conceptual jump to the illegal act of CSA. Sufferers of the condition find themselves immersed within a society in which the hatred reserved for their ‘kind’ is so intense that moral values that are otherwise held sacrosanct can be forgotten in an instant in the rush to condemn. Furedi (2013) writes of moral crusaders and their shunning of any alternative perspectives or understanding of paedophilia. They oppose any views other than their own, occupying an ideology that is not only hostile to the accused but additionally to anyone who dares question their claims. This leads to an accusation becoming a ‘transcendental truth’ with the distinction between allegation and evidence becoming blurred. Furthermore, Furedi writes that “there is a belief that the

²¹ Image sourced online from <https://www.thelocal.de/userdata/images/article/0c59b5210b6d03d78e33cede49ab538bab1787250f1834d0287aac2eba25470f.jpg> (accessed: 21.08.18)

accuser possesses a unique monopoly over a transcendental truth that must not be burdened with conventional norms of proof” (ibid: 63). From this perspective, debates about the issue are not an option; any skepticism about the issue may actually help to create a climate in which the crime of abuse will flourish. As a result, we have a climate in which the duty to believe allegations is a recurrent theme and any doubt cast on the statement of a victim invites moral condemnation.

Ultimately the impact of such a climate of hate towards what is essentially a mental health issue can often be catastrophic. A social climate that stigmatizes not just those individuals who could be categorised as paedophilic, but also those who may harbour sympathetic opinions in contrast to the status quo regarding the issue creates a climate in which, without any additional support systems, suicide is often interpreted as a coping mechanism. As stated previously, the effects on those with paedophilic thoughts are difficult to measure, yet there are testimonies from participants on programmes like those mentioned who claim that they see suicide as the most viable option available, if the alternative is living with these thoughts within their heads. Further studies and wider public engagement are required in this highly sensitive area, but again such studies are beyond the realms of this research.

4.8 The reactionary consequence

The cultural construction of a discourse that positions the paedophile as a monstrous and deviant predator has resulted in both the normalisation of an attitude within society and the passing of legislation that reflects this dominant attitude. The public’s perception of abusers largely accords with the previously discussed media coverage and furthermore that the media can resource stereotypes and amplify some fears rather than others (Kitzinger, 2004). Drawing on her empirical research Kitzinger (ibid) notes that the conversational direction of her focus groups often returned towards the media dominated ‘stranger danger’ perpetrator of sexual abuse while discussions concerning incestuous abuse were rarely if ever brought up. Kitzinger felt there was a level of social currency associated with the telling of ‘stranger danger’ type incidents, whereas the silence regarding stories of family members was deafening. Similar findings were referenced by Pain (2006) in her research with children from the North East of England, who would indulge in ‘I also know of an incident’ type conversations while in focus groups. Discussions of this nature further complement media stories surrounding ‘stranger danger’ with the stereotype often gaining access to everyday conversation and

the very public, and sometimes collective nature of some experiences; a process that further compliments the normalisation of 'othering' the perpetrators (Kitzinger, 2004).

The silence evident in Kitzinger's focus groups concerning discussions of abuse that takes place within the family home is also a reflection of the media's coverage of such abuse or lack thereof in this instance. The general absence in media reports, and within referenced discussions above of the everyday practice of CSA perpetrated by those known to the victim shows the unease triggered within society by such practices. Having discussed this sentiment from the perspective of the media, its audience and newsworthiness earlier, Kitzinger positions her findings from the perspective of the orator of the stories. If a certain social currency is attributed to the relaying of 'stranger danger' type narratives, is there an element of shame associated with instances of incestuous abuse, both for the victim themselves and for any relatives of the victim, or even the perpetrator of the abuse? Kitzinger considers that "telling tales on a family member or close friend is very difficult because of the power relations and emotional ties between the abuser and the abused" (2004: 140). Kitzinger suggests that shame may be felt as a consequence of regret on behalf of those known to the victim and perpetrator who may feel judged as having been in a position to have done more. Ultimately, the consequence of this is the continued circulation of stranger danger type stories despite their prominence being misrepresentative of the truth.

4.8.1 Reactions to the dominant attitude within society

Stokes (2010: 10) outlines the political and social alliances often formed through an attempt to cope with a perceived problem within society. She argues that this activism embodies the 'world risk society' with individuals, through solidarity gaining comfort in numbers and engaging with possible preventative measures that may be called upon in the future to prevent further possible risks. Specifically, this was evidenced through the mobilisation of parents following the death of Sarah Payne in the UK who collectively sought change to public information policies (Sarah's Law, referenced previously in section 4.3.1). However, Stokes (2010) simultaneously concurs with the opinion of Furedi (2001) when commenting on the effects such discourse has on communities; that the predominance of the threat of child abusers in society is actually a reflection of the erosion of adult solidarity. Furedi (2001) emphasises that there that parents have low levels of trust for other adults regarding child

safety, further accentuating the concept of 'stranger danger', despite the relative risk. Stokes (2010) echoes the earlier literature of Stanko (1990) in emphasising that the likelihood of a child being abducted by strangers is statistically slim and less feared than other threats by children. Nonetheless, the concept of 'stranger danger' appears to "have caught the imagination of the public in the Anglophone World" (Stokes, 2010: 13-14).

Furedi (2013) contemporises these low levels of trust that parents have with other adults when engaging with what he refers to as the "pathologisation of adult-child relationships" (2013: 49). Here he discusses the collective discourse that has led to a fundamental erosion of trust in the motives of adults towards children. This has been normalised through the warnings concerning the risks inherent in adult-child encounters. Real-world examples of this have been experienced personally when I have engaged in conversations with 'Lolly-Pop' ladies who are being advised to no longer embrace or 'high-five' school children they encounter, or summer camp supervisors who have advised all parents, myself included to apply sun cream to their children in the morning prior to the camp starting under the instructions that they were no longer permitted to apply sun cream to children.

Furedi (2013) claims that within society today the physical contact between adults and children is now perceived as a prelude to the act of molestation and that this promotion of an attitude of mistrust and suspicion among children, through concepts like 'stranger danger' "pathologises intergeneration encounters" (ibid: 49 – 50). Within teaching and childcare environments, both Piper and Smith (2003) and McWilliams (2000) note that the consequences of this can be observed through the growing presence of non-touch practices and policies between adults and children within their relevant sectors. Piper (2002) presents this as a consequence of such contact being potentially misconstrued by a child, parent/carer or observer. Piper et al. (2006) further notes, that such practices are more dependent on fears of accusation and litigation than any actual concern for a child. The consequence of this 'fear of accusation' can be evidenced both from the perspective of the individual who may be labelled and the reaction of a 'morally conscious' society.

The attitude towards paedophiles and perpetrators of CSA is very much one of zero-tolerance from the perspective of a society consisting of 'right-thinking members'. It can be said that a similar approach is evident from a policing perspective. This can be seen as a reaction by both sectors to paedophiles being considered by society as "a kind of roaming danger, a sort of omnipotent phantom"

(Foucault, 1988: 281) or what Thomas (2005) refers to as being at “the heart of secular demonology” (2005: 1). Having engaged with the broader societal attitudes, from a legislative standpoint, Campbell (2015) believes that across OECD²² jurisdictions the criminal justice response to CSA has become more exclusionary and retributive, with a growth in both intensive and extensive punishments (2015: 2). In her paper entitled ‘Policing Paedophilia: Assembling Bodies, Spaces and things’ (2015), Campbell maps out the key dimensions to governing paedophilia within society. Despite this list consisting of robust legislative frameworks, statutory checks and disclosures, sex offender lists, transnational policing agencies representing both the voluntary sector and private sector, the establishment of National Level Policing Units in addition to the opening line of An Garda Síochána report on ‘Responding to Child Sexual Abuse’ stating that “Nothing is more important than protecting our children” (2012: 3) there are instances in which society’s zero-tolerance attitude has felt undermined. This is represented through the reactions of sectors of the general public when there is an attempt to reintroduce a convicted child sexual abuser into society. Danny Ward, a convicted child rapist, according to media reports and video imagery, was beaten in the street on two separate occasions in Dublin City Centre after his reintroduction into society (Pattison, 2015). Anthony Luckwill has also been subjected to similar assaults while residing in Kildare following his release from prison having served his time (Flanagan and Scott, 2016).

This type of reaction is a consequence of a zero-tolerance attitude towards CSA and the unforgiving nature of some sectors of society who adhere to the attitude verbatim. Mapping the context within which such vigilante activities emerged, Kitzinger (2004) focuses on the UK in the latter part of the 1990s. This was a time that saw unprecedented local action across the UK including protests, civil disobedience and violent attacks on suspected paedophiles. Kitzinger (2004) positions elements of society’s mindset at the time next to media reports of the impending release of infamous serial child sex murderers who had been imprisoned in the 1960s and 1970s. These were accompanied at the time by policies and procedures to deal with the releases. Kitzinger (2004) details that despite government initiatives setting the news agenda “that agenda changed through the questions that it opened up, accompanied by the uncertainty it brought and the subsequent direct action by ordinary citizens” (2004: 151). Kitzinger (ibid) associates such acts of direct action and vigilantism as being representative of community’s feeling that “experts and professionals could not provide sufficient protection on their own” (2004: 153), with protestors feeling that direct action represented the only

²² The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

way to have their voices and concerns heard. Ironically, this culminated in a situation where it is the reintroduced child abusers that are being protected by probation services and police (Adams, 1998).

Legislation to monitor sex offenders after their release was introduced in the UK in December 1996. This prompted widespread coverage by the media seeking public access to this list. Such a demand mirrored Megan's Law which was implemented in the US following the 1994 rape and murder of Megan Kanka by her neighbour Jesse Timmendequas, who had twice previously been convicted of sexual assault of young girls. However, there was governmental opposition to the public access to this register in the UK. It is notable that a 2008 report produced by the US Department of Justice concluded that "given the lack of demonstrated effect of Megan's Law on sexual offences, the growing cost may not be justifiable" (Zgoba et al., 2008: 2). In terms of a UK-based publicly accessible register, the feeling was that it would not necessarily protect children and would drive offenders underground, making it harder to monitor them.

Such acts of vigilantism do have consequences outside of the violence towards previously convicted perpetrators of CSA. Numerous instances of mistaken identity and false accusations have been reported in the media, with some leading to assaults taking place on innocent members of the public. Jewkes and Wykes (2012) write of such labelling having catastrophic consequences, as seen through a number of suicides and deaths that have been connected to accusations of paedophilia²³. An accusation of paedophilia can have irretrievable damage on an individual and often acts of violence from vigilantes have stemmed from unfounded accusations. Furedi (2013) contextualises this, citing the work of De Young (2011) claiming that what has been present since the 1970s is the construction of a master-narrative that has the power to unleash public panics that can engulf innocent people. Thus, adhering to the 'deviancy amplification' theories of Cohen (2002). This further emphasises the toxic attitude within society towards CSA and the protective nature-society feels towards children, despite the possibility of some 'collateral damage' occurring. Furedi (2013) discusses a lack of any empathy when accusations are made in relation to the consequences of these allegations upon those accused, even when they are entirely innocent; "... the necessity of defeating evil means that the

²³ 'Man accused of being paedophile and murdered for photographing garden vandals' (The Telegraph, October 28th, 2013). Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/10409326/Man-accused-of-being-paedophile-and-murdered-for-photographing-garden-vandals.html> (accessed: 10.10.18)

collateral damage caused by false allegations is an acceptable price to pay... the duty to believe trumps other considerations" (2013: 63).

These attacks on innocent members of the public following often unsubstantiated accusations gave rise to fear among members of society of being labelled as a predator. As a consequence, a climate of non-contact between an unknown adult and child has become widespread, as previously discussed. However, such a social norm can result in grave consequences, as seen with the Abigail Rae non-intervention incident which resulted in the occurrence of a potentially avoidable death. In this example the fear of accusation had an influence over the traditional tendency to help a child. Clive Peachey is reported to have noticed and driven past 2-year-old Abigail Rae wandering around alone moments before she was discovered drowned in a neighbour's pond. Reporting on the incident The Telegraph reports Peachey as saying "I kept thinking should I go back? One of the reasons I did not go back is because I thought someone would see me and think I was trying to abduct her" (Pook, 22 March 2006). Thankfully, such tragic consequences are extremely rare occurrences. However, this does not remove the fact that a concern exists within society related to the sometimes-violent consequences that follow an accusation of paedophilia. A key consideration for this study concerns the effect such attitudes are having on the everyday practice of photographing children and the sharing of their images.

4.8.2 Vigilantes, public policing and their escalation into the virtual world

From a criminology perspective Campbell (2015) engages with the use of social gathering and public policing in addressing a societal issue that may not be receiving the proportion of attention it deserves from authorities. Considering the policing of paedophiles, Campbell notes that advances in technology have seen the migration from the 'real world' not only of the perpetrators of CSA such as the previously discussed cyber-paed, but also the vigilantes who are often disgruntled with the insufficient or ineffective criminal punishment given to child sex abusers.

Campbell (2015) claims that in addition to technology being used as a platform for preventative measures, it can also be used by vigilantes; "this approach to policing paedophiles has become normalised as represented through reports within the media of various acts of entrapment has

indicated” (2015: 3). Vigilante groups like ‘Dark Justice’ and the popularity of programmes like ‘The Paedophile Hunter’ and websites like ‘Perverted-Justice.com’ are referenced as examples of how this type of policing has intensified and started to build a relationship with legitimate policing provisions. Campbell (2015) suggests that these occurrences pose questions about where the boundaries of citizen involvement in policing affairs may be drawn, while also engaging with countering opinions regarding this. One perspective is that these pluralised models of policing are a democratising force where the sharing of resources and responsibilities diffuses power. However, these same practices also ignite concerns of due process and accountability that have yet to be engaged with and considered fully. The press in the UK has engaged with both perspectives, covering organisations like ‘Online Predator Team’, ‘Letzgo Hunting’ and ‘Dark Justice’ and their alleged instrumental role in the conviction of paedophiles. They have also featured stories linking these organisations to a number of suicides and broken lives that have followed the public exposure of men with suspected paedophilic proclivities (2015: 4). Drury, when analysing the representation of vigilantes noted that they were constructed as a “reactionary crowd” and as being on a “witch-hunt” (2002: 43 and 51).

This engagement with the policing of paedophilia both from the perspective of the physical and virtual world engenders debates that fall outside of the context of this research. Yet, it is worth noting different perspectives concerning the consequences imposed on those accused of CSA, how they are implemented and by whom.

Despite these debates, consequences are not exclusively direct repercussions for the individuals. Responses can also be more sanctioned and take the form of a legislative measure.

4.8.3 Legislation: From local to international

Having engaged with legislation that resulted directly from inquiries into and media coverage of CSA previously, it is of relevance to consider legislative measures that have been introduced as a response to the wider protectionist discourse concerning children. Lumby (2010) in her research concerning the representation and framing of the child by photographers, examines the attempts of local Mayors in Sydney’s beachside suburbs to ban the photography of children in public places. She presents this as an attempt at passing legislation cognisant of a dominant attitude within society (2010: 3). Here in

Ireland, similar measures are implemented as part of a wider legislation concerning the protection of the child. Locations one would traditionally associate with the presence of children and customarily the practice of photographing children are now governed by photographic restrictions with polices now commonplace.

Swim Ireland specify in their 'Swimming Pool Safety Guidelines'(2010) that there should be signage prohibiting the use of photographic equipment unless otherwise authorised, placed "at the entrance to all pools and at other suitable locations throughout the facility" (2010: 26). Additionally, despite not advocating the banning of photography, the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) in the UK advise that spectators wishing to use photographic equipment should be asked to register their details at the event they are attending. Amateur or student photographers are also advised to seek accreditation with the event organiser, outlining their motive for attending the event. The CPSU provides more detailed advice regarding the framing, or composition of photographs permitted to be taken when in attendance at their events. Acknowledging that the activities of some sports will dictate that there is a greater risk of misuse of photographs than for other sports, they advise that the focus of the images should be upon the activity rather than any particular child. They further elaborate on their website (<https://thecpsu.org.uk/>) that photographs of these particular, potentially sensitive sport activities should avoid full face and body shots, giving the example of swimming where "shots of children in a pool would be appropriate or if poolside, waist or shoulder up". Similar policies can be seen in schools across the country with the circulation of photography consent forms to parents attending end of year performances becoming an all too familiar practice. Such documentation is often as specific and detailed as the CPSU requests mentioned previously, and the practice can also be witnessed within environments caring for preschool children, such as crèches and Montessori classes.

This presence of such policies within environments occupied predominantly by children can be justified, and schools will often refer back to their pastoral responsibility for their students and their privacy. With the protection of each of their students being of utmost importance, the example of children who may be wards of the court or involved in parental custody battles would expect their privacy not to be compromised through an innocently taken photograph publicly disclosing their whereabouts or other sensitive information. Such examples can be a justification for the monitoring of any photography taking place in similar spaces. However, when signage is displayed within much more public spaces, a 'play section' in the IKEA store in Dublin for example, one must question the

extent to which public attitudes concerning the protection of the child are affecting practices of quotidian photography.

4.9 Conclusion

“In times like these, which are marked by high anxiety about the need to protect children from predatory adults, it is all too easy to inscribe images with the worst of all possible readings”

Lumby (2010: 8)

Considering the theoretical perspective of the moral panic aligned with the protective discourses concerning children this chapter details the cultural construction of the ‘palatable’ folk devil. Mapping the reporting of CSA from its initial documentation in medical journals through to its newsworthy representation in various guises across the media presents an appropriate context to the contemporary threats towards children. Acknowledging Cohen’s (2002) reassertion of the validity of moral panic analysis the chapter presents the role the media plays in the fuelling of moral panics and their exaggerated and distorted focus on particular folk devils over other potential candidates. This raises questions concerning the media’s perceived hegemonic, heteronormative positioning of the deviant in society. Such a position adheres to the traditional characteristics of moral panics, as discussed, with the focus continually deflected away from those that bear the most threat to children; known individuals.

The calls for the criminalisation of the act of photographing children reveals a culture that regards virtually every childhood experience from the standpoint of a paedophile (Furedi, 2013) and evidences the homogenised attitude that results from the effects of the “perfect moral panic” (Jewkes and Wykes, 2012). This attitude impacts on society at a scale that goes beyond the limited scope of this research. The normalisation of a disproportionate fear for the wellbeing of children, compared to the dangers that they may actually encounter in everyday life has materialised in a variety of situations that have had consequences that are also disproportionate, the woman convicted of ‘contributing to the delinquency of a minor’ as a result of leaving her 4-year-old son in a car alone for a few minutes (Brooks, 2014) is a noteworthy example. Furedi (2013), citing a term first adopted by Becker (1963) explores the actions of ‘moral crusaders’ whom he distinguishes as having difficulty accepting that the issue at hand can be solved; “The frequent discovery of new crimes against children, shows how sightings of new evils are an integral feature of a moral crusade” (Furedi, 2013; 8). One such ‘new evil’

is the photographer, specifically the photographer of children in public or the sharer of these images across the virtual world.

The suspicion that accompanies the everyday practice of photographing children has previously encountered debate and concern among society. During the mid-1990s numerous cases were reported in the press concerning the taking of 'inappropriate' photographs by members of the public, with consequences that have been discussed in previous sections. Such debates generally centred on the 'inappropriate' nature, or not, of these photographs and engaged with theoretical frameworks concerning nudity and the sexualisation of children. Yet, contemporary attitudes within society have escalated with a presumption of perversion becoming ever more normalised when photographs of children are taken. This attitude has been documented previously through examples of confrontation and policies discouraging the taking of photographs that in previous generations most certainly would have been taken without the level of concern apparent today. Similar attitudes have also extended to the sharing of images, activating debates across academic and media spheres related to privacy, agency and meaning within the virtual world of social media sharing of images of children, as presented in section 2.5.2's discussion on 'sharenting'.

Reviewing associated literature across this and the previous two chapters appropriately frames the overarching research questions as the study progresses through its empirical findings. Discussions in chapter 2 of the democratisation of photography accommodates the study's concern with children as the subject of photographs taken and images shared online. Exploring the transition of photography from its origins as a hobby of the affluent classes through to its pervasive presence as a result of advancing mobile phone technology and social media accessibility the research unpacked the domestication of the practice. The continued juxtaposition of women with children was presented as the visual documentation of family life was predominantly a role fulfilled by women (Smith, 1998; Holland, 2008; Kamal, 2012). Cognisant of these discussions the research is poised to consider how advances in technology and the Internet have affected the technical and socio-cultural landscape of photographing children in Ireland.

Chapter 3 further supports this enquiry, providing a comprehensive discussion on the changing conceptualisations of childhood as presented through the practice of photography. The discussed changing visual representation of children historically provides an appropriate reference as the empirical findings present practices of visually documenting children by those participating in the research, both as adults and from their recollection as photographed children. This engagement facilitates a comparative study of real world practices across generations, exploring participants visual

representation of children and childhood through their practices of photographing and sharing images.

As advances in photographic technology and the increased mobility of social media accommodated an increased accessibility, attitudes towards the photographing of children aligned with the normalised protective discourses concerning them. Unpacking these discourses this chapter deconstructs the cultural construction of those presented as the biggest threat to children and their migration from physical to virtual spaces. The noted reoccurring proportional misrepresentation of certain threats over others is a key characteristic of a traditional moral panic (Cohen, 1972; Goode and Beh-Yahunda, 1995) as is the discussed reaction of moral crusaders towards the perceived perpetrators of these threats. The cumulative analysis of these more palatable folk devils across this chapter reiterates the protective discourses concerning children and platforms the researches aim to consider if we are witnessing the emergence of a new moral panic concerning the photographing and online sharing of images of children.

Concluding this review of associated literature the research is well positioned to explore not only related attitudes among participants but also potential implications for the everyday practice of photographing children and the online sharing of their images in the future from a social, cultural and practical perspective.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes among participants towards quotidian practices of photographing children and the sharing of those photographs and images. This chapter considers the chosen methodology, namely a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach used for analysis and discussion of the data across the three phases of collection.

A survey developed through a combination of open-ended and closed questions was generated and hosted online using Google Forms (see Appendix A). Facebook, Twitter, and specifically targeted online groups were used to generate awareness of the survey with responses accepted within a two-week period between 3 July and 17 July 2017. A total of 331 responses were received during this timeframe. The survey was also duplicated and circulated in printed form among two social clubs on 4 and 5 July 2017 with 29 further responses returned by 18 July. Combined, these methods of distribution yielded 360 survey responses, a number that exceeded the expected participation.

After collating the online and printed survey responses into a Microsoft Excel document the results were manually coded and analysed between August 2017 and March 2018. Based initially on the respondent's willingness to participate further in the study and then beneath the generated themes from the analysed survey responses, 15 potential interview candidates were contacted. A total of 12, eight women and four men of those contacted agreed to be interviewed. The remaining three candidates did not respond to the request, with no reason provided. The interviews were conducted between 20 June and 17 August 2018. Ten of the interviews were conducted in the participant's homes, with the remaining two specifically requesting to be interviewed in alternative locations.

Cognisance was given to the overarching themes generated from the analysis of the survey responses in the recruitment of interviewees, the initial structuring of the interviews and the analysis of the

interview feedback that followed the transcription process between September 2018 and January 2019. In February 2019, a follow-up email was distributed to all interviewees. It was felt that the time since participation (a minimum of approximately 4 months) provided those interviewed with an opportunity to reflect and consider if their participation in the research had affected their attitude or practices related to the quotidian photographing and sharing of images of children.

5.2 An ethnographical influence

The use of a mixed methods research design facilitates the triangulation of the data gathered across the three phases of collection. The richness of the data provided by participants responses is complemented further by the observational field notes gathered in interviewees homes. Considered as “an essential component of rigorous qualitative research (Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018: pp. 381) this method gathers data related to the relevant real-world practices of participants, as evidenced in their homes. Acknowledging similar methods of data collection from the homes of participants by Musello (1980), Chalfen (1987) and Rose (2003) in previous related studies this research considered Creswell’s “General Template for conducting an Ethnography” (2012: pp. 477-480). Creswell states that the researcher should identify intent and the type of design and relate this intent to the research problem. Cognisant of the research aims to explore participants attitudes towards and practices of photographing and sharing images of children elements of Creswell’s three approaches to ethnography were considered. From the ‘realist ethnographic’ perspective the ‘culture-sharing group’ was broad and encompassing yet remained engaged beneath an overarching cultural theme of photographing and sharing images of children. The practices related to this were categorised as the ‘activities’, which Creswell specifies should be studied in-depth when employing a ‘case study ethnography’. Finally, Creswell suggests that the intent of a ‘critical ethnography’ is “to use the research to advocate and call for changes...” (ibid, p.477). In this study the research acknowledges the calls for changes in policy and attitudes indicated in both the empirical findings and the associated literature reviewed. These changes were echoed in the recommendations going forward for future research in the area.

Creswell continues on to state that in the following stage the research should discuss approval and access considerations. This study applied traditional ethical principles throughout its completion. In accordance with the DCU Research Ethics Committee, I successfully applied for ethical approval for a project involving human participation. Furthermore, the principle of informed consent was adopted

for all the interviews conducted with candidates being informed of the nature of the research and those individuals who would have access to the recordings. Such information was provided through a 'Plain Language Statement' that was signed by the interviewee prior to any interviews being initiated (see Appendix B).

Creswell specifies that the next stage of the process involves the researcher using appropriate data collection procedures. This study used surveys distributed both online and offline. Follow-up semi-structured interviews with screened participants in their homes were used to provide sufficient depth to the themes developed from this initial data-gathering phase. Conducting interviews in the field site of interviewees' homes facilitated the use of field notes to observe and document participants' object and material culture related to their practices and habits of photographing, storing, and sharing images of children. The use of follow-up emails concluded the data-gathering phase of the research. This correspondence consisted of a solitary open-ended question asking recipients if their attitudes, opinion, or practices had changed after being interviewed. All interviewees were informed that this concluding email would be forwarded to them after concluding their interview.

Creswell advises that once gathered the data should be analysed and interpreted within the adopted design. In this study the data was thematically analysed with overarching themes developed beneath the three central organising concepts of attitudes towards the quotidian photographing of children, attitudes towards the sharing of those images, and the impact of these attitudes towards the associated practices of the participants. The themes developed from the first phase of data-gathering, the survey responses, were used to guide the semi-structured interviews beyond the central organising concepts that had shaped the interview's core set of questions. Interviewees' survey responses supplemented the individualised elements of each interview. This second phase of data-gathering, accompanied by the gathered field notes and concluding email responses enhanced the depth of information that would allow for a sufficient level of analysis.

Creswell concluded that the report on the study should be written consistent within the design. The write up phase of this study objectively reports and discusses findings related to the stated overarching themes. The study specifically acknowledges Lipu and Siibaks' (2019) observation that the majority of related research has been conducted in the US (Moser et al., 2017). This research further contributes to the knowledge of the limited studies conducted from other cultural contexts (Blum-Ross and Livingstone, 2017; Wagner and Gausche, 2018; Brosch, 2018). Furthermore, considering if

interviewees' attitudes or practices had altered post-participation, and reflecting and reporting on policy changes suggested among the data sets, the research adopts a novel approach.

It is important here to emphasize that notwithstanding this discussion of Creswell's template for conducting an ethnographic study this research is not itself being presented as an ethnographic study. The research recognises that traditionally an ethnographic study involves the prolonged engagement and/or observation of individuals to gain an emic perspective of a specific culture (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), and that conventionally, interviewing participants after their completion of a survey may lack the required depth to record first-hand experience appropriate to an orthodox ethnographic approach (Erikson and Kovalainen, 2008). However, further considering that "verbal description alone does not necessarily present a true picture of something" (Maggs-Rapport, 2000: p.220) it should be emphasised that the focus of this research extends beyond the responses provided by participants. Through the use of observational field notes gathered during and immediately after conducting interviews in participants homes, in addition to the use of post-participation correspondence the research sought a deeper level of understanding of interviewees experiences and practices around the capture, storage, display and sharing of images of children.

Adopting a mixed-methods research design that was conscious of the principles of traditional ethnographic studies positioned the research to analyse the "shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs and language" (ibid: p.462) among the participants, or "sharing group" (ibid). The research recognised these 'shared patterns' as "common social interactions that stabilized as tacit rules and exceptions of the group" (Spindler and Spindler, 1992). Furthermore, a specific emphasis was placed on the study of 'actual patterns' of behaviour, as opposed to 'ideal' or 'projective' patterns (Creswell, 2012: p.469).

Cognisant of previous studies in related areas (Musello, 1980; Chalfen, 1987; Rose, 2003) the research established a 'closeness' to those interviewed adopting a method of 'in-situ' semi-structured interviews, conducted in their homes. Reeves et al. (2013) emphasise the benefits of such 'in-situ' observations in allowing researchers to "immerse themselves" and "gather empirical insights into social practices which are normally hidden from public gaze" (ibid: p.1365). The establishment of such a 'closeness' is encouraged if an appropriate understanding of the context surrounding the cultural group being studied is to be successful (Creswell, 2012: p.473). This approach was considered appropriate for the research to successfully fulfil its aim of examining the attitudes and practices among participants towards the 'everyday' photographing and sharing images of children.

5.3 Investigative and analytical methods

O'Reilly (2012) acknowledges that ethnographic research can "...be carried out in everyday settings, using several methods... focus(ing) upon the meaning of an individual's actions and explanations rather than their quantification" (p.3). Thus, a mixed-methods approach was adopted in the gathering, investigation, and analysis of the data. Such an approach also took cognisance of the fact that given the uniqueness of each qualitative study, the analytical approaches will also be unique (Patton, 2002: p.433). These methods are detailed and discussed across the following sections.

5.3.1 Online and offline surveys

Following the successful application of approval for a research project involving human participants to the ethics committee of Dublin City University, a link to the approved survey was circulated on Facebook and Twitter, and offline in hard copy. The survey was produced and circulated online using Google Forms software. A lack of restriction and ease of access were the key considerations when constructing the survey.

The use of both online and offline formats simultaneously considered that the "use of virtual networks in non-probabilistic samples can increase the sample size and its representativeness" (Baltar, F. and Brunet, I., 2012: p.57), while also countering the potential drawback of participation within the research being restricted to those with 'digital social capital' (Murthy, 2008). It was considered that a lack of a social media presence or engagement should not preclude individuals willing to contribute to the research. Moreover, it was felt that their opinions were of equal importance to the research as those participants active on social media. Furthermore, Murthy (2008) emphasises the benefits of adopting a combination of both physical and digital data gathering as giving researchers a "...exciting array of methods... (that) enables them to de-marginalize the voice of respondents" (2008: p.837) with the two methods "in tandem providing a more powerful approach... broadening a cohort of respondents" (ibid: p.842). Collectively, there were a total of 360 responses to the survey.

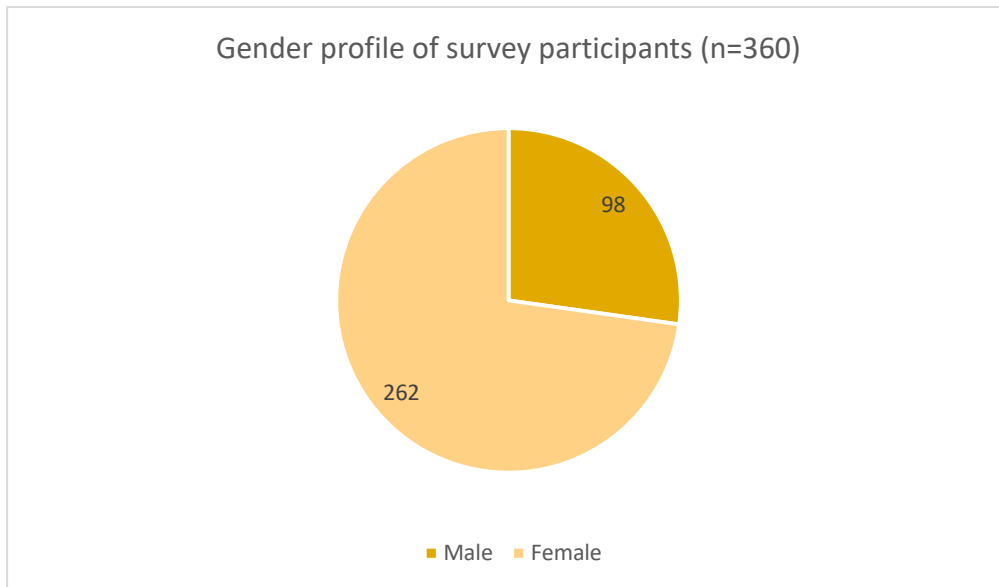


Figure 14: Gender profile of survey participants

The 360 responses to the survey represented a gender ratio of approximately 73% (n=262) women and approximately 27% (n=98) men.

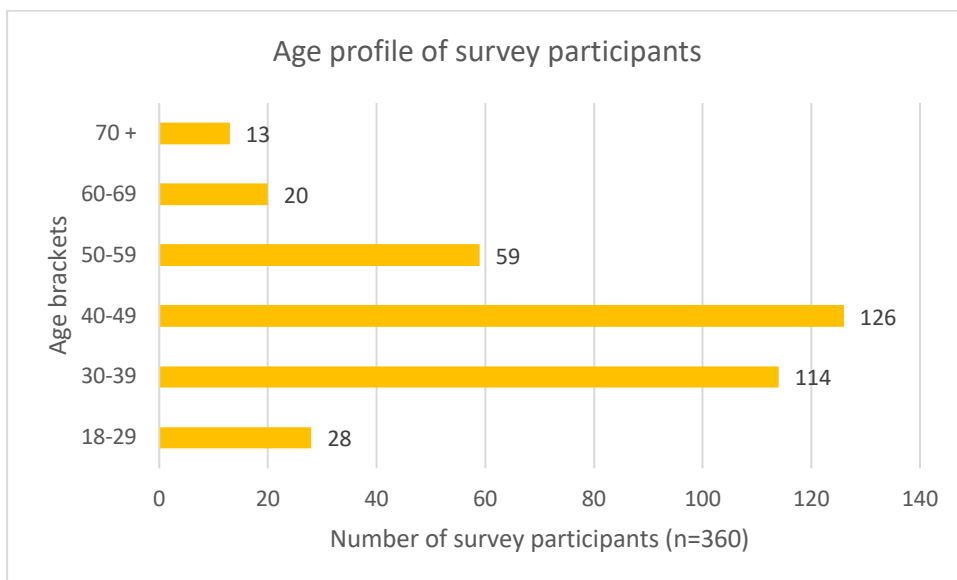


Figure 15: Age profile of survey participants

Each of the pre-determined age brackets were captured among the survey responses. Figure 15 shows that the largest number of participants were aged between 30 and 49 years (66.6%/n=240).

Furthermore, there was approximately the same distribution of age brackets among the interview participants, with 66% (n=8) of those interviewed aged between 30 and 49 years.

The survey consisted of a total of 41 questions circulated with the intention of providing an overview of the three key areas of the research while simultaneously providing a platform for participants to indicate a willingness to further contribute to the research through the more flexible research method of a semi-structured interview. Participation in the study was entirely on a voluntary basis.

Initially requiring survey participants to indicate their age and gender profiles, the survey then sought to establish an overview of the photographic practices of shooting, storing, and sharing within the childhood households of those completing the surveys. This was followed by a set of questions to generate an impression of their own contemporary practices. A comparative study of these findings provided an indication of any changes in the relevant practices across generations. Furthermore, these findings were mapped against industry findings related to purchasing trends and pertinent technological changes in photographing and sharing images.

In keeping with the context of the study, the survey narrowed its focus by seeking to establish participant's relationships or lack thereof with children. This initiated an engagement with participants to disclose information related to their personal practices and attitudes towards the photographing and sharing of images of children, in both the traditional physical form and online.

The survey concluded with a set of questions to garner participants attitudes towards both practices. These questions also provided a space for participants to recount any experiences they had of questioning the photographic and sharing practices of others, or of having their own practices questioned. This data was unpacked and explored as real-world expressions of attitudes towards the relevant practices.

The survey closed with a final question that presented a hypothetical situation in which an unknown individual was witnessed photographing children known to participants. Reflecting on the societal anxiety relating children and (male) 'strangers', as explored in chapter 4 'A cultural construction of a

palatable folk devil', and the social positioning of women as the traditional record keepers of family life (Smith, 1998; Kamal, 2012) this question sought to clarify if the presence of such a concern, when aligned with the specific practice of photography was maintained and gender-skewed.

The online survey was open to responses from 4 July to 17 July 2017. Applying the non-probability sampling technique of 'snowball sampling' (Goodman, 1961) encouraged recipients of the link to circulate it among their own personal contacts as a means of generating an appropriately representative response rate beyond the immediate receivers of the survey link. Murthy (2008) acknowledges the benefits of such a practice when commenting on the use of e-questionnaires asking participants to "...email friends, workers, and relatives asking them to also participate in the research" (2008: p.842). An additional three specific online boards/groups were targeted for the circulation of the survey. Personal contact was made with the moderators of Rollercoaster.ie, The Montessori Alliance Facebook Group and Boards.ie. Each of these platforms requires pre-registration before access is permitted. Once registered, I detailed the purpose of the research and successfully sought permission to re-post a link to the online survey.

Offline printed copies of the survey were circulated among the members of two social clubs on 4 and 5 July 2017. It was requested that participants completed and returned the survey after a two-week period. Participation was on a voluntary basis with no obligation for members to complete the survey. Both social clubs meet on a weekly basis in a large residential suburb in West Dublin, catering for a clientele of people over the age of 60. This demographic was purposively sampled to include participants who may not be active online. It was felt that an online presence should not be a prerequisite for participation in the research and that the opinions of individuals who are not active on social media were as appropriate as those who were. A representation of these groups allowed for a more diverse and representative sample of wider society in terms of age and social class. A total of 29 completed surveys were returned with the responses duplicated manually as additional responses to the online survey. The complete data set of 360 survey responses were exported from the Google form into an Excel document for the coding and analysis phase of the research.

On completion of the survey responses, numerous coding methods were applied manually across the data sets. A method of 'provisional' or 'lean' coding (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Creswell, 2012) was employed as a first cycle coding method (Clarke, 2005). This was then revisited after a short period of

time. This process of separation allowed for a deeper level of “digesting and reflecting” (Clarke, 2005: p.84) on the data before fully engaging with the coding process.

Applying a method of ‘sub-coding’ (Gibbs, 2007) to the open-ended, qualitative survey questions allowed for the further development and enrichment of the primary codes originally extracted. The coding process continued through employing the more effective methods of ‘emotive’ and ‘value’ coding (Goleman, 1995). These methods are most suitable to “studies exploring cultural values and interpersonal and intrapersonal participant experiences and actions” (Saldaña 2013: p.110). This allowed the research to provide a “deep insight into participants’ perspectives” (ibid: p.106). This approach was appropriate considering that the context of the research often elicited emotive responses from the participants when exploring their attitudes towards photographing children and the sharing of these images.

The procedural method that followed considered the occasionally emoted “folk terms” (McCurdy et al, 2005) and developed “analytical terms” (Saldaña, 2013: p.162) when establishing an appropriate taxonomy. The development of this taxonomy took cognisance of the nine possible semantic relationships (Spradley, 1980) that traditionally exist within taxonomies and adapted the following five:

Semantic relationship	Example from research
Cause-Effect	Participants not sharing images of children being an effect of concerns related to social media.
Rationale	Potential/perceived dangers associated with the Internet is a reason for masking the identity of a child. Being labelled inappropriately is the rationale for no longer photographing children.
Location for action	Social media is the location within which the perceived dangers exist. Comments related to attitudes towards the photographing and sharing of images of children are passed online and in real-world physical environments.
Means to an end	Use of terms/labels as a means of describing a negative association with photographing children.

Attribution	Attitudes among participants are an attribute of associated concerns or anxieties.
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Table 1: Adopted list of Semantic Codes (From Spradley, 1980)

Through this development of a taxonomy, the research was positioned to see the relationships between the elicited folk terms and developed analytical terms. From this point, a thematic analysis was developed.

5.3.2 Thematic analysis

Adopting a mixed-method approach considered the fixed research design of the surveys and targeted follow-up correspondence with the more flexible methods (Robson and McCartan, 2016) of in-situ semi-structured interviews. Accompanied by the observational field notes gathered through during and directly after the interviews accommodated the triangulation of the data. This allowed for a more ‘in-depth’ and holistic understanding of the data gathered, permitting the establishment of “a rich and representative articulation of what’s being studied” (Reeves et al. 2013).

On analysis of each of the survey responses a coding framework was devised. Microsoft Excel and Word software were used during this process. This allowed for the adapted coding methods to be used in a productive yet ‘non-procedural’ manner (Braun and Clarke, 2017), allowing for flexibility that is beneficial when thematically analysing data sets. Such an approach proved time-consuming, but it was felt that the method allowed for a closer relationship to be established with the data sets. The manual coding of the data also considered the fluid and active nature of the codes. Specifically, the research adopted a ‘reflexive’ or ‘organic’ approach to the thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This appropriately considers the depth of engagement and immersion conducted by the researcher in the role of knowledge production. Consequently, the research adheres to Braun and Clarke’s position that themes do not simply emerge, rather they are a result of methods applied by the researcher acting as a tool or instrument that is at centre stage in the process of gathering themes.²⁴

²⁴ Clarke, V., *Thematic Analysis: What is thematic analysis?* Lecture at University of the West of England, Bristol, U.K. 9 December 2017. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=18&v=4voVhTiVYdc (accessed: 02.10.18).

The research further acknowledged Clarke (2017) when considering themes that extend beyond reporting what participants had said, or ‘Storybook Themes’. These are more interpretative and take cognisance of underlying consensus, essentially being ‘fully realised themes’ (ibid) conceptualised as ‘outputs’, given that they evolve after the initial coding of the data sets. Adopting this approach acknowledged that thematic analysis is recognised as a ‘method in its own right’ (Joffe, 2012: p210).

Adapting the six phases of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013) provided an appropriate engagement with the data throughout the process.

1. Familiarising yourself with the data	<p>Conducted through the re-examination of the survey responses, gathered field notes, and the repeated listening and transcription of the interviews.</p> <p>This allowed for the second layer of immersion, specifically with regard to the semi-structured interviews.</p> <p>In addition to this a continuous ‘active reading’ of the data sets was applied through the process of notetaking.</p>
2. Generating of codes	<p>For this research, the practice of manually coding the data sets activated both semantic and latent codes, often in a continuum. Details of the adapted coding practice were presented in Table 1.</p>
3. Generating Themes	<p>The presentation of each of these labelled types of code was consistently related back to a ‘central organising concept’ through appropriate themes that were generated from the relevant data sets (Braun and Clarke, 2018).</p> <p>This practice ‘generates themes’ from the ‘active codes’ that are then linked back consistently to a central organising concept. This being an ‘idea or concept that captures and summarises the core point of a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data’ (Braun and Clarke, 2018).</p>

4. Reviewing Potential Themes	<p>Considering that one of the characteristics of thematic analysis is the flexibility of the codes and themes, phase four of the process: 'Reviewing Potential Themes' involved the studying of the possible themes that had been identified.</p> <p>It is at this stage that it is suggested that the researcher should consider the 'boundaries of themes' or the 'appropriate grouping' of themes together to form new themes. Braun and Clarke emphasise that it is at this stage that researchers should be prepared to let some of the themes they may be 'closer to' go if it benefits the overall analysis (ibid).</p>
5. Define and Label or name the themes	<p>This process identifies the essence of the theme and produces a concise and informative name/label for each one. Again, Braun and Clarke (ibid) suggest conducting a detailed analysis of each of the themes considering what story the theme tells and where the theme may fit within the overall story being told about the data. Cognisance here is consistently paid to the central organising concepts.</p>
6. Writing Up	<p>This process involves the telling of a coherent and persuasive story concerning the data, while contextualising it in relation to existing literature. Constraining the data appropriately to the relevant research area is the aim of this phase, as it is not necessarily of benefit to the research to construct a complete or total picture of everything about the data set gathered.</p>

Table 2: The six phases of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013)

Table 3 and Table 4 below catalogue the results of this thematic analysis of the data. Each table clarifies the overarching themes and sub-themes elicited beneath the two central organising concepts, the attitudes of participants towards the photographing of children and the sharing of images of children online.

Central organising concept	Participants' attitudes towards the photographing of children		
Overarching themes	Permission and consent	Those photographing the children	Content/subject of the photograph
Sub-themes	Misunderstanding of legislation	Relationships to the photographer	The photographed child
	Agency and rights of the photographed child	Gender of the photographer	The location of the practice

Table 3: Taxonomy of thematic analysis underpinning the central organising concept of participants' attitudes towards the photographing of children.

Central organising concept	Attitudes towards the sharing of images of children across social media		
Overarching themes	Access to images	Sharers of the images	The image being shared
Sub-themes	Friend and family vs stranger	Sharer's relationship to the child in the photograph	Content of the shared image
	Security and privacy affordances of social media	Permission and consent	Age of the photographed child
	Perceived dangers of the Internet	The practice of 'sharenting'	
		Intention of sharing	

Table 4: Taxonomy of thematic analysis underpinning the central organising concept of participants' attitudes towards the sharing of images of children on social media.

5.3.2 In-situ semi-structured interviews

Potential interview candidates were screened from the survey responses through a method of self-selection sampling (Lavrakas, 2008) with each participant asked to provide contact details if they were willing to participate further in the research through an interview. This sample frame was further screened and reduced to a preliminary list of 15 potential interview candidates based on the alignment of the previously developed dominant themes with elements of their survey responses. The contents of these responses initiated intrigue given that they often testified to personal, real-world experiences that it was felt required further exploration. These responses, comments and perspectives were deemed important to the research topic overall. It was felt that further engagement with these participants on a one-to-one basis could provide a deeper level of engagement and be of

benefit to the overall research. An example of this method of ‘purposive sampling’ (Sarantakos, 1998) was when participant R325 in her survey response stated that it was because of ‘personal experiences’ that she would be more suspicious of an unknown male photographer taking a photograph of her daughter. Having provided contact details, the participant could elaborate on these experiences further when interviewed, if comfortable doing so.

In addition to the suggestions of Kvale to “establish good rapport through attentive listening and respect to what the respondent may have been saying” (1996: p.128) the interviews often adopted a “conversational approach” (Hitchcock, 1989: p.79). This allowed each respondent to feel at ease and comfortable when interviewed. Candidates were shown the key questions that would constitute the core structure of the interview prior to the interviews being recorded. Each of these questions was then explained to the interviewee, further enhancing the comprehensibility. This approach proved successful and there remained the possibility of ‘funnelling’ (Cohen and Manion, 1994) down from a broad to a narrow context during the interviews. This ‘probing and follow-up’ questioning approach (Patton, 1987: pp.125-126) provided fruitful, comprehensive data that was underrepresented within the initial survey responses.

Code	Gender	Age at time of Interview	Interview	Notes
R002	Female	38	20 th June	
R235	Female	52	22 nd June	
R325	Female	30	26 th June	
R004	Male	42	6 th August	
R048	Female	44	4 th July	
R015	Female	43	28 th June	
R307	Female	59	2 nd July	
R194	Female	39	25 th June	
R348	Male			No Response
R319	Male	26	6 th August	

R355	Male	44	15 th August	
R080	Female			No Response
R045	Male			No Response
R096	Male	38	4 th July	
R324	Female	72	17 th August	

Table 5: Profile of survey participants contacted for interview

Table 5 details the survey participants contacted with the intention of being interviewed. From the initial list of 15 potential interview candidates, 12 were interviewed. These interviewees consisted of eight females and four males. This gender profile of interviewees approximately reflected the gender balance of the total survey responses: 72.8% female and 27.2% male. This further reduction of participants, from 15 to 12 came from three screened participants providing no response, despite being contacted many times. The remaining interview candidates were interviewed over a period of June – August 2018.

Further considering the previous methods of Chalfen (1987) and Rose (2003), , it was the intention of the research to conduct all interviews in the homes of the participants. This provided spaces where the field site and the questions being posed were relevant to each other (Erikson and Kovalainen, 2008). This also facilitated an observation of the interviewees' practices of storage and display of photographs of children in their homes. Interviewees were also questioned about their storage and display of photographs outside of what was visible at the time of interview. An invitation to view these referenced photographs was only extended by participant R235 during the interviews. However, this participant's photographs were already visible from a second room adjoined to where the interview was conducted. At no time did any participant grant an invitation to view photographs exhibited or stored in more private locations of their homes.

Interviews were conducted 'respectfully' (Ryen, 2009) while 'preserving dignity' (Madison, 2005) with a specific consciousness paid to the privacy of the location being visited. It should be noted that two interviewees preferred not to be interviewed within their homes. One of these interviewees was

residing in an Air B&B location at the time of being interviewed and the second preferred to meet in a public space.

The combination of three methods of data collection when conducting the interviews; audio recording, transcription and field notes proved beneficial to the research, with each method complementing the other (Tessier, 2012). Adhering to Bertrand et al. (1992) this combined approach provided completeness through the transcriptions, kept data fresh for analysis via the audio recordings and provided context through the accompanying field notes recorded both during and after the interviews.

Each interview was audio-recorded using an Olympus DS-40 voice recorder and an iPhone SE as a secondary recording device. The use of two audio recorders was to ensure that any technical errors would not cause the interviews to be stopped or rescheduled. On completion of the interviews, the relevant audio files were transferred to an encrypted hard drive before being deleted from the recording devices.

The transcription of each interview was followed by a process of data familiarisation. This involved listening back to each of the interviews and ensuring the data was accurately presented within the transcriptions. This process adheres to the position of transcription being analytical (Lapadat, 2000), presenting an opportunity to notice, reflect and understand the detail of the data. Additionally, it is an interpretative process (Mishler, 1991) that produces an artefact that can be analysed further.

5.3.3 In-situ observational fieldnotes

This audio recording of interviews was supported by the manual recording of field notes, a method considered a key way to “enhance data and provide a rich context for analysis” (Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018: pp.381). The use of field notes not only documented non-textual or auditory information about the interviews but additionally the object and material culture of participants’ homes, thus increasing the richness of the data gathered.

Documented within the context of the research’s theoretical framework the field notes were recorded during and then immediately after the interview to negate any potential memory discrepancies likely

with the passing of time (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2011). This combination of both a chronological and historical recording of events (White, 1980) allowed for the addition of critical reflection (Elo and Kynegäs, 2008). Such a practice also served to refine the interview technique proceeding through each of the candidates' interviews.

The structure of these field notes considered Roulston's (2017) adapted 'observation summary guide' from Miles, Huberman and Saldaña's (2014) 'contact summary form'. While also accepting that each social situation involves a place, actors, and activities (Spradley, 1980: pp.39-41). Table 6. below is an example of the guidelines used during each of the interviews conducted:

Observer:	The name of the principal investigator was noted
Date of observation:	The date the interview took place was noted
Time:	The time the interview took place was noted
Date of field notes taken:	Date of any post-interview field notes taken or added was referenced
Actor:	Interview candidate and survey participant reference number
Place/location: (Observable notes)	Observable notes regarding the location within the context of the research and the material culture of the interviewee were noted here. Additional notes regarding the location that were not presented within the audio-recorded interview were also documented
Activities/behaviour (notes)	Behaviour and nature of interviewee was noted Any physical/visual mannerisms or impressions 'given off' during the interview were also noted

Table 6: Observation and field note guideline for interviews

The inclusion of observable notes related to both the location of the interview and the behaviour of the interviewee provided data that extended beyond that of what could be audibly recorded. The intention of this observational method of data gathering reflects the influence of the previously

discussed more ethnographical studies by Musello (1980) and Rose (2003). Documenting the practices of participants from the field sites provided real world evidence of their habits of displaying photographs around their home, while verifying children as the dominant subject of photographs in their homes²⁵.

5.3.4 Post-interview email

In February 2019, a follow-up email was sent to each of the participants interviewed. A period of approximately five months since the completion of the second phase of data-gathering provided sufficient time for participant reflection. The emails provided a platform to disclose any post-interview thoughts that may have arisen. Each interviewee was asked if they had noticed any changes in their attitude or practices concerning the photographing or sharing of images of children since their participation. With no obligation to participate, eight of the 12 contacted interviewees provided feedback and the remaining four did not respond to the requests. This stage of the data-gathering process provided extremely rich data. Corresponding emails displayed shifts in attitude and practice among the respondents that would not have been disclosed otherwise. These are appropriately discussed across the next three findings and discussion chapters.

5.4 Challenges and limitations

The response rate to the survey surpassed initial expectations. This presented a logistical challenge when manually coding. Nonetheless, with the potential for software to be more 'procedural' when conducting a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2017) the manual process provided a closeness to the data that benefited the research greatly. There were a number of duplicate responses submitted among the survey responses. A thorough cross-check of all survey responses for repetition was conducted prior to the commencement of the coding process. This process was time-consuming, yet the benefits of the survey response rate outweighed the challenges of scanning for duplicate responses. On occasion survey participants did not answer the open-ended, elaborative sections of

²⁵ A sample of these observational field notes is included in Appendix E

the survey. This compromised the coding to some extent, but it is to be expected with a large survey response rate.

Occasionally during the process of conducting interviews candidates had the tendency to go off-topic. Such a tendency made it challenging to keep or return the interviewees to the research topic and often involved the process of allowing them to finish the point they were making. Reflecting on this, in these situations, interviewees may have used the interview as a platform to voice opinions they had inhibited up to this point.

From the interviews that were conducted in the homes of the interviewees, occasionally, there was unavoidable interruption from the children of the participants. These interruptions were transcribed as they occurred during the interview yet were excluded from any of the coding or analysis processes. Such interruptions were rare occurrences but are unavoidable when conducting interviews in a familial space.

Finally, given the subject matter and context of the research, interviewees occasionally elaborated on very personal experiences. The divulging of such personal information within these interviews was at times challenging to hear and listen back to. Notwithstanding this, the disclosure of such experiences was representative of the comfort the interviewees felt within the home environment in which the interviews were conducted, and was evidence of the benefits of often adopting a conversational approach (Hitchcock, 1989) and attentively listening and respecting what the interviewee was saying (Kvale, 1996).

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how the adopted mixed-method design was used across the three phases of data gathering. Considering the previous research of Musello (1980) and Rose (2003) observational field notes were also used. This method intended to engage with participants beyond their survey and interview responses and into first-hand observations of their practices of the photographing, storage and sharing of images of children.

Given the scope of methods employed the analysis process was at times arduous, yet also gratified the research aims providing a comprehensive overview of the attitudes and practices presented by participants. Additionally, the final phase of data collection provided the participants with the novel opportunity to reflect on their involvement in the research and allowed them to disclose any changes in their attitude or practices that had occurred. Conscious of this process, the next three chapters will present and discuss my findings.

6 THE DOMESTICATION OF PHOTOGRAPHY: HOW MOBILE PHONE TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA HAS AFFECTED THE PHOTOGRAPHING AND SHARING OF IMAGES OF CHILDREN

6.1 Introduction

The cultural shift of photography from a practice of technical professionals and affluent hobbyists to a customary practice across all socio-cultural backgrounds was facilitated through rapidly advancing technology and plummeting economic cost. This journey has been detailed previously in the review of appropriate associated literature. Cognisant of the statistical data related to purchasing trends and additional information drawn from the survey participants' responses and semi-structured interviews, this chapter explores how mobile phone technology and social media has changed the landscape of domestic photography.

From a practical perspective, this chapter unpacks and explores the survey participants' contemporary practices of capturing, storing, exhibiting and sharing everyday images and photographs of children. Considering the recalled practices from previous generations, when participants themselves were the child subjects of photographs, the chapter discusses the unparalleled increase in the photographing of children today.

Authenticating the influence that digital technology and social media have had on personal photography (Goh et al., 2009; Litt and Hargittai, 2014) and the traditions of visually documenting the family, the research presents the changing platforms and formats used by participants. The research

challenges the validity of the 90-9-1 participation ratio for social media (Nielsen, 2006). Additionally, the research shows that social media and mobile technology have accommodated a cultural shift from the heteronormative positioning of women as those most likely to be the creators and keepers of a family's visual history (Smith, 1998; Holland, 2008; Kamal, 2012).

The chapter concludes by exploring the emergent dichotomy that those sharing images of children on social media must consider. The research acknowledges the balance between the benefits and risks that results from the migration of image sharing practices to social media (Minkus et al., 2015; Blum-Ross and Livingston, 2017; Choi and Lewallen, 2018; Lipu and Siibak, 2019). Furthermore, the research complements the existing knowledge in the field by discussing the uses and gratifications considered by this study's survey participants.

6.2 A proliferation of photography: Changing formats and an increased practice

The recent plummeting sales of compact digital cameras has not impacted the overall popularity of photography as a practice. Figures from the 2016 Camera and Image Products Association (CIPA) camera production report show that photography is more popular than it has ever been, with more cameras sold than at any time previously. This trend is the result of smartphones comprising 98.4% of consumer cameras sold in 2016, and just 0.8% being traditional digital compact cameras²⁶. Most recent reports from the International Data Corporation (IDC) provide a sales figure of 341.1 million smartphone units being shipped in the second quarter of 2018²⁷, thus indicating the pervasive presence of cameras across society. The popularity of photography demonstrated by survey participants in this study indicates that Ireland is no exception in this regard.

²⁶ <https://petapixel.com/2017/03/03/latest-camera-sales-chart-reveals-death-compact-camera/> accessed: (28.10.18).

²⁷ <https://www.idc.com/promo/smartphone-market-share/vendor> (accessed: 28.10.18).

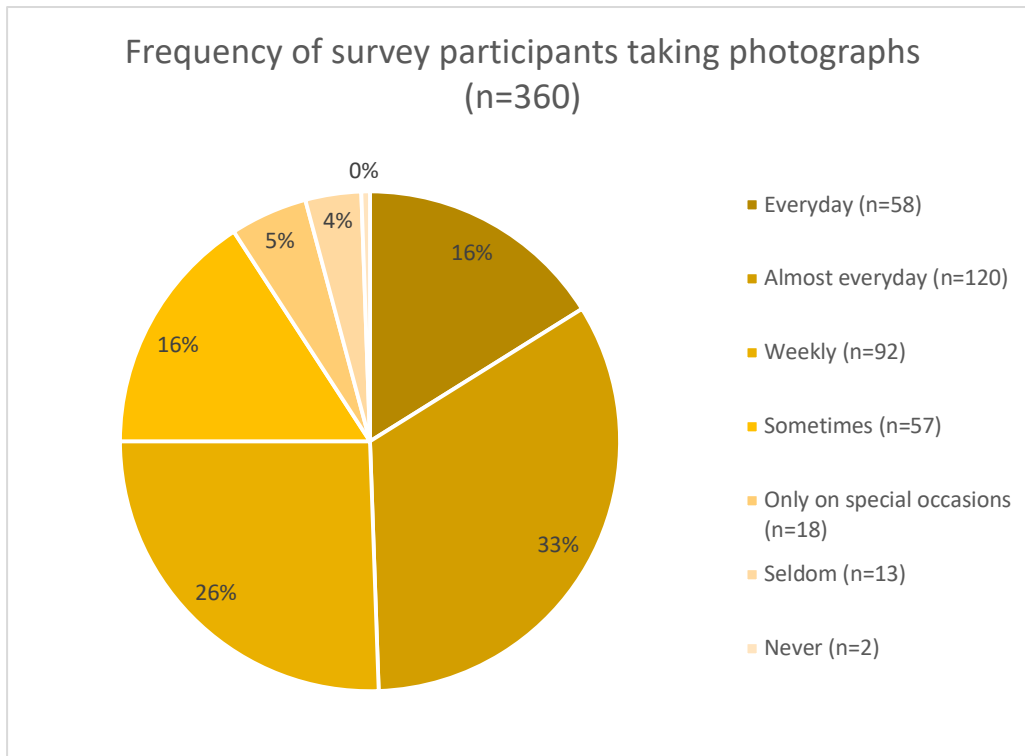


Figure 16: Frequency of survey participants taking photographs

Figure 16 shows that 90.8% (n=327) of survey participants either took photographs ‘every day’ (n=58), ‘almost every day’ (n=120), ‘weekly’ (n=92) or ‘sometimes’ (n=57). 73.3% (n=240) of these were female participants with 26.6% (n=87) being male. From a broader perspective, these figures represent 91.6% (n=240 from 262) of female and 88.7% (n= 87 from 96) of male survey participants in the study. These figures are significant when compared to participants who restricted their photographic practices to ‘only special occasions’ (n=18) or ‘seldom’ (n=13) or those that stated they ‘never take photographs’ (n=2) and emphasises the increased popularity of the practice in contemporary society.

Considering the statistical data presented by both the CIPA and the IDC in the previously cited reports, it is unsurprising that the device that dominates the landscape for capturing photographs among those surveyed was the camera embedded in a smartphone.

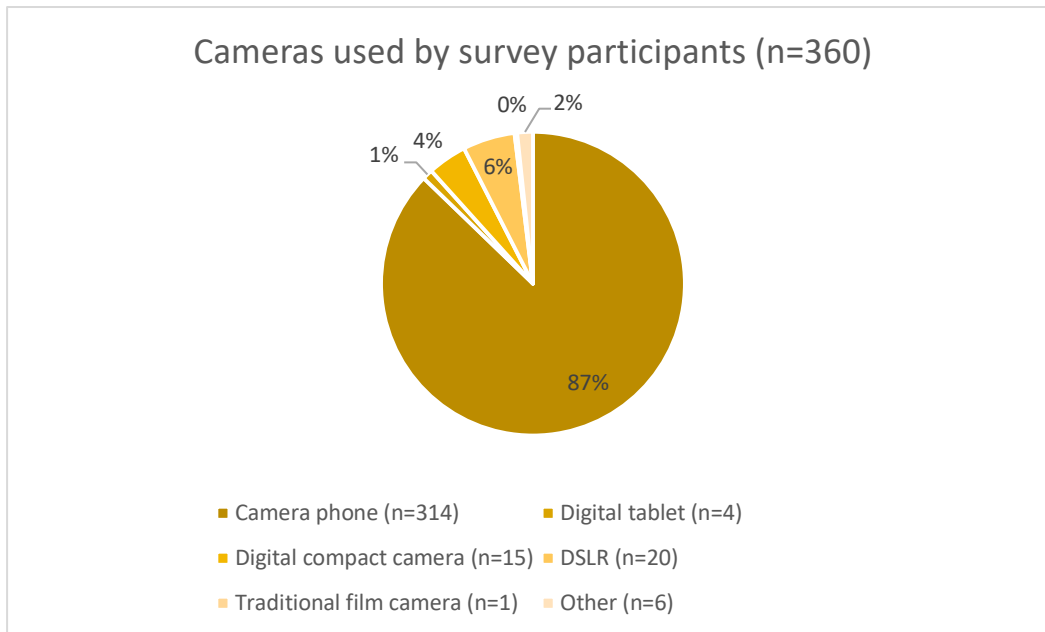


Figure 17: Cameras used by survey participants

It is visible from Figure 17 that 87.2% (n=314) of survey participants stated that the camera phone was the device most frequently used to capture photographs. This figure represented 90.8% (n=238) of all the female survey participants and 77.5% (n=76) of all the male survey participants. The convenience of having a camera embedded within a mobile phone and its pervasive presence can be appreciated.

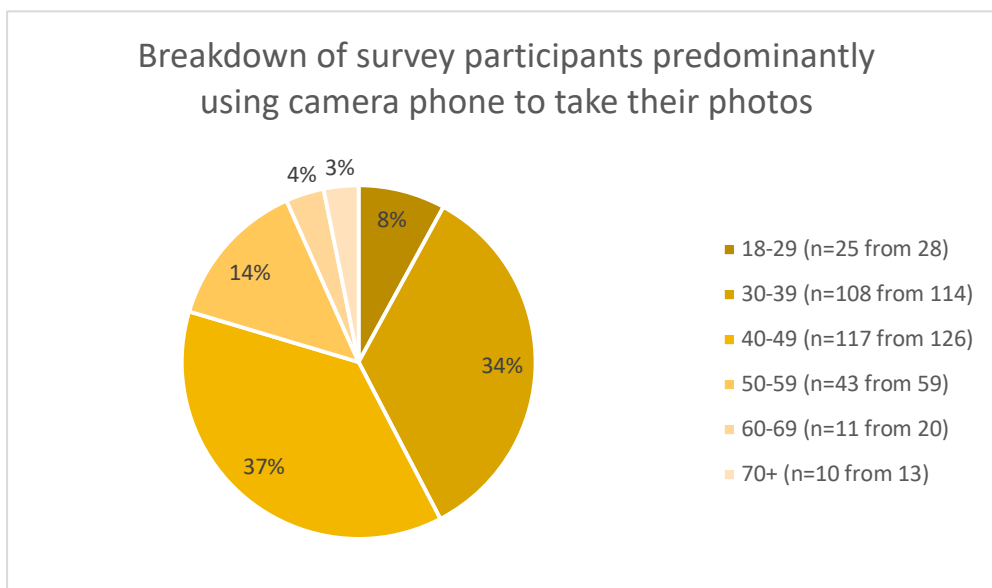


Figure 18: Breakdown of survey participants predominantly using a camera phone to take their photographs

The popularity of the camera phone format is not exclusive to any age demographic. Figure 18 above shows that for each of the predefined age brackets over 75% of participants referenced the camera phone as the most popular format for taking photographs. Only the 60-69 years age bracket fell below this with a figure of 55% (n=11 from 20).

The low percentage (12.8%, n=46) of participants who claimed the camera phone is not the camera they would use most often (see figure 17) for taking photographs is evidence of the successful push in society towards the use of an all-in-one type device. This push has been witnessed through numerous mobile phone manufacturers advertising campaigns highlighting the quality of their phones' camera technology. On 21st August 2018, in a report in PC Magazine²⁸ phone company, *Huawei* was accused of using photographs captured using a DSLR camera to exaggerate the camera capabilities of their brand's Nova 3 handset. Previously, in September 2012, a similar accusation was made by The Verge website²⁹ regarding an advertisement for Nokia's *Pure View* camera. A result of this was the issuing of an official apology by the company. These reports indicate the lengths that the manufacturers will go to in highlighting the technical capabilities of the cameras embedded in their phones. Essentially, the phone itself has become a secondary consideration, as further evidenced through the normalised use of the terminology positioning the 'camera' before the 'phone'.

This dominance of the camera phone has almost wiped out the sales of other camera formats used for everyday photography. In this study, survey participants' responses indicate that there has been an almost complete erosion of traditional film-based cameras, with only one participant claiming it to be the format they used most often for taking everyday photographs. This change of practice is significant when compared to previous generations. Considering there was a time when the viewing of photographs depended on their printing, it is unsurprising that 82.5% (n=297) of survey participants claimed they 'always' or 'often' had the photographs taken when they were younger printed. The practices of printing photographs are discussed further in section 6.3 of this chapter.

Film-based cameras would have taken most of the photographs printed of participants. Nevertheless, with digital technology negating the necessity to print photographs to make images viewable and the camera phone increasing the portability of the practice, photography has become pervasive in contemporary Irish society. However, this increased popularity of photography may have plateaued. The previously referenced figure of 341.1 million units shipped for the second quarter of 2018 is a 2.1% decline in comparison to the 348.2 million units shipped in the second quarter of 2017. Future

²⁸<https://uk.pcmag.com/news-analysis/116976/huawei-caught-using-dslr-photos-to-highlight-phones-camera> (accessed: 08.02.19).

²⁹ <https://www.theverge.com/2012/9/5/3294545/nokias-pureview-ads-are-fraudulent> (accessed: 08.02.19).

studies will be in a better position to reflect on this respite and consider if market trends have changed.

Having established that the camera phone dominant participants' photographic practice a comparative analysis of the practices of previous generations in capturing, storing, displaying and sharing is presented across the following sub-sections of this chapter.

6.2.1 Photographing children: Then and now

The presence of a camera and the practice of photography was something most survey participants were familiar with throughout their lives. 93.1% (n=335) claimed that there was a camera in their home when they were a child, emphasising that the practice of taking photographs and being photographed was a normalised aspect of family life (Slater, 1995; West, 2000). This popularity came as a result of the technological progress that simplified the practice and a reduction in cost that facilitated greater accessibility (Coe and Gates, 1977). Successful marketing campaigns were also run. They presented the use of photography as a ritual of family and leisure time that could avoid the potential fallibility of peoples' memories in recalling and remembering personal or collective life stories (West, 2000). From an ethnographical perspective, Sontag emphasised the role of photography in documenting family life: "Through photographs, each family constructs a portrait chronicle of itself – a portable kit of images that bears witness to its connectedness" (1973: 5)

Given this increased presence of cameras in society, that only 1.8% (n=5) survey participants claimed to never have had photographs taken when they were young is unsurprising. There was no distinct commonality across these participants other than they were all over 30 years of age. However, these participants differ from the small number of participants (6.9% /n=25) who noted the absence of camera ownership within their family home as children. This absence may not have necessarily meant an unfamiliarity with the practice of photography or participants having their photograph taken. Overall, 7.2% (n=26) of participants had their family photographs taken by individuals outside of their immediate family unit, or that they could not remember who took the photographs.

An additional six participants explicitly stated when family photographs were 'required', professional photographers took them. This position of considering photographs being 'required' aligns with the 25% (n=90) of survey participants who said that photographs were only taken on 'special occasions' when they were growing up. This perceived need to have photographs taken reflects a generational tradition; photographing children at celebratory times or 'special occasions'. Historically, this was a

practice among the more affluent classes in society through portraiture paintings, when such items symbolised a particular cultural status (Du Boulay, 1970). However, it was the emergence of photography that genuinely democratised the practice to become the hegemonic social force that it is today (Zuromskis, 2013). These photographs were often stored or displayed in family homes and documented special occasions, while simultaneously adhering to traditionally expected imaginings of childhood. These homogenised visual constructions of children and childhood are explored in greater detail in the next chapter when the research questions if they have changed.

The next section of this chapter further explores practices of storage, but it is worth noting here that while 25% (n=90) of participants claimed that when they were children photos of them were taken only on special occasions, only 5% (n=18) currently limit their photographing of children to 'special occasions'. This indicates that there has been a marked change in everyday photography, with an increased frequency of photographs taken as a result of the ubiquity of the camera.

The popularity of photography among the survey participants was evident. Previously figure 16 showed that 49.6% (n=178) of those surveyed claimed to take photographs either 'every day' or 'almost every day', with an additional 25.6% (n=92) doing so 'weekly'. Combining these figures, they show that 75.5% (n=198 from 262) of all the female survey participants and 73.4 % (n=72 from 98) of all male survey participants take photographs regularly. Given this popularity, the research sought to draw a comparison with the frequency with which survey participants were photographed as children.

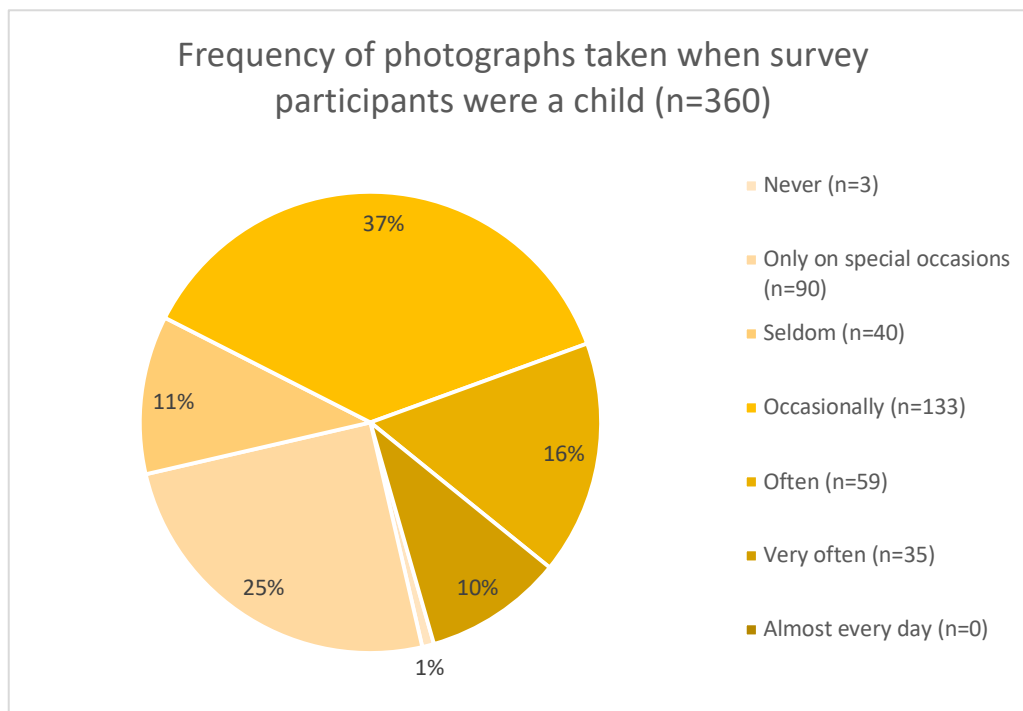


Figure 19: Frequency photographs were taken when survey participants were a child

Despite being less prevalent than today, the practice of everyday photography was far from an uncommon practice among the participants when they were children. Figure 19 shows that, for most participants, family photographs were taken either occasionally (36.9% / n=133), often (16.4% / n=59) or very often (9.7% / n=35). However, in contrast with their current practices of photographing children, no participants recall being photographed 'almost every day' when they were children.

When the ownership of cameras was uncommon, the practise of photography remained familiar. Recounting a period during the late 1950s and early 1960s in Dublin, participant R324 (f/72) claimed that being photographed was surrounded by an air of excitement. Stating that, as a child, she would be "... dying to get in a photograph" and that she considered it to be a "... pleasure for someone to take a photograph of you". When interviewed, she elaborated on being photographed as a child in the street as an especially fond memory:

I remember playing in the street as a child and eh, we were sitting on the step playing marbles and these Americans came along and took photographs of us. And we said, oh won't you send us a photograph. And telling 'em where we lived but they never sent us a photograph... that was the late 1950s

(Participant R324 (f/72) Interview 17th August 2018)

By requesting to have the photograph sent to her, even providing the photographer with an address displayed an eager anticipation and ultimately disappointment having never received it.

The trajectory of domestic photography becoming more commonplace over time, was presented among survey participants' responses. Participant R235 (f/52) reflected from the perspective of being a child when performing as part of a stage show and: "... not thinking twice about it (being photographed)". Participant R048 (f/44) spoke of her personal experiences: "like I grew up in a family where there were photographs all the time and of millions of people...". There is no evidence of imposition with this normalisation of the practice. Nor is there any recollection of permission from either the photographed children or their parents or guardians.

Returning to participant R324 (f/72), she similarly referred to this lack of permission when recalling as a teenager deliberately trying to have her photograph taken by a photographer renowned for photographing people as they crossed O'Connell Street bridge in Dublin: "... every week we went by, we'd cross the bridge and the fellow'd be taking your photograph... he wouldn't even ask". The next chapter explores the area of permission in more detail, with appropriate discussion on permission and

consent in the context of photographing children. The research questions if social norms related to such permission have changed.

Across a relatively short time, camera ownership and usage moved from being a limited and time-consuming practice to being available to most people and producing immediately visible results. Survey participants indicated that the practice of photography increased from 26.1% having photographs taken in their family when they were children 'often' (n=59) or 'very often' (n=35), up to 75% photographing nowadays 'weekly' (n=92), 'almost every day' (n=120) or 'every day' (n=58). Participant R235 (f/52) considered this change from the perspective of a pre- and post-camera phone era. When interviewed, she claimed that she would "just use my iPhone all the time. I have it with me all the time, so if I see something, I want to take a picture of I just use my iPhone".

Similarly, participant R307 (f/59) claimed during her interview that "with digital cameras, you just take every photograph... now it's more spontaneous, you just take them whether they are, you know, they are moving or sitting or smiling or whatever". Comparatively, participant R324 (f/72) recalled that during the pre-camera phone era "... we wouldn't be going around with a camera, waiting to take a photograph".

However, despite this growth in everyday photography passive attitudes were no longer the norm, particularly when children were the subject photographed. A noticeable shift towards a more protectionist attitude to the photographing of children was presented among survey participants. The next chapter unpacks these attitudes in more detail when considering the visualised construction of childhood and how it has evolved and changed. Before this, the research sought to clarify survey participants' relationships with children, considering if this influenced their practices of photographing and sharing images of them.

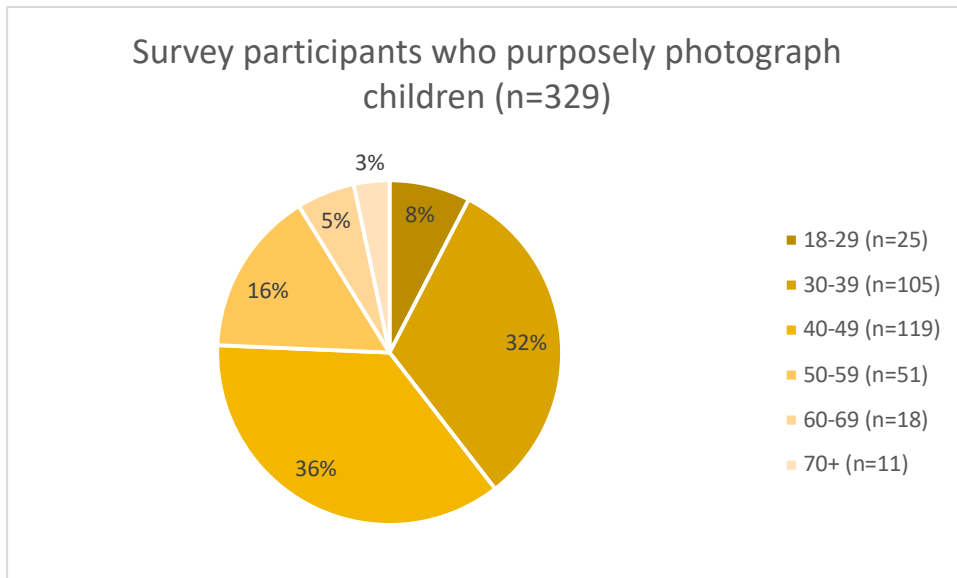


Figure 20: Breakdown of survey participants who deliberately photograph children

Correlating the 98.1% (n=353) of participants who some form of relationship with children and the data related to the popularity of taking photographs shown previously in Figure 16 (section 6.2) unsurprisingly, 91.4% (n=329) of survey participants have previously or continue to take photographs that purposely include children. When considering the gender breakdown of these participants the figures represented 86.7% (n=85 from 98) of all male survey participants and 93.1% (n=244 from 262) of all female survey participants.

From the remaining 8.6% (n=31) of participants, only five stated that they 'have no close acquaintances with children'. Whereas, 14 of these 31 participants confirmed they were parents or step-parents to children, with eight of them stating that they took photographs, not necessarily of children, either 'almost every day' (n=3) or on a 'weekly' (n=5) basis. Considering their previously stated relationships to children and the frequency of their photographic practices, the authenticity of these survey participants' claims to have not intentionally taken photographs of children can be questioned. The research returns to the potential causes for this in chapter 8 when exploring the effect that protectionist discourses concerning children have had on the practices and behaviour of survey participants

It was unsurprising to find that only 4.8% (n=16) of participants acknowledged photographing children unknown to them when considering the traditional situations in which the photographing of children occurs; birthday parties, play dates and other similar scenarios. Predominantly the children photographed in these situations would be familiar to those taking the photographs. Survey

participants stated that the children they photograph were most often their own children (64% / n=210), related to them (65.9% / n=216) or known to them (46.6% / n=153). In the circumstances of these relationships, the taking of photographs would be an accepted social norm.

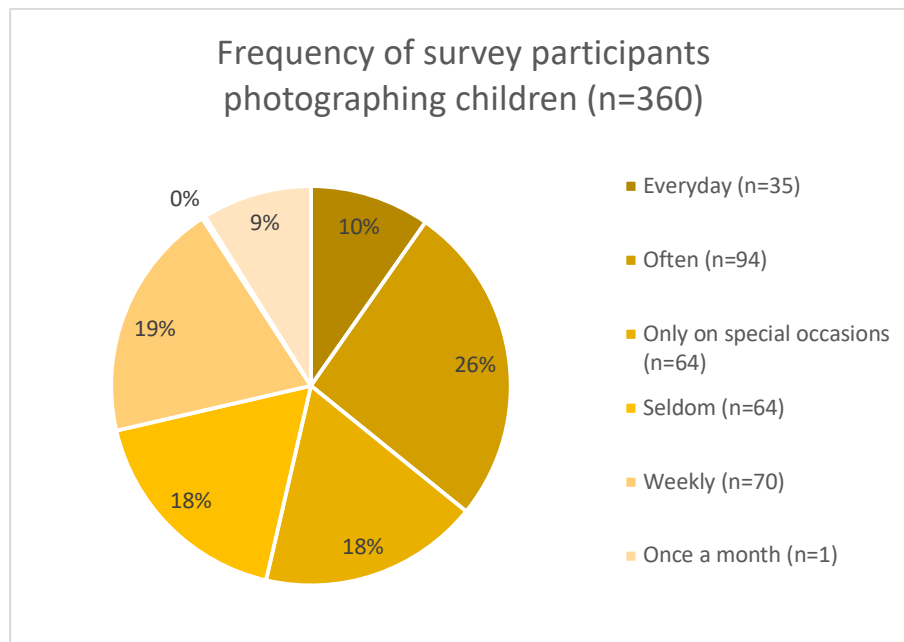


Figure 21: Frequency of survey participants photographing children

Considering the frequency with which survey participants photograph children, a combined figure of 60.7% (n=199 of 328 responses) of participants clarified that they take photographs of children ‘often’ (n = 94), ‘weekly’ (n = 70), or ‘every day’ (n = 35). When comparing the frequency among male and female participants, 66.3% (n=162 from 244) of female participants and 43.5% (n=37 from 85) of male participants either photographed children ‘often’, ‘weekly’ or ‘everyday’.

Despite this frequency continuing the generational practice of photographing children, in which parents often enthusiastically chronicle their child’s development, traces of reconsideration were presented by survey participants. Notwithstanding the ubiquity of the technology and the high percentage of participants in regular contact with children evidence of this was seen with the relatively high percentage of participants who limit their practice; a combined figure of 38% (n=128) of participants who acknowledge photographing children do so seldomly (n=64) or restrict their practice to ‘special occasions’ (n=64). These figures represent 33.1% (n=81 from 244) of female survey participants photographing children, whereas it is 55.2% (n=47 from 85) of male survey participants, indicating that a male photographer would be less inclined to photograph children frequently. This

issue is further elaborated on in section 6.4 when the research considers traditional gender associations with the practice of visually documenting children and the family.

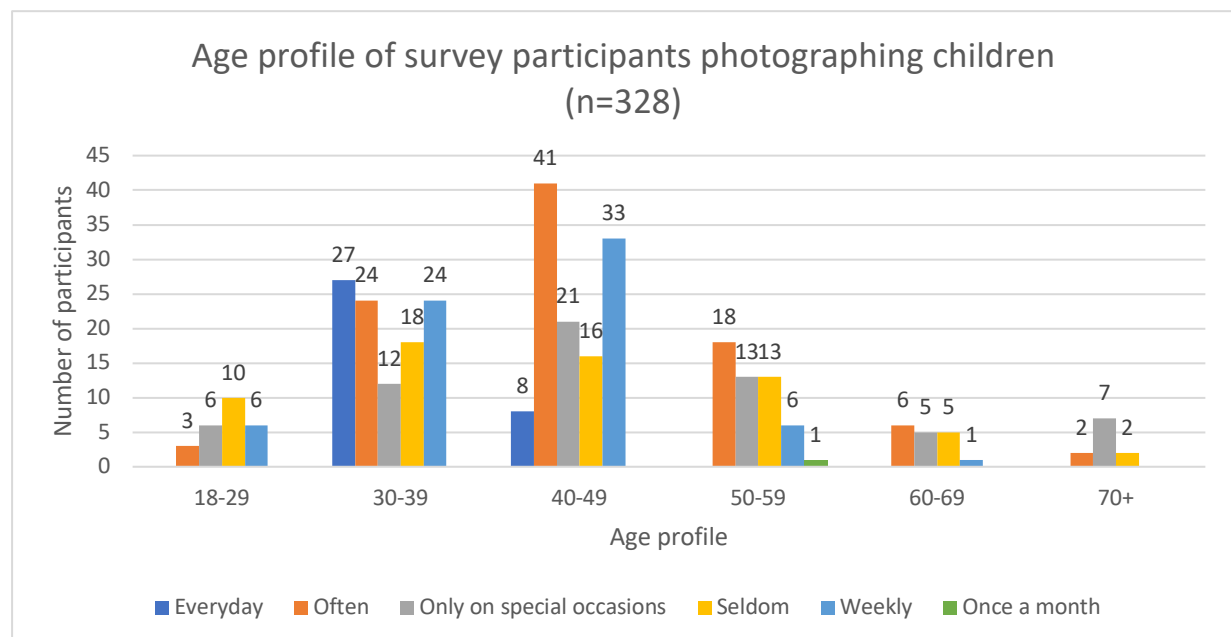


Figure 22: Age profile of survey participants photographing children

Considering this data from an age demographic, as seen above in figure 22 the most significant percentages of 90.9% (n=10 from 11 responses) and 81.8% (n=9 from 11 responses) of survey participants came from the two oldest age groups; between 60-69 years and those over the age of 70. However, cognisance should be given to the small number of survey participants from these demographic groups. If considered from a numerical rather than proportional perspective, the age groups of 30-39 (n=30) and 40-49 (n=37) produced the higher number of survey participants who restricted their photographing of children to 'seldom' or 'only on special occasions'.

It is appropriate here to consider the contemporary imposed restriction on photographing in particular public and private locations: publicly accessible swimming pools, play centres and playgrounds, as well as schools and clubhouses, would have previously been spaces in which it was acceptable to photograph children. These restrictions are likely to have been a contributing factor for the 19.5% (n=64) of participants who stated that they 'seldom' take photographs of children. Prohibitions of this nature play a key role in shaping contemporary discourses surrounding childhood and are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter when the research considers the continued construction of childhood in contemporary Irish society.

6.3 The photograph to the image: The changing landscape of storage and sharing

The practice of photographing is only the first stage in the modern process of visually documenting family life and childhood. However, as previously discussed for generations, the viewing of these captured shots was dependent on the printing of photographs. Digital camera technology ended this necessity. Notwithstanding this, the research sought to explore whether the printing of photographs remained a widespread practice among survey participants.

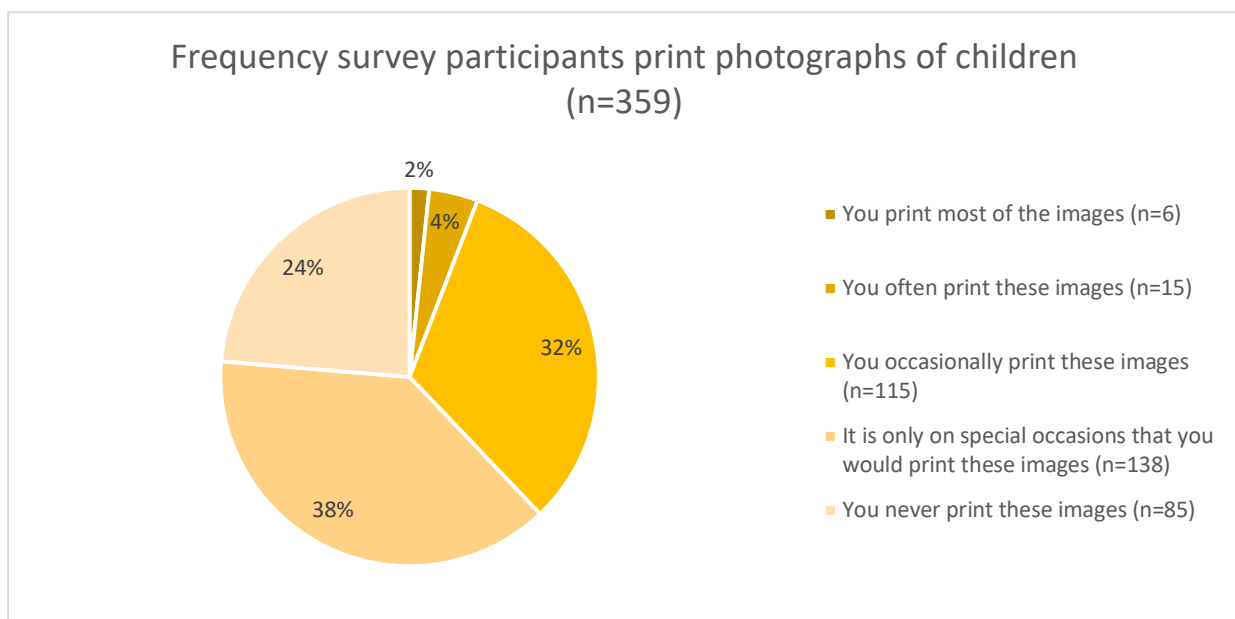


Figure 23: The frequency survey participants print photographs of children

When asked how often survey participants would print photographs they have taken of children, 93.8% (n=338) limited their printing to 'occasionally', only on 'special occasions' or they clarified that they 'never' print images. From a gender perspective, these figures represent 95.9% (n=94 from 98) of all male survey participants and 93.1% (n=244 from 262) of all the female survey participants. This high figure is indicative of a society where the need to print photographs in order to see, store, display or share them is no longer compulsory. For previous generations, this was an arduous task that involved a lot of time and effort. Although, as referenced in the previous section, some participants romanticised this process nostalgically.

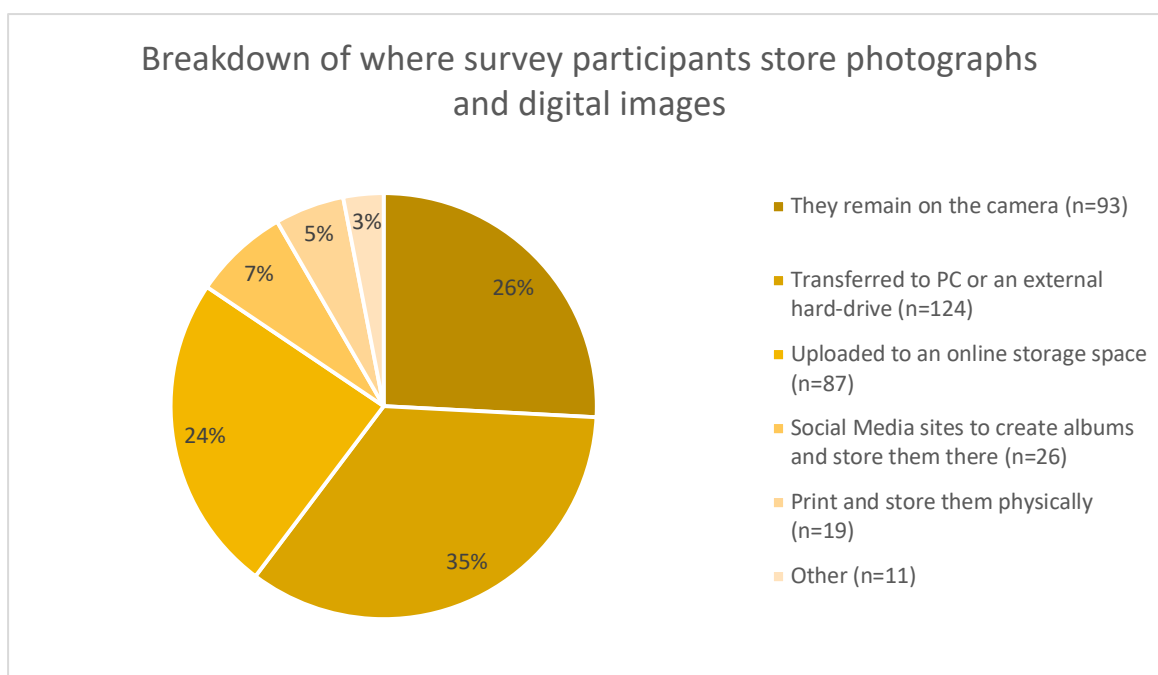


Figure 24. Breakdown of where survey participants store photographs and digital images

The homogenisation of digital photography has seen a mass reduction in the printing of photographs overall. Figure 24 shows that only 5.3% (n=19) of survey participants print and store their photographs physically. For the remaining survey participants, their storage was much more arbitrary and fragmented, with 31.4% (n=113) using some form of online storage, be it a social media platform (n=26) or a separate designated online storage space (n=87). There is a level of trust when storing photographs in a virtual location that lies outside of the participants' own physically-accessible spaces. Participant R015 (f/43) questioned this. When interviewed, she elaborated on her own, more cautious approach to storing images:

"Only on my home computer... I turned off the cloud. I turned off the iCloud Sessions ... I would have turned off a lot of that setting, that does it automatically, the one thing it backs up to is the home computer... and a backup of the home computer... on an external hard drive ... I've turned off the automatic sync that goes to the cloud yeah. And the same with Google"

(Participant R015 (f/43) Interview 28th June 2018)

This practice of transferring images to personal computers or external storage devices was the case for 34.4% (n=124) of survey participants. This was the most popular storage practice, with the figure representing 47.9% (n=47 from 98) of male survey participants and 29.3% (n=77 from 262) of female

survey participants. Proportionally, this indicates that male survey participants were less inclined to store their images online than in these offline locations.

The storing of images on external devices or personal computers limits the portability and accessibility of the images when compared to those that remain on the devices used to capture them or stored online. The process of retrieval is even more cumbersome when access is required to share or show the images. However, notwithstanding the benefits of retaining images on capturing devices or on social media, participant R324 (f/72) referenced the disadvantages of this practice and her preference for having a physical photograph to show among her friends:

‘... you can have them in your bag and you can show them to everybody and you’re not squinting looking at them on the phone that takes 5 or 6 minutes to come up... on the phone I’m pressing buttons and this that and the other. A load of ‘ballsology’ as you call it’

(Participant R324 (f/72) Interview 17th August 2018)

Similarly, when interviewed participant R307 (f/59) reminisced about a time when physical copies of photographs were the social norm:

‘... you know, you don’t have any photographs now compared to years ago. I had boxes of photographs like albums... and I haven’t had an album with things since... since digital photography came in. And it’s a shame, because, you know ... you can go back and you know, and on – on the digital ones, but you don’t have something to look at and you can’t beat kind of visual hard copies. But, maybe I’m from a hard copy era’.

(Participant R307 (f/59) Interview 2nd July 2018)

With both of these female interviewees aged approximately 60 years and over their position may be considered a nostalgic reflection of a previous generation’s practice. However, participant R319 (m/26) also made a similar point when considering what future social media platforms would provide:

‘I think that was the nice thing about growing up. Our parents, eh, parents and my grandparents, they used to take photographs, but they’d only take them now and again and they used to put them together in this lovely album, whatever. And then, when you’re flicking back through it now, it’s lovely to kind of see those little moments. You’re like, “Oh, I remember this, I remember that”. Whatever. But, I don’t think you’re going to have the same

experience as, like, a kid when you're older now... kids in the noughties or, you know, are in their 20's or whatever, whatever, looking back on Facebook feeds. I don't think it's going to be the same kind of nostalgia you're going to get from it'

(Participant R319 (m/26) Interview 6th August 2018)

Echoing the perspective of the previous participants, he distinguishes physical photographs from digital images and questions the value of sentiment attributed to each. This position aligns with broader theories concerning the use of images and photographs. Previous research has positioned younger generations as using images as a part of ephemeral conversations more likely to be shared in peer-group environments than organised in photo albums (Van Dijck, 2008). The image-sharing habits of younger generations are beyond the scope of this study. However, the research explores the perceived 'instant-ness' and disposable nature of digital images when considering the dangers and risks associated with the sharing of images of children in the next chapter.

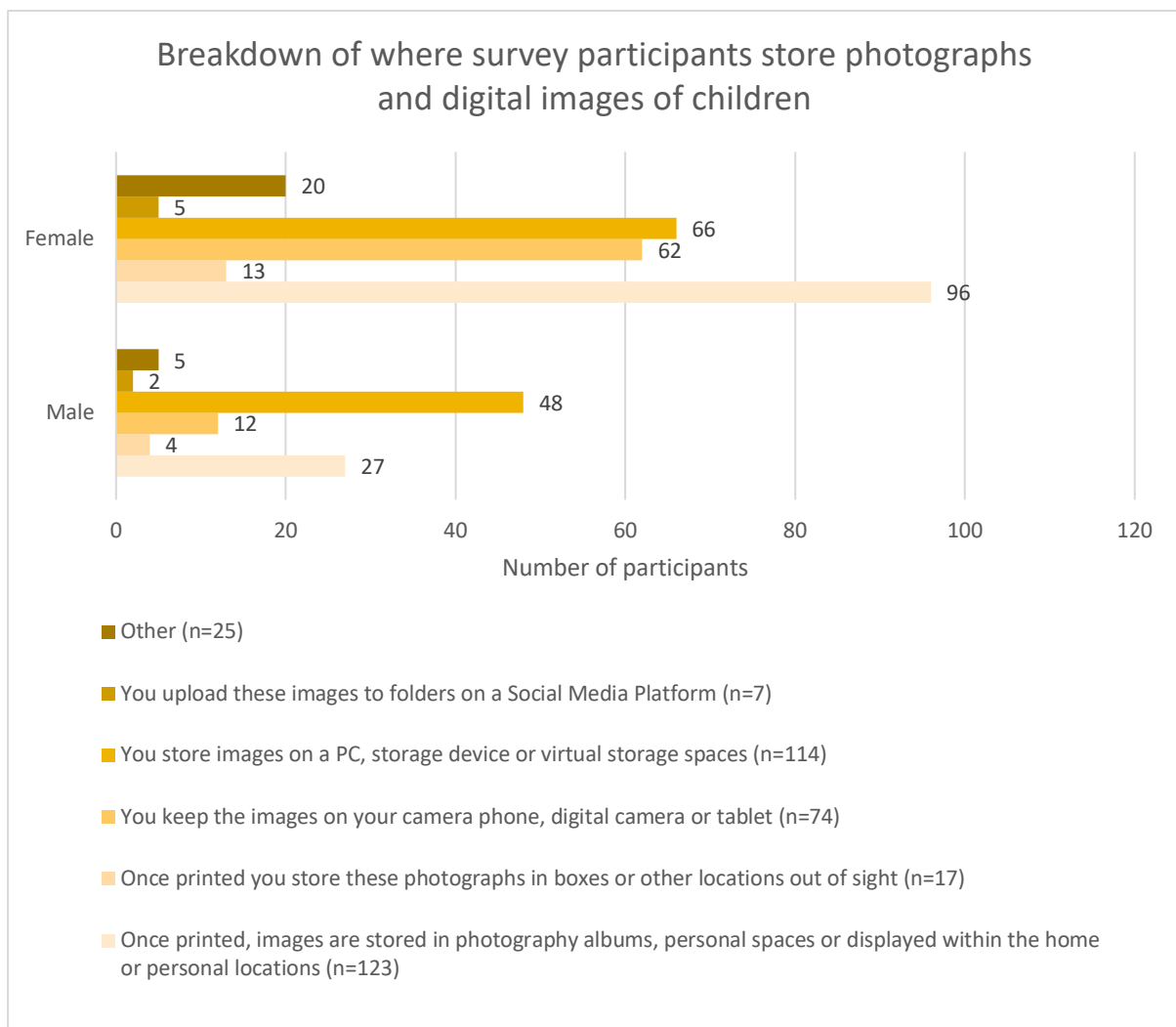


Figure 25: Breakdown of where survey participants store photographs and digital images of children

Narrowing the subjects of the photography to children, Figure 25 shows that 53.8% (n=194) of survey participants specified that they do not store printed photographs, choosing instead to keep digital images. This number compared to the 20.2% (n=73) of all survey participants who kept images of children solely on the device they used to capture the image, be it a phone, digital camera or tablet. These participants may be consciously utilising the previously discussed accessibility facilitated by retaining their images on the devices used to capture them, allowing them to show and share them conveniently. Alternatively, a worthy consideration is that some of these participants may simply be less proactive in transferring images from the capturing devices, either as a result of a lack of technical proficiency or perception that the process is arduous.

Figure 25 also shows of the 31.6% (n=114) of survey participants storing images on 'a PC, storage device or virtual storage spaces' 48 were male and 66 were female. These figures represent 48.9% of

all male survey participants compared to only 22.1% of all female survey participants. Elaborating on their own routine when storing images and the physical storage devices she uses participant R048 (f/44) stated:

“I have a little box with my USBs in them and they will be from, you know, whenever we started with USBs what a couple... when (child’s name) was born I started. So that would be nearly 11 years ago I started putting the images from the camera phone onto USB... I’ll update it every so often until the USB is full and then pop it upstairs, keep it in the memory box because I think going forward it would be lovely to give it to her when she’s 30 or 40 years of age to look at ...”

(Participant R048 (f/44) Interview 4th July 2018)

A similar process of preserving images to be accessed in the future was traditionally witnessed through the printing, storing and display of photographs in photo albums, specifically photographs of children, the research considered if this remained a practice among those surveyed.

The traditions of printing a photograph to display in frames, store in albums or have physical access to remains a preference for many participants. To varying degrees of practice 76.1% (n=274) of participants continue to print photographs of children they have taken. Occasionally participants acknowledged that their storage practices mirrored those of previous generations, when the necessity to print resulted in photographs ‘not always treated as particularly precious objects... ‘shoved’, ‘bunged’ and ‘whammed’ into storage boxes or albums...’ (Rose, 2010: 25). Participant R325 (f/29) referred to her practice of having ‘hundreds and hundreds of photographs that kind of just sit in the drawers...’. However, with only 23.6% (n=85) of survey participants never printing photographs, it is evident that the digital image has not monopolised the practices of storage, sharing and display. Furthermore, when conducting interviews in candidates' homes, it was noticeable that there was no evidence of digital images displayed.

Often, the content of the images dictates if they are printed. From the 274 participants who continue to print photographs, 50.3% (n=138) do so if the image is documenting a ‘special occasion’. Participant R235 (f/52), when interviewed elaborated on her practices of displaying photographs in her home: ‘... it was mainly graduation pictures... pictures of the boys when they were babies, then some school photos, and then some pictures of us in Disneyland’ (Interviewed 22nd June 2018). Participant R307 (f/59) elaborated on their similar practice, despite acknowledging that ‘there’s so few photographs

printed now'. When interviewed, she spoke of the types of photographs that she displayed in her home:

'... the kids at school, uh, in their school uniforms. Um, on holidays. Um, those kind of photographs ... They're good memories. They're photographs that would um, they would uh, I suppose revive memories of an experience or an event or, generally happy times... school events and that kind of thing. Graduations.'

(Participant R307 (f/59) Interview 2nd July 2018)

This practice of printing photographs of children from particular milestone occasions or celebrations maintains established representation of children and childhood. As previously discussed in section 3.7 these photographs are predominantly constructed and captured from the perspective of the photographing adults. Gratifying pre-existing protocols of visually documenting family life they are considered 'print-worthy' acceptable representations. The decision to select, print and display these particular images reiterates this depiction of childhood.

Printed photographs were displayed and referenced fondly during the interviews. Echoing the literature of West (2000) they are presented as triggers of positive memories of past times. Of the ten interviews conducted in the homes of the interviewees, eight had printed photographs of children on display, either mounted on walls or in frames. One of the two remaining interviewees was living in temporary accommodation while their home was being renovated and consciously chose not to display photographs given the temporary nature of the residence. Whereas the remaining interviewee had no photographs visible from where the interview took place, yet she occasionally referred to printed photographs located elsewhere in the home.

Seven interviewees displayed photographs that were visible either on entry to their residence or from where they were interviewed. These photographs predominantly featured children related to the interviewees. Five of the interviewees referred to additional photographs that were on display in more personal locations of their homes, namely upstairs or in bedrooms. The access to these photographs was more controlled than photographs displayed in hallways and kitchen areas visible during the interviews. At no time was an invitation to view these photographs suggested by those interviewed. This restriction displayed retention of access control over the photographs by the interviewees. The loss of such control resurfaced as a critical issue of concern with the sharing of images of children across social media; an area further explored in chapter 8 when the research considers the digital

'afterlife' of images once they are shared and the precautionary practices adopted by survey participants to maintain this sense of control.

The locations within the home chosen to display photographs is a conscious decision influenced by both the content of the photograph and place they are displayed. In her study, Rose (2010) noted that 'practices of looking are also about the practising of places'. She stated that as photographs move from one place to another, they are 'looked at differently and look different' (pp.22). Referring to the variety of sites within the home photographs can be displayed, Rose (2010) presents the viewing experience as being governed by the material structure of the space, the tacit knowledge and 'rules' attributed to the location, and the practices undertaken in those spaces. Thus, we have the display of more personal photographs in more private locations within the home.

In some cases, the printing of photographs occurs as a precautionary measure. Participant R325 (f/29) spoke of her fear of losing her images when she displayed concerns about the reliability of technology to store their photographs:

"I take so many photos and I send loads off to print cause I have this mega-fear of my phone breaking, my laptop where I backed them up, my hard drive breaking, so I try to print off like my favourites all the time so I always have this physical copy of them... they're kind of all over the place cause I have nowhere really to put them. Like but they're kind of stored in their packaging, Um, I do take them out sometimes and, you know, but they're just all over the house kind of"

(Participant R325 (f/29) Interview 26th June 2018)

Participant R325 (f/29), when referring to photographs that she had on display in her home, acknowledged that "... these have all been online". However, this online sharing or storage of digital images is a different practice to the physical display or storage of printed photographs as previously discussed.

Before unpacking and exploring the survey participants' practices and attitudes towards the online storage and sharing of images, the research discloses their presence and levels of participation on social media platforms.

6.3.1 Platforms used for sharing images of children

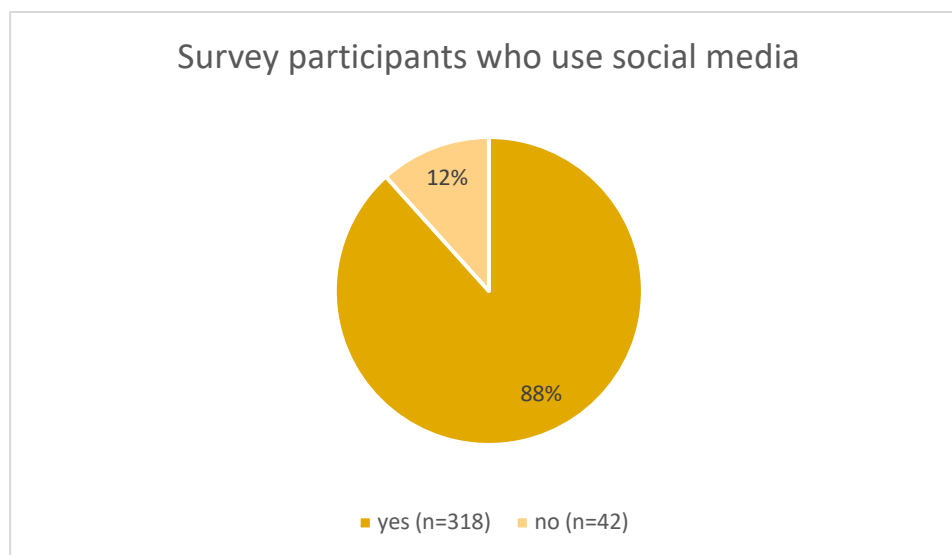


Figure 26: Survey participants who use social media

Figure 26 above shows that 88% (n=318 from 360) of survey participants use social media. This total number represented 83.3% (n=82) of all male survey participants and approximately 90% (n=236) of all the female survey participants. The majority (70% / n=224) of participants were between 30-49 years of age. This combined figure of 88.3% of all survey participants surpasses the Central Statistics Office's report that 72%³⁰ of Irish citizens use the Internet to access social media. This finding is indicative of how normalised the practice of social media engagement has become in contemporary Irish society, a perspective emphasised by participant R194 (f/39):

'... it's now like the Internet is just a fourth dimension of life, I think. Social media, so much of everything is online that it, in a way I don't think you can realistically exclude anything because ... like especially kids growing up today, it's completely normal for them to post things on Facebook and Instagram and whatever'

(Participant R194 (f/39) Interview 25th June 2018)

³⁰ https://pdf.cso.ie/www/pdf/20200212091235_Information_Society_Statistics__Households_2017_full.pdf (accessed 02.05.19).

To further explore this homogenised use of social media in Irish society, the research provided survey participants with an opportunity to elaborate on their engagement.

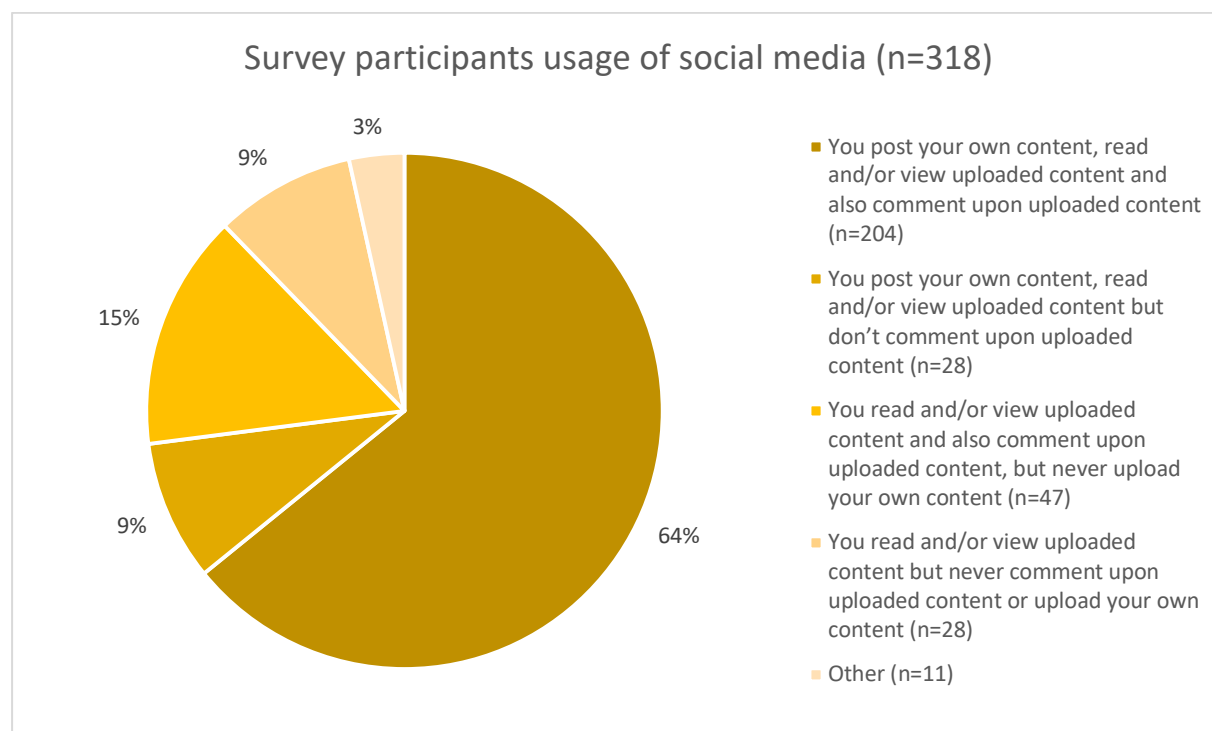


Figure 27: Survey participants' usage of social media

Figure 27 shows that many survey participants (64.2% / n=204) who use social media 'observe, comment upon and create content'. This figure represents 73.1% (n=60 from 82) of male survey participants using social media and approximately 60% (n=144 from 236) of female survey participants using social media. The research considered these participants as fully engaged users of social media. A further 8.8% (n=28) of social media-active survey participants 'participate in the creation and observation of content, but they refrain from commenting upon content they engage with'. Whereas 14.8% of participants (n=47) are 'active in observation and commenting upon content, without generating any content themselves'.

The research categorised an additional 8.8% (n=28) of survey participants as 'lurkers' on social media. 'Lurkers' is a term used to describe individuals who restrict their participation to the level of observation without posting comments or content themselves. Traditionally, three categories of social media users label subscribers: heavy contributors, intermittent contributors and 'lurkers' (Nielsen, 2006) The ratio for participation conventionally adheres to a 90-9-1 rule. Nielsen (ibid.) indicates that 'lurkers', those who observe rather than actively contribute, make up 90% of users, 9% of users

contribute occasionally, and only 1% participate a lot. However, findings from this research contradict this 'participation inequality' (ibid). Figure 14. shows that the smallest number of survey participants (8.8% / n=28) claimed to 'read and/or view uploaded content but never comment on uploaded content or upload your own content'. These participants are 'lurkers', and such a small figure in this study shows that the 90-9-1 rule of thumb concerning participation inequality is not an accurate representation of the reality of these findings. The technological advances made in the accessibility and mobility of social media attribute towards the seismic shift in engagement. The 90-9-1 rule was initially published in 2006 (Nielsen, ibid). Facebook and Twitter were both launched to the public during the same year. Therefore, a more contemporary study of participation rates and social media users' levels of engagement may produce a more accurate figure that aligns with the findings of this study.

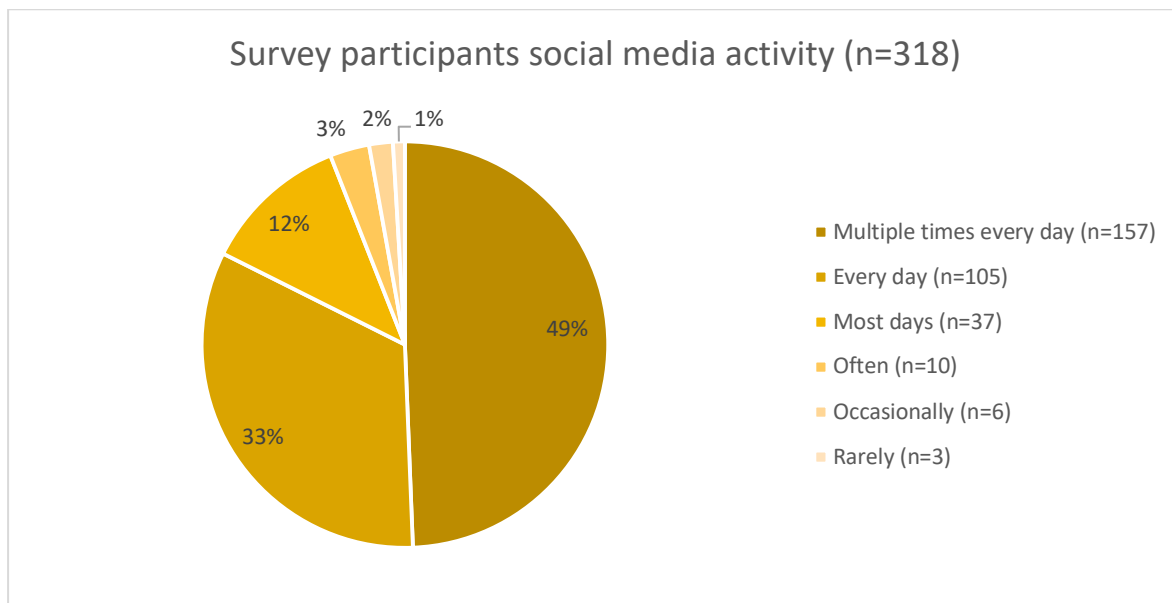


Figure 28: Breakdown of survey participants' social media activity

The vast majority of survey participants used the social media everyday (figure 28). The 82.4% (n=262) represents 72.2% (n=65 from 82) of male survey participants using social media and 83.4% (n=197 from 236) of female survey participants. 49.4% (n=157) of these participants use social media multiple times every day. These figures are symptomatic of the extent to which social media occupies the lives of broad sectors of society. Only nine participants in their survey responded that their use of social media was 'occasional' (n=6) or 'rare' (n=3).

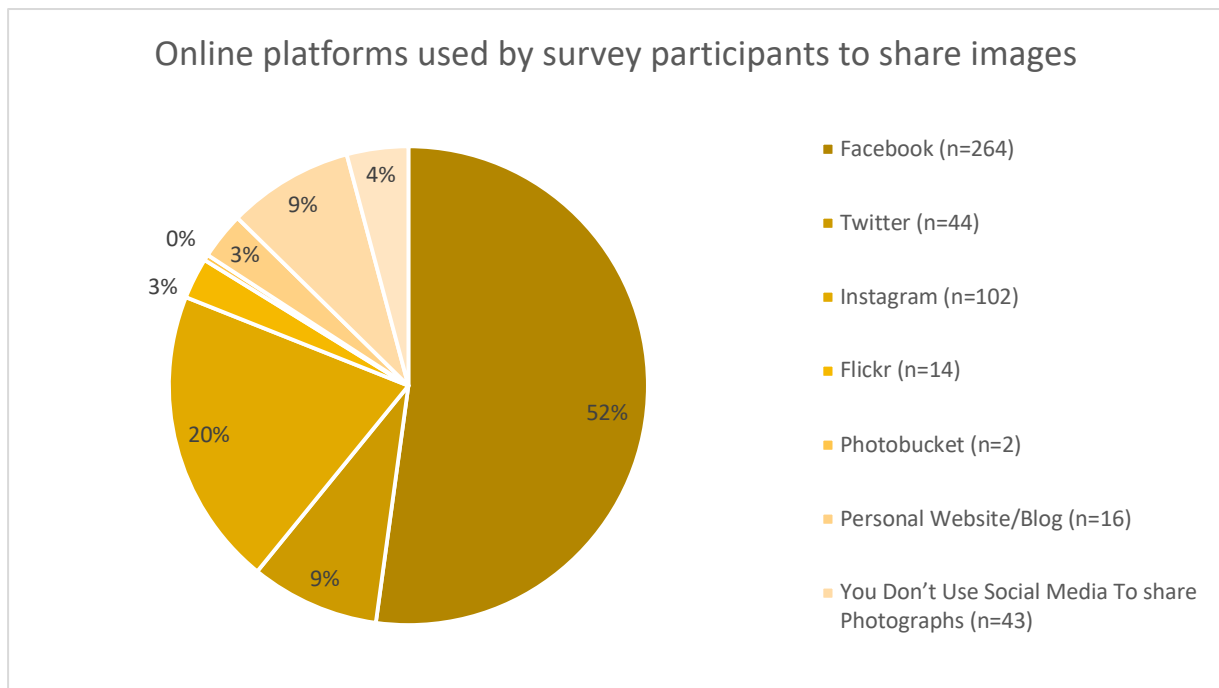


Figure 29: Social media platforms used by participants to share digital images

While not all social media using participants used it to share photographs (13.5% / n=43), consistent with previous research (Bourke, et al. 2013; Morris, 2014; Minkus, et al. 2017; Wagner and Gasche, 2018; Lipu and Siibak, 2019) Facebook was the dominant platform (figure 29). Its popularity was evident across both genders with 68 of 82 male participants and 196 of 236 female participants actively using it to share images. Despite being exclusively designed for the sharing of images, Instagram was the second most popular platform with 37.1% (n=102) of participants.

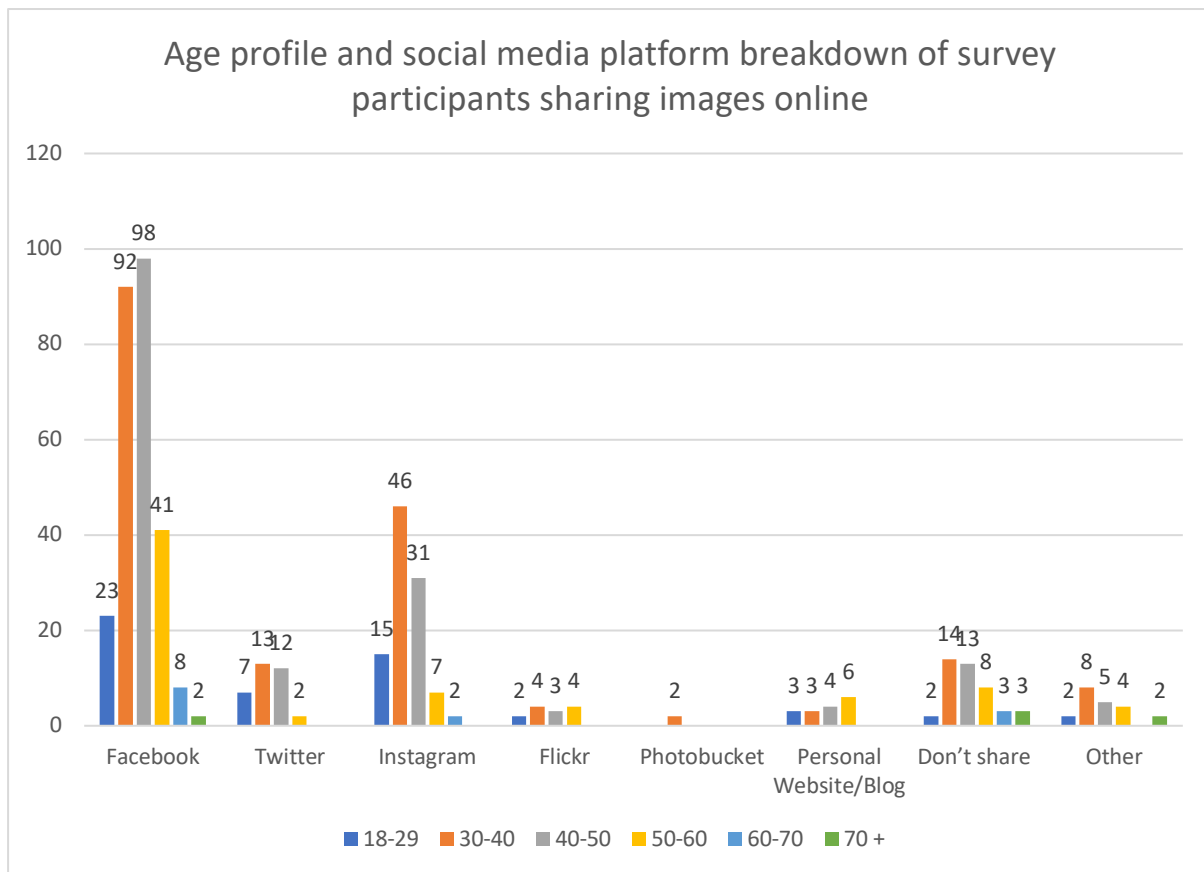


Figure 30: Age profile and social media platform breakdown of survey participants sharing images online

Facebook's popularity among social media-using survey participants was consistent across all the age categories. In terms of the regularity of photo sharing on social media, a combined figure of 21.7% (n=79) chose to share 'most of' their images or to do so 'sometimes'. However, 68.2% (n=217) responded that the frequency with which they use social media to share images is dependent on their content. The next section of this chapter explores how the content of shared images resurfaced as a significant influencing factor in participants' attitudes to the online sharing of images of children specifically. Concluding this set of data, the remaining survey participants verified that they do not use social media to share their images (n=23), or they did not provide an answer to the survey question, indicating that they also refrain from the practice.

Given the context of the research, and the previously stated aims in section 1.2 the survey sought to explore in more detail the image-sharing practices and attitudes of participants when it specifically came to images of children.

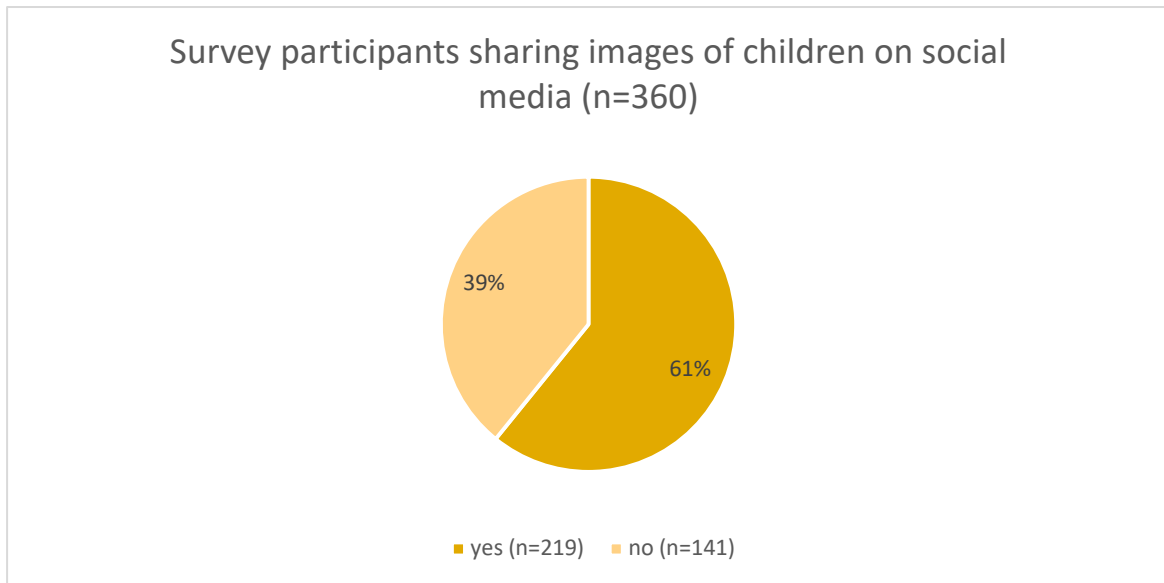


Figure 31: Breakdown of survey participants sharing images of children on social media

When asked, approximately 61% (n=219) of all survey participants verified that they share images of children online, as shown above in Figure 34. This number represented 68.8% of the 318 survey participants who used social media. From a gender perspective this figure represented approximately 67% (n=55 from 82) of male social media-using participants and approximately 69.4% (n=164 from 236) of female social media-using survey participants. Thus, despite the number of participants being heavily skewed towards female participants, the proportional figures of each gender are very similar, with a margin of 2.4%. This difference reflects a broader key finding from the research that there is a growing trend among men to be more involved in the visual documenting of family life as the practice has changed from a tactile to a more technical process. This shift in cultural practice is unpacked and explored in more detail cross the next section of this chapter.

6.4 A cultural shift in the visual documenting of the family

Traditionally the practice of visually documenting a family's history was a role dominated by women. The Historian Anne Higonnet positions this as a result of the traditional capitalist opposition between masculine public and female domestic spheres (1998: 26). It was considered a women's moral obligation to keep a record of their families, given their presence within the domestic setting (Smith, 1998; Holland, 2008; Kamal, 2012). The use of photography became a normalised practice, encouraged through marketing campaigns that emphasised the technical ease with which affordable cameras could be used (Slatter, 1995; Chambers, 2003; Sarvas and Frohlich, 2011). Previously, Sontag

(1977) emphasised the role played by photography, and that it did not merely reflect family life, but it also constituted it.

Cognisant of these traditions, the research explored the practices of everyday photography among survey participants families when they were children.

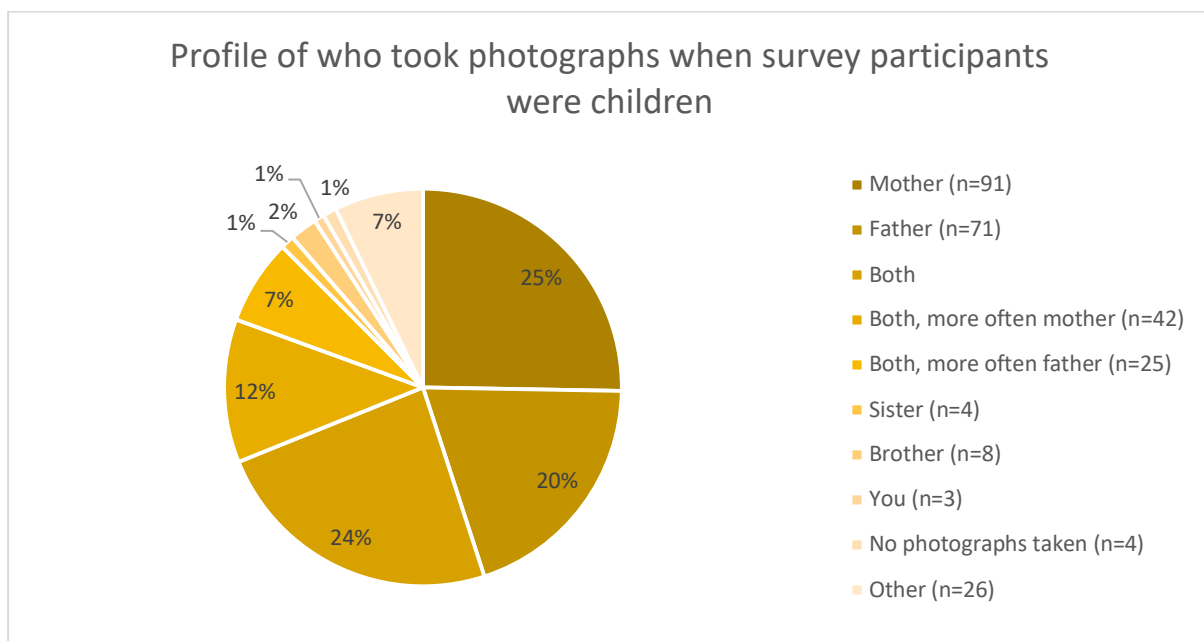


Figure 32: Profile of who photographed survey participants when they were children

Figure 32 shows that 36.9% (n=133) of survey participants claimed their mother predominantly took their photograph when they were children. This figure compares to 26.6% (n=96) of participants claiming that it was predominantly their father. A further 23.9% (n=86) of participants stated that both their mother and father were responsible for taking photographs when they were children. The difference of only 10.2% (n=37) between the relevant genders is noticeable but not substantial when reflecting that the practice of documenting the family was traditionally considered a female role. However, taking photographs is only one aspect of the documenting process. When looking at the data considering the storing and printing of the images when participants were children, the traditional gender bias alignment with the practice is more prominent.

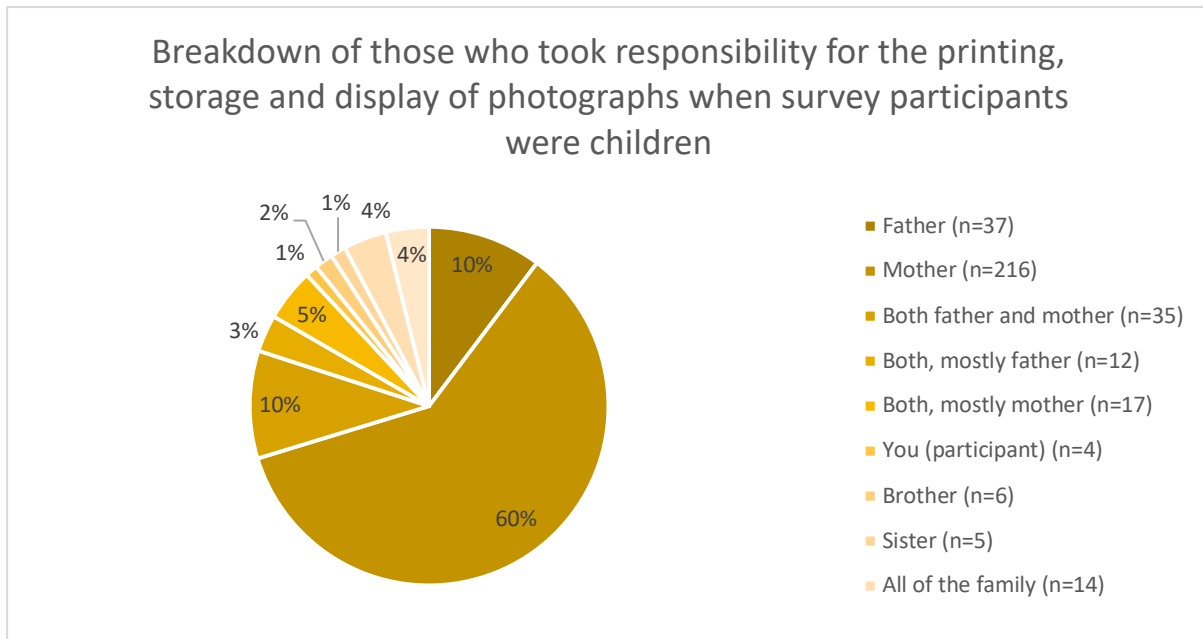


Figure 33: Breakdown of those responsible for the printing, storage and display of photographs when survey participants were children

As clarified in Figure 33 64.7% (n=233) of survey participants stated that their mother predominantly took responsibility for the printing, storage and display of photographs when they were a child. This figure compares to 13.6% (n=49), claiming it was predominantly their fathers' role. This data correlates with the traditional role of women to document a record of their family's history. Traditionally this practice would have been a very tactile process involving printing photographs to be stored in photographic albums. These albums would often be artistically decorated in a domestic setting predominantly occupied by women. Given the nature of this practice it is unsurprising that traditionally it was considered more so role aligned with female members of the family. The difference between the number of men taking photographs compared to storing them is significant. Despite, as previously discussed the practice of photographing children being considered a practice more appropriate for women it remained a more technical practice, less effeminate than the storing of photographs and the creating of photo albums. Thus, although both practices were predominantly carried out by women for previous generations men were more comfortable taking photographs than being responsible for their storage.

Previous research into the area of storing and sharing images of children has compounded this dynamic by explicitly concentrating on a female demographic (Burke, et al. 2013; Morris, 2014; Tiidenberg and Baym, 2017; Wagner and Gasche, 2018; Lipu and Siibak, 2019). The studies found that

mothers tended to be more active in communicating with their children and more likely to share photos of their children on social media as part of this communication. Minkus et al. (2015) in their study of Facebook users found that women continued to dominate the documenting and sharing of children's lives, with 46% of women compared to 23% of men sharing images of children. Again, this was a practice that maintained the traditionally gender-biased role.

However, the findings of this study indicate that a change in practice is occurring. While the numerical representation of participation in the practice appears to remain skewed towards women, considered proportionally, the findings are somewhat different.

As previously discussed, 69.1% (n=164 from 237) of female participants who use social media share images of children. However, approximately 67% (55 from 82) of male participants who use social media also claim to share images of children. This data shows proportionally a difference of only 2.1% between the genders. This significantly low figure indicates a change in the gender dynamic of participants storing and sharing children's images. It is evident that more than any time previously, men are embracing aspects of the visual documentation of family life that extend beyond the initial photographing of children. This change has coincided with society's enhanced engagement with mobile technology and social media. The rate of which has been remarkable. The most popular platform for sharing images both in this study (Figure 16.) and internationally,³¹ Facebook, has seen users increase from 1.33bn to 2.38bn between the years 2015 and 2019.³² Consequently, it can be concluded that the normalisation of mobile technology and social media among the practices of visually documenting the family has facilitated this gender-neutral cultural shift.

6.5 To share or not to share? A balancing act of benefit and risk

Mobile technology has facilitated the enormous growth in online participation, with social media networks dominant among the platforms used.³³ As previously stated, the figures from this study exceed those released by the Central Statistics Office; 88.3% of the survey participants for this study use social media compared to the national figure of 72%. Cognisant of this popularity it was essential

³¹ Approximately 300 million photographs are shared daily on Facebook, with 95 million shared daily on Instagram <https://dustinstout.com/social-media-statistics/> (accessed: 14.05.20)

³² <https://ourworldindata.org/rise-of-social-media> (accessed: 30.03.19)

³³ Central Statistics office reported that 87% of individuals surveyed accessed the internet outside of home or work through their mobile phones, with social networking accounting for 72% of the activity online. Available at https://pdf.cso.ie/www/pdf/20200212091235_Information_Society_Statistics__Households_2017_full.pdf (accessed: 02.05.19)

to explore further the reasons and motivations behind the participants' use of social media-specific activities.

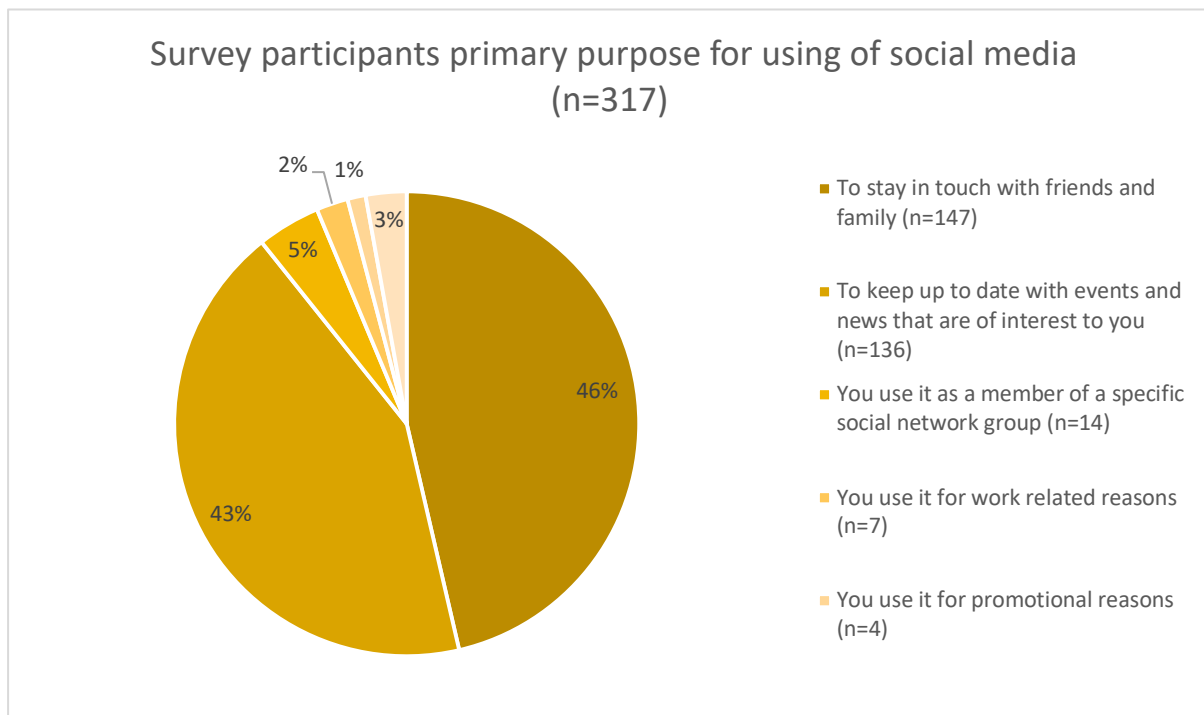


Figure 34: Survey participants' primary purpose for using social media

Acknowledging the basis of uses and gratification theory in communications literature, Malik et al. emphasised that its 'theoretical grounding provides excellent foundations and relevance for research on social media usage and practices' (2015: 130). This study sought to identify the core uses and gratifications obtained from the survey participants' engagement on social media. Figure 34 shows that 89.2% (n=283) of survey participants who use social media, when asked to elaborate on their use primarily did so as a means of being connected. Be it connected to family and friends (n=147), or as a way of connecting to news and/or events that may be of interest to them (n=136). Previous research similarly found social media used as a communicatory utility, a location of social interaction and a platform for information sharing (Whiting and Williams, 2013). The use of social media to be connected among this study's participants correlates with the motives for disclosing personal information on social media outlined by Brosch (2018). Citing the studies of Cheung, Lee and Chan (2015), Brosch (2018) similarly stated that establishing and maintaining relationships was one of the primary benefits of online self-disclosure.

Within the context of this research, we see a similar 'online self-disclosure' of personal information with the sharing of personal images. Van Dijck (2008) positions the shared personal image as a tool

used for an individual's identity formation and communication. The ease with which they are disseminated from online mobile devices has further positioned them as an accessible object of expression. A consequence of this for some has been a distancing of the use of images from their primary function as a tool for remembering (Garry and Gerrie, 2005; Harrison, 2002; Schiano et al., 2002). The practice connects those who share images and those who access the images once they are shared. This continues the use of photographs, or images to strengthen relationships (Sarvas and Frohlich, 2011; McDaniel, 2012). Furthermore, the connection is reciprocal as the feedback expected and facilitated by the affordances of social media platforms increases the intimacy between users (Brosch, 2008; 77).

Ellison et al. (2007) have previously presented a connection between the practice of building and supporting new relationships with the need for accumulating social capital. The specific practice of sharing images of children on social media was considered a 'capital enhancing activity' (Choi and Lewallen, 2018) among this study's survey participants and it is the authenticity of the reasons for sharing that the next section of this chapter explores.

6.5.1 The intention of the sharer

Previous literature has noted the benefits garnered from the sharing of images of children on social media (Ellison et al., 2007; Mc Daniel, et al. 2012; Duggan et al., 2015; Steinberg, 2016; Brosch, 2018; Wagner and Gasche, 2019). Acknowledging the popularity of sharing images of children on social media, with 60.8% (n=219) of survey participants doing so (see figure 34.) the research sought to explore participants' attitudes towards the practice. While 86.4% (n= 275) of survey participants said that they actively use social media to share images, this was not considered a prerequisite to having an opinion on the practice. From the 332³⁴ survey responses legible for coding as holding a positive, negative or neutral attitude toward the practice approximately 39% (n=130) were positive about the practice.

³⁴ From 360 survey participants, seven did not provide an answer to the question. The remaining nineteen participants provided answers that were not legible or did not specifically answer the question of 'What is your opinion on the sharing of photographs of children online through Social Media Networks?'

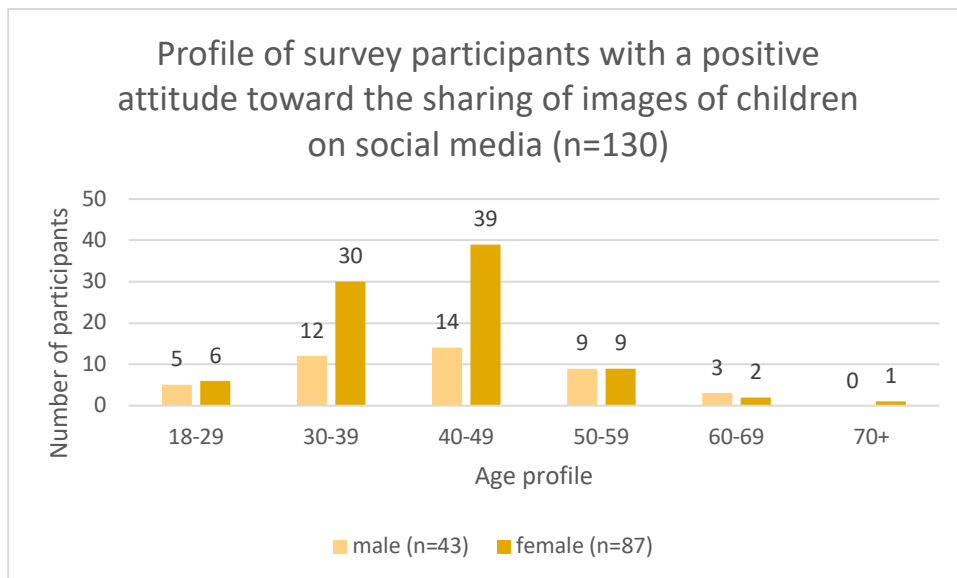


Figure 35: Profile of survey participants with a positive attitude toward the sharing of images of children on social media

Figure 35 shows that these responses consisted of 43.8% (n=43) of all male survey participants and 33.2% (n=87) of all female survey participants with the largest number (n=100 /76.9%) aged between 30-49 years of age. This mirrored the age profile of those among the survey most likely to use social media as shown previously.

The popularity of sharing images of children online was attributed by 41.5% (n=54) of these participants to overcoming challenges set by real-world accessibility and locational difficulties for family and friends. Participant R117 (f/40-49) stated that ‘It is great for families and friends who are separated by distance to see children growing’. From the perspective of a recipient, participant R009 (F/30-39) similarly spoke of the benefits, stating that she ‘wants to see my friends and family’s cute baby pics and I’m glad I can see them on social media as I don’t get to see them every day’. When interviewed, participant R048 (f/44) reflected on the contemporary sharing practices afforded by social media compared to the practices of previous generations. She spoke about the benefits from a personal perspective, while also premising her position on a managed access to the images:

‘Like, years ago we couldn’t unless you send them actual photographs to a relative abroad by post you wouldn’t know what your cousins looked like if they lived in a different country. Whereas now because of media, it’s amazing, it’s brilliant you’re not so distant, you know? It makes you closer, you know? and you appreciate like, the kids walking through the door it’s not as if oh my god which one is that? Who’s that? And who owns that one? We all know each other. We all know the kids, what they look like, what they’re at, you know what I mean? And that’s again, a brilliant thing, it’s a brilliant thing, it’s a brilliant part of it, you know what I mean? But again, that’s just immediate family, you know?’

Despite this benefit it is worth noting that seven survey participants specifically queried the intentions of those using social media to share images of children. These participants questioned who was benefiting more from the practise; whether it was the subject of the images or those sharing the images. Previous research that considered people's motives for sharing images of children online concluded that often such activities enhance the socio-cultural capital of the sharers opposed to the subjects of the images (Minkus, et al., 2015; Choi and Lewallen, 2018; Lipu and Siibak, 2019).

Evidence of this was seen in both the survey participants' responses and from those elaborating when interviewed. Participant R125 (f/30-39) believed that those sharing images were objectifying the children, claiming they were '... showing off, treating them as possessions'. A similar perspective was posited by participant R133 (f/30-39) referring to the practice of sharing images of children as using them as accessories of social media. She stated that '... what I don't like, is children being used to enhance as a social media accessory and to boost a profile'. Two other participants were also of the opinion that sharers were using images of children to enhance their status on social media networks. Participant R195 (f/40-49) felt that '... parents will be seeking likes and appeal from an image', referencing the 'like button' feature on Facebook, used as an indicator of approval for content or messages shared. While participant R314 (f/40-49) elaborated further that 'There is an obsession for some people to share every single photo and I feel this generation's parents are gratified by how many likes their children receive'.

Two participants believed by providing positive feedback they were gratifying the desires of the sharers to be 'liked' or approved by those accessing the images they shared. Specifically, participant R111 (f/40-49) elaborated that because of the 'need for approval' she would 'occasionally like a cute pic'. Similarly, participant R153 (f/40-49) stated that by commenting positively on photographs shared she felt that she was 'sharing their (the parents) pride in their offspring'. Both responses adhere to a normalised protocol of acceptance, that the images shared are worthy of a 'like' and ultimately, the participants perceive this to be the reason that the images are shared.

These practices authenticate the concurrent use of images as a currency of social interaction to both reaffirm and maintain established bonds (Van Dijck, 2008; 62) while simultaneously enhancing socio-cultural capital (Choi and Lewallen, 2018).

When interviewed, participant R319 (m/26) provided further reasons why he believed individuals shared images of their children on social media:

‘I think there’s just kinda two sides to that. It’s like, there’s like, sharing of content for the purpose of, like you know, showing the world, like, “Here’s my beautiful kid”. But, then there’s the other side of it where I kind of think it’s more about the gratification of the ... or self-gratification of the parent. Where it’s like “I just wanna keep sharing all this content”... but I think it kinda gets exaggerated and, like blown to, like new proportions when it comes to kids ‘cause you get plagued with lots of graphics and you’re like just kinda like, “Oh for god’s sake, this is ridiculous”. Like do you know that kind of way? So, I don’t know, that’s... I think it’s more about the self of the parent instead of it being about the kid, which is what they’re sharing it for...”

(Participant R319 (m/26) Interview 6th August 2018)

In this instance, the participant acknowledges that the intentions of those sharing images may be authentic, yet he also considers the possibility of sharing images for ulterior or even self-serving motives. Participant R255 (f/30-39) emphasised this perspective, claiming that photographed children ‘should not be used to gain attention for the parents’. Participant R308 (m/18-29) felt that some use this attention to compete with other parents, or even as a means of achieving forms of financial gain. These perspectives are consistent with the commodifying of the photographed child in online parent-photography blogs (Blum-Ross and Livingstone, 2017). While acknowledging that social media posts differ somewhat from traditional online blogs, similarities exist and Lee (2011) has classified the practice of posting information on social media platforms as a form of ‘micro-blogging’. However, in the current study, except for the sole response cited above [R308 (m/18-29)], participants were not concerned with potential monetary or commercial gains, but instead with the perceived self-gratification of the sharer.

Despite the tendency of survey participants’ to frame this as a social media issue, images of children have been used in this way for generations. Instances of the use of children as objects of conspicuous consumption (Du Boulay, 1970: 90-91) can be traced historically to portraiture of children commissioned by affluent classes to represent their social status or currency (Higonnet, 1998). Thus, despite the formats and platforms changing from physical tangible artefacts to pixels disseminated in a virtual place, the practice of using children’s images as a signifier of cultural capital (Bourdieu: 1970) persists.

6.5.2 Sharenting: A new development in the visual sharing of children

Concerns that relate to the authentic reasons for sharing images of children across social media do not lessen the popularity of the practice. As previously stated, 68.8% (n=219) of the 318 survey participants who use social media use it to share images of children. However, the ease with which this can be done, thanks to advances in technology and the mobilised accessibility of the Internet has seen the emergence of the oversharing of images.

The emergence of the related practice labelled as 'sharenting' has been discussed previously in chapter 3. From the 360 survey participants 120 made a specific reference to those sharing the images as influencing their attitude toward the practice. 28.3% (n=34) of these attributed this specifically to practices that can be classified as 'sharenting'. The practice of sharing images of children on social media has its benefits, with parents most likely doing so with positive intentions (Minkus et al., 2015). As previously discussed in section 6.5 of this chapter and evidenced in previous research, often sharing is a practice used to maintain relationships and help distant relatives and friends stay in touch. The popularity of the practice has positioned it as 'a ubiquitous part of the parenting experience' (Archer and Kao, 2018: 134). Participant R015 (f/43) alluded to the social normalisation of the practice when she recounted being questioned by her peers 'What do you mean you don't share photographs of your kids? How are people supposed to know what they look like?'. Following closing her Facebook account participant R325 (f/29) similarly recalled how she was 'hassled for weeks because no one could get pictures of (redacted child's name)'.

Previous research has found there to be a decrease in the frequency of sharing and capturing images of children as they grow old. Traditionally, it is at the beginning of a child's life that their image will be captured and shared more than any other period. Rose refers to this period of a child's life when a camera seems to "accompany the birth like an especially persistent visitor, determined to see the baby at all moments" (2010: 19). The subsidence as the child grows older has been accredited with the transition of the sharer or capturer of the images to parenthood (Titus, 1976; Rose, 2010; Zuromskis, 2013). Such a transition is adapted to more efficiently as the children age, resulting in the documentation of the child's development becoming less frequent. Participant R228 (f/30-39) testified to this when acknowledging that they 'do it (share) occasionally, while my child is a baby, but I think once he reaches two or so I will not post photos of him'.

Notwithstanding this, the popularity of sharing images of children is consistent. Yet, it can be done to excess, even fostering a weariness or concern among some of the survey participants. 21 survey participants explicitly stated that the practice of 'oversharing' was excessive and affected their

attitude toward the sharing of images of children. 12 additional participants reaffirmed this perspective claiming that if the sharing of images of children were less frequent, they would be more comfortable with the practice overall. Similarly, three participants, while of the opinion that sharing images of children on social media was a positive practice overall based their opinion on the practice being limited to 'moderate sharing', 'on occasion' or only done the 'odd time'.

Five participants noted that they had reached saturation point and commented that the practice was 'boring', 'irritating' or that they found it 'annoying'. For participant R324 (f/72), this was particularly relevant to the sharing of images of children unrelated to them:

'The only thing I find wrong with it, it's boring. No interest in looking at photographs of other people's kids, Maybe the odd one. But I'd say you get a pain in your... You'd be sick of looking at photographs of those kids of those that are sharing photographs all the time'

(Participant R324 (f/72) Interview 19th August 2018)

This displays a parochial attitude toward images of children that are known to the participant, as opposed to images of those who are not. When interviewed, participant R048 (f/44) reaffirmed this attitude:

'I understand that parents want to share, but as somebody who doesn't really like children, even though I have them, it's hard for me to get excited about somebody else's children, you know what I mean? Unless I know them, unless they're family. So that's why I... like my group would be family but if somebody started posting up pictures of their children, on, on, on there like every two minutes you're there going, "Give me a break". You know.'

(Participant R048 (f/44) Interview 4th July 2018)

Occasionally, intolerance with others' sharing practices resulted in participants 'unfriending' those whom they deem to share excessively. This was evident when participant R319 (m/26) stated:

'... there's been a number of people that I've considered unfollowing or unfriending, or whatever, simply because of that. You just get your timeline plagued with, like, images of you know, their kids effectively growing up day by day kind of stuff... it just kind of becomes, like,

this endless stream of kid photographs and it's like you know... I kinda feel like people need a bit of space. Do you know that kind of way? It's like share your best moments, don't share all the moments' cause then like how do you know which one is, like... where are the ones that meant the most?'

(Participant R319 (m/26) Interview 6th August 2018)

However, such a decisive reaction to oversharing did not sit comfortably with other participants. Again, when interviewed participant R235 (f/52) spoke of her unease with such decisions:

'... there's the etiquette, isn't there? They could make a choice and say "Do you know what? I haven't spoken to her in 15 years. Unfriend. And I could make the same choice, but you're afraid of offending people. The unfriending thing is actually really problematic (laughs)'

(Participant R235 (f/52) Interview 22nd June 2018)

Notwithstanding this, six additional participants chose to self-reflect on the frequency of their sharing practices. Alluding to their awareness of other people's limited tolerance of excessive sharing, they stated that they shared images of children 'sparingly' 'rarely' or that they only post the 'odd photo'. However, participant R194 (f/39) when interviewed acknowledged that those receiving the images could always ignore the practice of oversharing, stating that she '... understands some people get annoyed at it but they can just not look at it or change their settings. You know, I don't have a problem with it really' (Interviewed 25th June 2018).

Similarly, participant R325 (f/29) claimed that she did not have a problem with it and questioned why individuals harboured an issue with a practice that was not affecting them:

'If people are moaning about people posting images, how is it affecting you? Like, you know, people like to take pictures of their kids. Obviously, if they're their kids, people like to share them with their friends and their family. I have absolutely no issue with it, you know...'

(Participant R325 (f/29) Interview 26th June 2018)

By acknowledging the popularity of the practice, participants validate the previously discussed social norm of sharing images of children. However, there is a dichotomy entailed within the practice. Those choosing to share images of children must weigh up the balance between the benefits and the risks associated with creating a digital presence of the photographed children online (Marasli, et al., 2017; Brosch, 2018; Choi and Lewallen, 2018; Wagner and Gasche, 2019)

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed how mobile technology and social media has truly democratised the various aspects of everyday photography. The convenience of photographing and sharing images has resulted in the use of images as a 'preferred idiom in mediated communication practice' (Van Dijck, 2008: 58). The continued phenomenal uptake of social media has facilitated a shift in the levels of engagement by users. The former dominant presence of the passive observer among online participants (Nielsen, 2006) has been debunked with most users actively participating beyond the traditional role of the 'lurker'.

An effect of this increased engagement sees a similar shift away from the generational positioning of women as the dominant visual documenters of family history (Smith, 1998; Holland, 2008; Kamal, 2012). This research has shown there to be a proportional increase in the participation of men in this traditionally female role, a change that correlated with the increased mobility of the camera and the accessibility of social media. This migration from a predominantly domestic practice to one aligned with technology and digital online spaces has repositioned its appeal as a traditionally effeminate role to one less emasculating to men. Future research into the area of photographing and sharing images of children should take cognisance of this progressive re-aligning of the traditional gender roles, which up to this point has mostly focused on the practices of women or women and children (Holland, 2008; Chalken and Anderson, 2017; Wagner and Gasche, 2018).

The visual documenting of children and the family has predominantly transferred to online spaces populated by digital images despite the practice of printed photographs continuing to be stored and shared in the physical world. However, the unparalleled rise in social media engagement has presented those sharing images of children online with a dichotomy of benefit and risk. Survey participant's initial concerns were related to the benefits of sharing images and to whom they may be addressed, querying both the frequency and the authenticity of the perceived intentions of those who share images of children on social media. Participants also echoed the concerns of previous research when questioning the appropriateness of using images of children as a 'capital enhancing activity' (Choi and Lewallen, 2018: 156) by those engaging in the practice of online sharing (Minkus, et al., 2015; Lipu and Siibak, 2019).

This resulting dichotomy between the perceived benefits and risks of sharing are engaged with in more detail across the next chapter. With an emphasis placed on the visual construction of the child the research aligns with its key aim to explore how attitudes among the survey participants work to

construct a set of discourses around childhood and considers if they have changed as digital technology and social media engagement has progressed.

7 THE CONSTRUCTION OF CHILDHOOD: HAS IT CHANGED?

7.1 Introduction: Imaging the child

When discussing society's preference for the representation of the actual or real, Sontag stated that "Photography is the reality; the real object is often experienced as a let-down" (1973: 115). Such a relationship has long been established with society and the conventional imaging of children. Higonnet (1998) posited that images of family life in which children were presented as innocent, vulnerable and in need of protection were popularised among more affluent classes during the 1700s. This representation was maintained as improvements in print technology allowed mass duplication and distribution to gratify the demand for such images across all sectors of society (ibid).

Citing Lury (2002), Van Dijck (2008) notes that cultural ideas of physical appearance displayed through photographs and evolving over time, often unconsciously influence the mind's (idealised) images of the self (2008: 65). Similarly, the continued construction of childhood takes influence from the established visual concept of the child as represented in paintings, photographs and images previously circulated that was in no need of refurbishment (Holland, 2004). The resulting idealised images of children, as constructed by adults (Kumer and Shoenback, 2015) are sustained and re-presented across society through the everyday photographing of children.

The popularity among survey participants of photographing and sharing images of children across social media, as detailed in the previous chapter, maintains the homogenised visual representation of children. Social media affordances allow viewers of the images to provide feedback through Facebook 'likes' or individual comments to those sharing the images in real time. Approximately 32% (n=36 from 111) of survey participants who claimed to have commented on other people's images of children did so in a positive manner. These comments varied from general positive comments or 'likes' (n=15), comments related to the marking of special occasions or milestones in a child's life, a birthday or communion for example (n=12) or other positive comments related to the photographed child (n=9). These latter comments predominantly approved of the image of the child being 'cute', 'beautiful' or 'getting big'.

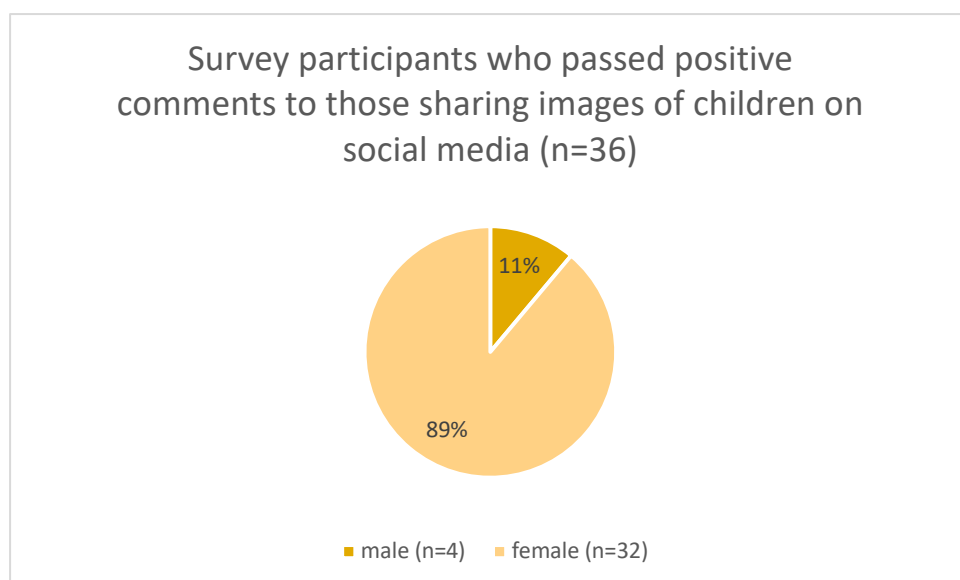


Figure 36: Profile of survey participants passing positive comments to those sharing images of children on social media

89% (n=32) of these survey participants were female (Figure 36) with over 72% (n=26) aged between 30-49. These figures reflect the high percentage of survey participants active on social media being female (74.2 % / n=236) and the majority aged between 30-49 (70.4% / n=224).

The nature of these positive comments indicates there to be an approval among participants for those sharing the image successfully achieving what has been normalised as an appropriate representation of what a child or childhood is meant to resemble. In section 6.5.1 of the previous chapter, the research referred to the practices of survey participants considering the intention of the image sharer. It follows here that the process of positively commenting on or ‘liking’ shared images of children gratifies a need for approval that some participants (n=3) perceive to be the genuine reason for sharing. Participant R195 (f/40-49) verified: ‘I said they were cute, that’s why I think the person put them up there... for approval’.

While this study does not engage in actual image content analysis, participants’ attitudes about photographing children and sharing images of children online work to construct a particular set of discourses around childhood. These are unpacked and explored across this chapter and considered from the perspective of the continued positioning of children as innocent, the ‘property’ of parents and non-agentic (Higonnet, 1998; Holland, 2004; Prout, 2008; Fulkner, 2010; Zuromskis, 2013) despite a contradictory rhetoric often being presented among the data sets. This raises queries regarding

participants understanding of online ethics and the continued undervaluing of the perspective of the photographed child. Again these issues are discussed across the following sections of this chapter.

7.2 Those most vulnerable: A continued protection of the innocent child

Literature on the construction of childhood positions the shift in responsibility for the child from the private spaces of the family into a more public discourse following the Child Study Movement of the late 19th and early 20th century (Prout, 2008: 28). This extended sense of concern for children can be attributed to the traditional separation of the innocent, vulnerable child from the adult world, a world from which they need protecting (Higonnet, 1998; Prout, 2008; Fulkner, 2010). This perception of responsibility persists today and is normalised through protectionist discourses that surround children. A subsequent concern was presented when survey participants were initially asked if they had previously or would in the future question someone taking photographs of children.

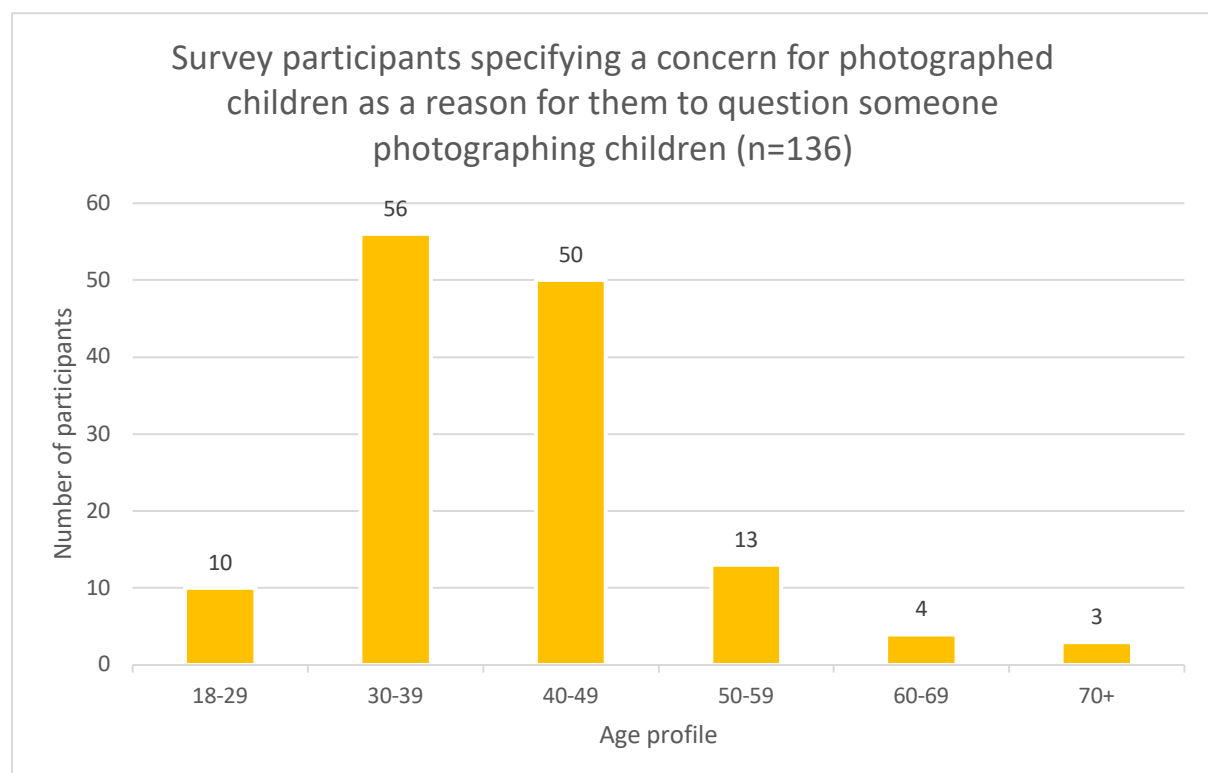


Figure 37: Survey participants specifying a concern for photographed children as reason for them to question someone photographing children

Figure 37 shows that from the 241 survey participants who claimed they previously have or may in the future question someone photographing children approximately 56% (n=136) mentioned a concern specifically for the children being photographed. Approximately 79% (n=107) of these were female participants and approximately 21% (n=29) were male. The largest proportion (78.5% / n=106) were aged between 30-49 years.

Approximately 52% (n=71 from 136) of these participants stated that their concern would be specific to children they knew being photographed. It is worth noting that three female survey participants specified that their concern for children was not dependent on whether the photographed child was known to them or not. Participant R027 (f/40-49) stated that if the children were 'unknown to me' they would 'maybe' consider questioning the photographer. Yet, they also stated they would have the same consideration if the children were their own, thus applying no differentiation between the two categories of children in their response. Without mentioning their relationship to the children being photographed, a further 55 participants did not specify if this would be an influencing factor. This figure constitutes over half (58.5%) of the 94 participants who chose to elaborate on their position that the child being photographed 'may be' a cause for them to question individuals taking photographs in the future. This indicates that the majority of these participants would not limit their potential future questioning of photographers taking photographs of children to only children that they knew.

A similar protective sentiment towards children was shown when survey participants were asked for their opinion on the sharing of images of children online through social media networks.

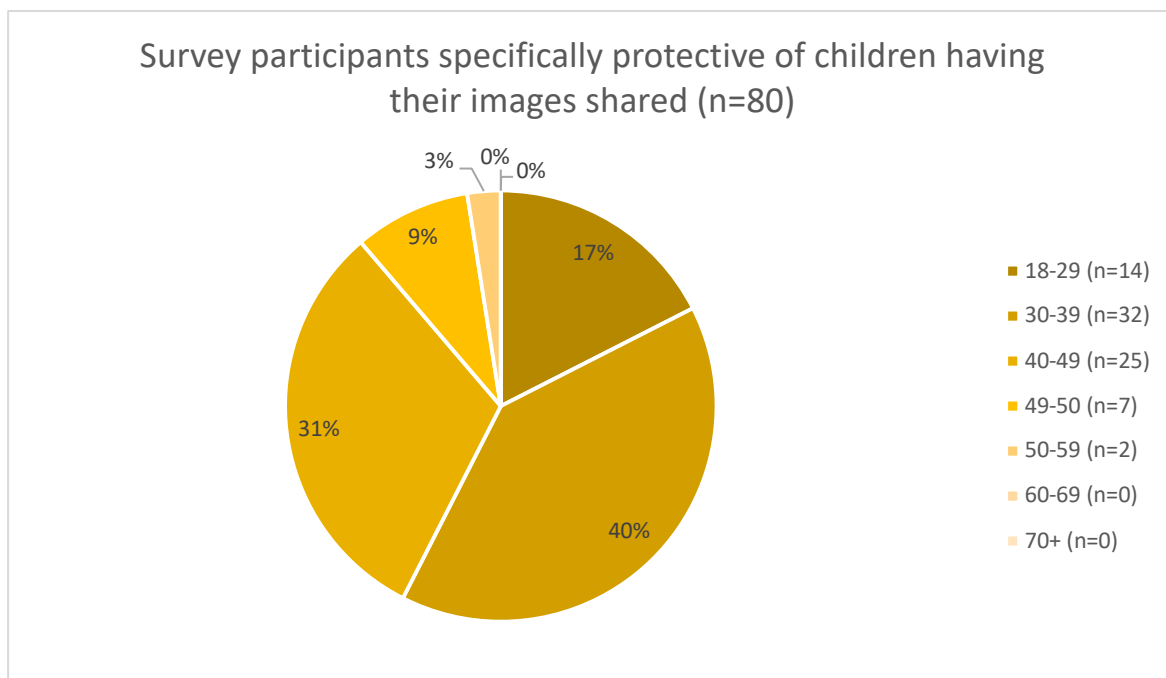


Figure 38: Survey participants specifically protective of the children having their images shared

From the 349 survey participants providing an opinion on the practice, approximately 22.9% (n=80) specifically felt protective of the children having their images shared. Most of these survey participants (71.25% / n=57) were aged between 30-49 years with 81.25% (n=65) being female. Approximately 21% (n=17) of these participants' concerns were directly related to children they knew. When interviewed participant R307 (f/59) spoke of the onus of responsibility she felt for safeguarding children, claiming '... because they're a child, you know, there's obviously uh, more of an obligation on us to them' (Interview 2 July 2018). Participant R002 (f/38) echoed this perspective stating that '... a child needs to be protected, and you know they're vulnerable at a young age...' (Interview 21 June 2018).

These findings show that the traditional protectionist discourses concerning children continue to extend beyond concerns with survey participants own children or children known to them. Both the photographing of children and the sharing of their images online are practices in which children are continually constructed as a concern for the nation (Prout, 2008) as opposed to being limited to the family.

The previous chapter considered the dichotomy presented to those sharing images of children online as a balance between the associated benefits and risks. The benefits of sharing predominantly align with those doing the sharing; Parental public expression of affection for their children (Duggan, et al.,

2015), receiving approval for their parenting (Krasnova, et al. 2010; Steinburg, 2016; Brosch, 2018) and using social media to create and continue relationships while increasing familiarity through reciprocal exchanges (Elison, et al., 2007; Brosch, 2018; McDaniel, et al. 2012). Whereas the risks are, for the most part associated with the potential compromising of the photographed child in a non-consensual manner (Minkus et al., 2015; Blum-Ross and Livingstone, 2017; Moser et al., 2017; Brosch, 2018; Wagner and Gasche, 2018; Lipu and Siibak, 2019).

The extension of these anxieties online aligns with children's occupancy of and participation in web-based spaces. Their online vulnerability is part of a construction of the online child as passive and susceptible, positioned vis à vis potential predators, who are constructed as active and tech-savvy, utilising the technology for their own nefarious gains. This presents a technological-determinist and socio-individual determinist dichotomy of online participation, shaped by the user being a child or an adult (Meyer, 2007). Research into the online habits of children extends beyond the scope of this research, yet the perceived risks associated with their online presence has been noted as affecting survey participants' attitudes towards sharing their images.

From those surveyed 29 participants stated that the presumption of online dangers directly influenced their attitude towards sharing images of children. 15 of these participants were unspecific in their response, simply stating that there was a 'risk' associated with the practice or that it was 'dangerous'. Participant R241 (m/60-69) stated that he felt '... it was at best foolish and certainly dangerous', without providing any more details. Whereas, participant R018 (f/18-29) emphasised that the practice of 'posting photos... is dangerous and in a way abusing'. Eight other participants related potential dangers directly to the compromising of the photographed child, stating that it was '... not safe', '... not entirely safe' or clarified that they 'don't post partly for safety reasons'. Yet, these participants again did so without being specific about the actual risks.

Five participants gave context to their concerns, relating them directly to perceived dangers of the web. They believed the dangers to be a contemporary issue that reflected the current state of social media and the uncertainty surrounding it into the future. Participant R008 (f/30-39) attributed her concerns to the '... rapidly changing nature of social media', a perspective echoed by participant R167 (m/18-29) when he stated that '... it is getting more dangerous every day'. Participant R137 (f/50-59) drew out her concerns about wider society claiming that '... it (sharing images of children online) is inappropriate and dangerous in the world we live in today'. These responses, again presented without any further elaboration, reflect a perception that is considered normal and unchallenged by the participants.

There is a noticeable omission of an explicit example of what such a 'danger' or 'risk' may be from these responses. This lack of a perceived necessity to provide specifics is an example of the traditional association between online activities related to children and potential endangerment. This juxtaposition contradicts the 'techno-optimist' outlook that sees the potential for technology to empower children (Smith and Cole, 2016). Instead the more cautious protectionist discourse traditionally aligned with children is maintained, nullifying the need to specify any explicit danger or risk.

Notwithstanding this, participant R293 (f/40-49) felt that despite there being concern about the dangers of sharing images of children online, it was not enough to deter people. She explained, '... you need to be aware that the image can be downloaded and use (sic) without you even knowing it. It is a risk, but I think we all do it even though we know the danger of that being done'. Here participant R293 (f/40-49) queries the authenticity of these concerns among those who continue to share images while perceiving the practice to have potential consequences. This mindset raises concerns related to the reasons for the online sharing of images of children and the balance of benefit and risk considered by those choosing to share.

Other than these unspecific responses, 14 survey participants elaborated on the dangers they perceived to exist online. Eight of these believed that there was potential for the misuse of images shared online by those gaining access to them. Participant R277 (f/60-69) stated that images '... may be used without permission for purposes other than the initial intent when posting'. Participant R224 (m/50-59) provided more detail, stating that '... some nefarious characters may use the images for immoral purposes'. This was also considered a concern for participant R235 (f/52). When interviewed she further elaborated on the 'creep factor':

'You know, the idea that somebody's gonna download a picture of my daughter in a communion dress and have a wank to it. Not to put too fine a point on it. That's, that's creepy'

'It's the lack of control... you have a picture, you share it with your friends on the Internet, and unless it's in a protected space, you don't know where it's going. And it could be innocent, you know? A little girl in a dress doing a tutu dance, but it's the creep factor there, you know? Is that somebody's fetish? Do they, they like pictures of toddlers doing tutu dances and they get off on that?'

(Participant R235 (f/52) Interview 22nd June 2018)

Concerns related to immoral activity and deviant gratification resurfaced among other participants when interviewed. Participant R325 (f/29) clarified her reluctance to facilitate the use of images of her child in that way:

‘... I think with the rise of social media and the Internet, stuff like child pornography has become easily accessible thing for paedos, you know... people getting caught with it on their computers and you know, people saving pictures of kids... just the thought of someone having that image (their daughter) and using it in that way, it's just not nice, you know?’

(Participant R325 (f/29) Interview 26th June 2018)

These dangers and risks have origins in the traditional separation of the child from aspects of the adult world. The protection of the child from adult secrets, faults, social evils, and sexuality (Postman, 1994; Higonnet, 2008; Fulkner, 2010) remains a key element of their continued construction. Such a protectionist discourse is justified when children are continually represented as innocent, vulnerable and in need of guardianship, a construction that has normalised over the centuries (Postman, 1994; Orne, 2001; Prout, 2008). Furthermore, as the child's presence has drifted from real-world locations to virtual spaces there has been an affective erosion between the concerns and worries for the actual child and the representation of them.

7.2.1 ‘The image of the child is the child’: A cognitive collapse between the image of the child and the child itself

The protectionist discourse aligned with children dominates to such an extent that there is evidence of an affective cognitive collapse between the visual representation of the child and the child itself. Batchen previously stated that we tend to look at photographs and images as though we are “gazing through a two-dimensional window onto some outside world” (2000: 263). Given the context to this research, the protectionist gaze extends beyond the child to include their visual representation, these days extensively shared across social media. Previous research into family photography found that photographs are often interchangeable with what they are refer to (Rose, 2003). Recounting numerous occasions during her research Rose noted that the “photographs were addressed or described as if it was the person it showed” (2003: 11). A similar practice was observed during this study's field work. When interviewed, participant R235 (f/52) adopted the abbreviated phrase ‘That's

Jane', rather than completing the sentence 'That is a photograph of Jane' when referring to a displayed photograph of her daughter.³⁵

Despite being the only example among those interviewed, this sentiment was implied when participants displayed protective attitudes towards photographs and images that would traditionally be confined to actual children. When interviewed, survey participant R307 (f/59) explained her reasons for being as protective of the images of children when accessed online:

'My concerns would be what is the purpose of it, what is it going to be used for, um, you know this is, these children's photographs are going somewhere ... I mean you do obviously think you know, of the dangers of it and you know, the whole area of paedophilia and all of that. And, and you know, that may, but you have to be qu-query of what is the purpose of it'

(Participant R307 (f/59) Interview 2nd July 2018)

When reminded that it is an image of the child as opposed to the actual child themselves, the interviewee emphasised: 'Oh, I don't know, the image of the child is the child... You know it is the child. And it is the person'. This perspective is indicative of the protectionist discourse that surrounds children. In this example it is presented in a mindset that perceives the immoral use of a child's image is tantamount to an abuse of the actual child.

This sentiment holds value to those active in research related to the use of online images of children. Former assistant director of Vulnerable Communities Office (VCO) at INTERPOL Detective Sergeant Michael Moran (2019) emphatically declared during his presentation at the IRISSCERT Cyber Crime Conference³⁶ that 'it's not just pictures'. Acknowledging the potential for actual real-world abuse being perpetrated by those using online images of children to gratify deviant needs, he cited both the Butner Study (Bourke and Hernandez, 2009) and follow-up research by Bourke et al. (2015). These reports found that 57.5% of those who view child sexual abuse imagery online admitted to hands-on offending also. The relationship with this study's area of research relates to the manipulation and use of everyday, non-sexual images of children to gratify deviant needs by individuals with a proclivity for child sexual abuse images (Quayle and Taylor, 2002; Ost, 2010).

Concerns with the shared images in this context relate to the potential misuse by those accessing them online. The digital afterlife of the images and the accompanying loss of control is at the heart of these anxieties. These were key issues identified as influencing survey participants' negative attitudes

³⁵ The name Jane is being used as a pseudonym as a means of anonymity

³⁶ IRISSCERT (2019) They're All Wan&*ers – A look at the role of masturbation in online offending. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dL_yyv9-upQ (accessed: 02.03.20)

and concerns about the photographing and sharing of images of children. These issues and their impact on the everyday practices of survey participants are unpacked and explored in more detail in chapter 8.

Concerns with the manipulation, misuse and abuse of images once shared are initially founded on an awareness of the potential for it to occur. There was a notable absence of this awareness when participant R324 (f/72) was asked during interview if she would share an image of her grandchildren on the Internet, she replied:

‘Em, ... If it was a nice one and cute one, I’d say I would. What harm is it? Who ya... who ya doing harm to? Just putting up a lovely photograph of your grandchildren. Anybody wanna see it, they can see it. What can they do? They can’t harm the child. What are they going to do? They’re going to make a big picture of it and throw darts at his eyes or something? You know people go overboard about photographs and being on the Internet. Do this and don’t do that’

(Participant R324 (f/72) Interview 19th August 2018)

Here participant R324 (f/72) displays her obliviousness to the potential for a more sinister misuse of uploaded images. This was pleasant to hear and ethically it was felt that no good could come from elaborating to the interviewee on the more ominous misuse of images that could occur.

Contrary to the previous perspectives, participant R324 (f/72) made a clear distinction between the image of the child and the actual child themselves. However, this was a unique position among the survey participants and there is more likely a tendency for the line of separation between the actual and the representation of it to be blurred.

7.3 A continued imaging of the child

Having presented concerns that relate to the misuse of images among the survey participants and wider academic research, the chapter now explores the actual imaging of children with a focus on what is considered appropriate in their continued homogenised construction.

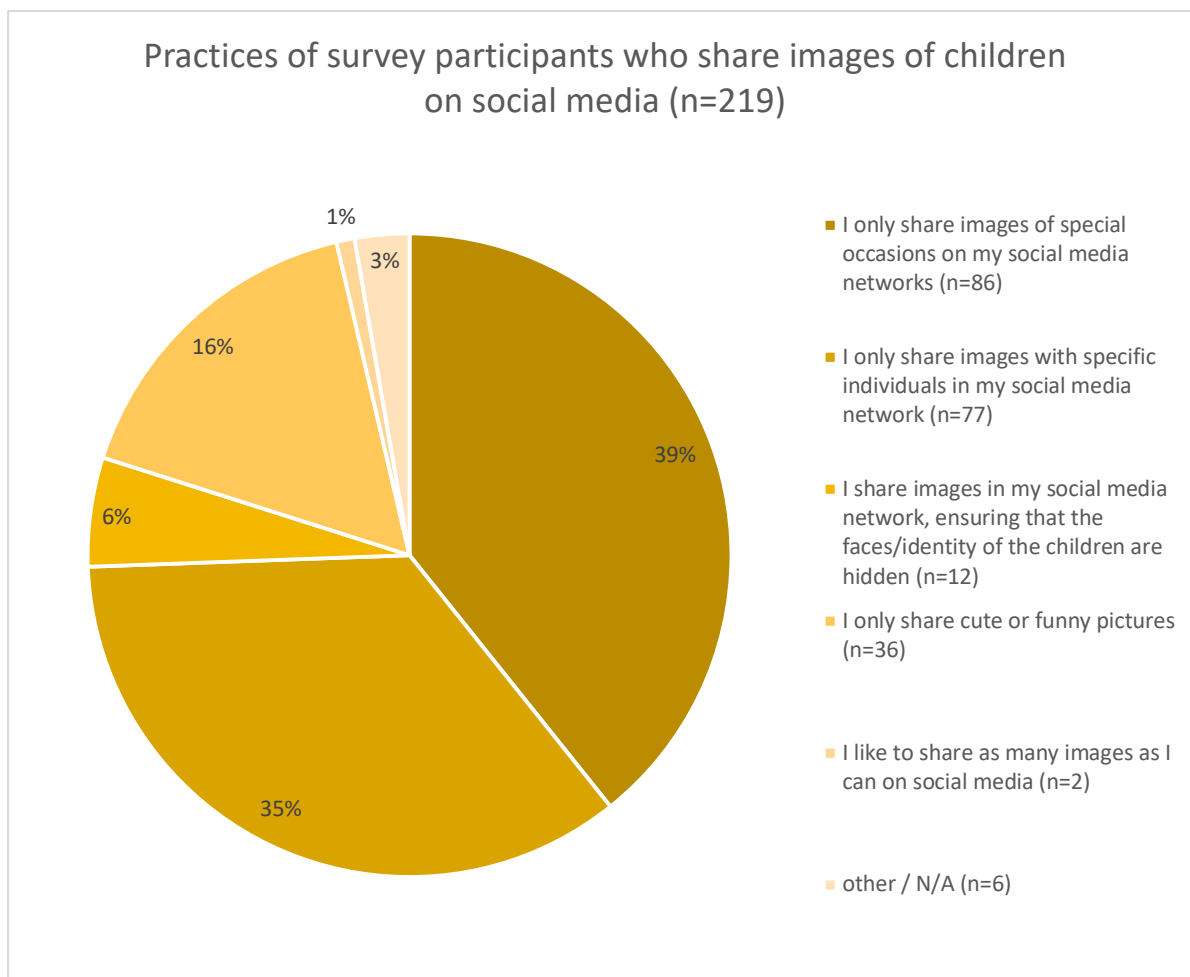


Figure 39: Practices of survey participants who share images of children across social media

When asked to elaborate on their practices of sharing images of children online, approximately 55.7% (n=122) of survey participants specifically referred to the content of the images as effecting their practice. These participants claimed that their sharing depended on whether the image being shared was 'of a special occasion' (n=86) or if the 'photographed child looked good, funny or cute' (n=36). Approximately 73.7% (n=90) of these participants were female, with the remaining 26.2% (n=32) being male. Each of these figures equate to approximately 55% of the male and female survey participants who choose to share images of children across social media.

The sharing of this type of content continues the tradition of visually documenting 'special occasions' in children's lives as discussed in section 6.2.1 of the previous chapter. Similarly, the sharing of images in which children look 'good, funny or cute' maintains the accepted construction of the innocent child. Platforms, materials and spaces may have changed from the physical to the digital, but the child continues to be photographed in the same way. Yet, it is when the content of these images alters from

this established and culturally acceptable construction that attitudes towards the practice of photographing and sharing images of children are less than enthusiastic.

When asked, 17 survey participants stated that the content would influence the likelihood of them confronting an individual photographing children. Without further clarification seven participants simply stated that it would “depend upon the content”. The remaining ten participants related their concerns back to the photographed child, referencing the clothing worn by the child or lack thereof being a concern. Participants R017 (f/40-49) and R317 (f/40-49) specifically referred to the child swimming or wearing a swimsuit, whereas three other participants indicated that if the child was unclothed or naked, they would or may question the practice of the photographer. The five remaining participants specified that if they felt it was “distasteful” or if the child being photographed was “posing suggestively” or “was in distress” they would question the photographer.

18.4% (n=24 from 130) of survey participants who had previously stated that they were positive about the online sharing of images of children felt that way provided that the content of the images did not potentially cause embarrassment for the photographed child, or present them in an inappropriate way. Five of these participants referred to the sharing of images of children in situations in which they were unclothed as being ‘inappropriate’ for social media. Specifically, participant R043 (f/18-29) felt it was ‘... not appropriate to share images of your children in the bath’. This opinion was also implied by participant R181 (f/30-39) who said, ‘fully dressed, I have no issue’. An additional two participants felt that images of children in swimming costumes were similarly inappropriate to share.

Comparatively 11 survey participants referred to the representation of the child as a reason for them to negatively comment on someone sharing an image on social media. Three of these clarified that any photographs of children in ‘a state of undress’, ‘nude’ or ‘not fully clothed’ warranted the questioning of those sharing the image. Furthermore, three participants felt that if the representation of the children in the photographs ‘humiliated’ or caused the child ‘embarrassment’ it was appropriate to pass comment or question those sharing the images. Other concerns referenced ‘exploiting ... or just making fun’ of children and compromising their ‘dignity’.

From those interviewed, three participants emphasised that it was inappropriate to share naked or semi-clad images of children on social media. Participant R002 (f/38), when speaking of images, she had on her Facebook account stated that ‘I wouldn’t have, you know, pic – like naked pictures of my children’ (interviewed 21st June 2018). Similarly, participant R096 (m/38) claimed that it was ‘... pictures of naked children I would class as a kind of inappropriate to put up online’ (interviewed 4th July 2019). Alluding to concerns related to a loss of control over the images, participant R048 (f/44)

claimed 'You know, with this hot weather, kids going up in their swimsuits and all that sort of thing... you don't know who's getting their 'jollies' looking at that ...' (interviewed 4th July 2018).

Both Facebook and Instagram prohibit the sharing of images that portray nude children. Such prohibitions are included in their Community Standards and Guidelines policies. Specifically, Facebook states that:

'We know that sometimes people share nude images of their own children with good intentions; however, we generally remove these images because of the potential for abuse by others and to help avoid the possibility of other people reusing or misappropriating the images.'³⁷

Accompanied by a cultural migration from the printed photograph to the digital image these policies have contributed to a decline in this type of photograph and image circulating in modern society. When interviewed, participant R096 (m/38) reflected that 'I wouldn't know whether you'd necessarily see as many of them (naked photographs of children) nowadays'. Recently an article published by YouGov (Ibbetson, 2019) stated that one in ten Britons claimed to have posted images of their children nude online.³⁸ This compares to previous generations when photographs of semi-clad or nude children were more commonplace. The cultural shift has been unpacked in section 2.5 of chapter 2 when reviewing the associated literature. The research considered the impact of the 'minority gaze of the photo chemist' (Buse, 2010) that reflected the zeitgeist of the attitudes toward children in the 1990s. This spawned a time in which 'images of naked children are viewed only through a sexual filter, where... one definition of obscenity is a child nude' (Brooks, 2007: 32). Previously the tradition of sharing this type of photograph among friends and family was often to the embarrassment of the photographed child in later years. Participant R325 (f/29) reminisced about her own experiences and brought context to today's practices:

'My mam's got loads of images of my little ass, you know. But, I mean, she didn't share them with loads of people. But she had them in photo albums that she takes out sometimes and, you know shares with people.

³⁷ https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards/child_nudity_sexual_exploitation (accessed: 26.06.19).

³⁸ Survey conducted online by YouGov between 16th -20th August 2019 with 897 British parents of children aged 18 and under who use social media. YouGov are a survey house who have played a pioneering role in developing and enhancing the reputation of internet surveys in the UK. Available at: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/lifestyle/articles-reports/2019/09/03/half-britons-say-parents-dont-need-childs-permission> (accessed: 28.05.20).

I think it's funny. Like it was embarrassing when I was a kid obviously, but you know I look back now and, you know, I kind of think of my mom as you were my age and you know, (child's name) was like me. And you know, I don't know, like it depends on her life experiences. She might think it's really embarrassing, and she might think it's inappropriate. She might think it's cute, you know, I don't know.'

(Participant R325 (f/29) Interview 26th June 2018)

Here the participant acknowledges her child's potential feelings in the future particularly when they are reflecting on images, hoping that they will not feel embarrassed, as they were when they were a 'kid' themselves.

This sentiment was echoed by five other survey participants who similarly referred to the potential future embarrassment that inappropriate photographs could cause in the future for the photographed child. Previous research with children found they perceive embarrassing and or overly revealing content as inappropriate for parents to share on social media (Moser, et al. 2017). Participant R207 (f/30-39) considered the feelings of the photographed child, stating that '... any photo that may cause the child embarrassment or upset in the future should not be posted'. This position not only acknowledges the inappropriateness of sharing images with embarrassing content but also considers concerns related to the access of images beyond the time that they are shared.

The source of future embarrassment for photographed children may not be a direct result of the content of the shared image (Brosch, 2016). Sometimes it is the commentary that accompanies the image or the comments that follow it being shared that are the source of embarrassment (ibid: pp.79-80). Again, this relates to the digital afterlife of images once they have been shared. This area is explored in more detail in the next chapter as another key issue identified shapes survey participants' negative attitudes about the photographing and sharing of images of children. Notwithstanding this, the opinions of the photographed children are beyond the scope of this study and further research should be carried out in the future with a specific focus on Irish children being photographed and having their images shared online, as has been done previously with children in the US (Moser, et al. 2017) and Estonia (Lipu and Siibak, 2019).

This continued visual construction of the child is expected and authenticated through the passing of positive comments and 'likes' by those accessing the images on social media. This results in a homogenised, constructed image of childhood that omits the realities of childhood that are deemed less palatable or inappropriate given the negative comments from these survey participants. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, in practice society prefers the representation to the reality (Sontag, 1977) and it is when the representation contests the 'accepted' or 'constructed' reality that

uncomfortableness ensues, and challenges are made. A noteworthy, albeit more public example of this was witnessed when photographer Jill Greenberg received death threats through the mail following the publication of her series of photographs titled 'End Days' (2012).

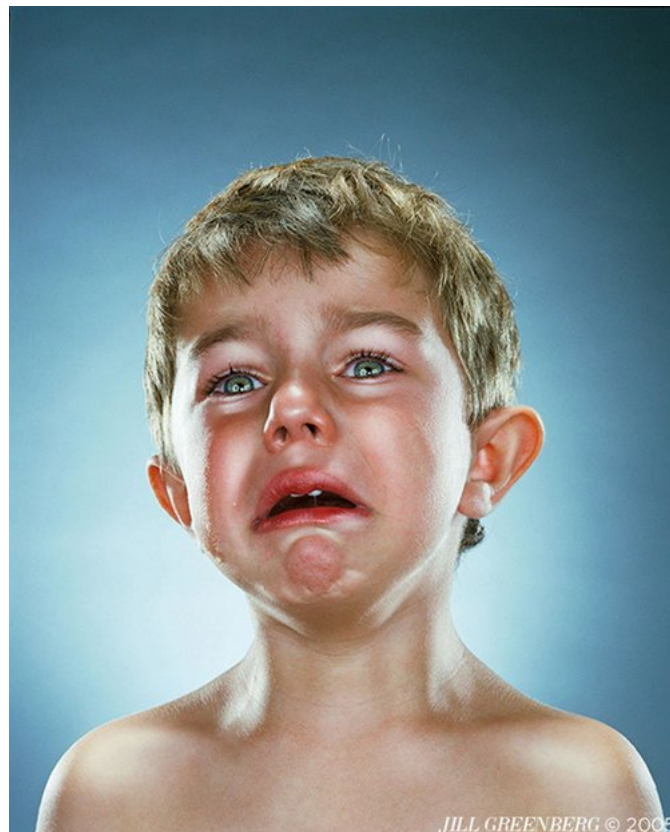


Figure 40: Untitled image from 'End Days' collection. Jill Greenberg (2005)³⁹

Each image represented a visual commentary from the photographer on the Bush administration at the time in the United States. These photographs captured a split second of time when the photographer photographed numerous young, semi-clad children crying having had a lollipop or screen-device taken from them by their mothers. The backlash and criticism received fixated on accusations of abuse on the part of the photographer. However, Greenburg, when interviewed in 2013 defended the photographs claiming that:

"Making children cry for a photographer can be considered mean. But I would say that making children laugh and show off their jeans for an apparel ad is just as exploitative and less natural.

³⁹ <https://www.jillgreenberg.com/end-times> (accessed: 20.11.20)

Toddlers' natural state, like 30 percent of the time, is crying, and it doesn't indicate pain or suffering... it really just a way they communicate".⁴⁰

The capturing and display of photographs that represent an authentic aspect of childhood that is rarely documented ignite emotional reactions characteristic of the normalised protectionist discourse around childhood. When compared to the lauded and often duplicated photographs from Anne Geddes' 'Until Now Collection' (1999), as previously discussed in section 3.2 and shown in figure 3 and figure 4 the palatable nature of the constructed innocent child is obvious. Notwithstanding this, occasionally even traditionally appropriate photographs and images of children were challenged by survey participants.

Participant R198 (m/18-29) stated 'I'm not a fan of parents posting photos of their young children on Facebook etc. When they're older they can choose if they want to post photos of themselves, but it's not necessary now and they don't have a say'. While participant R281 (f/30-39) claimed '... I feel we should wait until the child can give consent as to what can and cannot be posted to social media of them'. These participants consider the photographed child as something more than a subject to be photographed, despite not specifically suggesting an age deemed appropriate. Participant R307 (f/59) took cognisance of the legal perspective when considering this. Using the term *compos mentis* during her interview she spoke of a child's capacity for making decisions. When interviewed she stated that 'they, you know haven't, they're not *compos mentis* enough to represent themselves until they come to 18 or whatever' (Interviewed 2nd July 2018). This concern relates to the consent of the child and their entitlement to privacy. The next section of this chapter explores this area of consent in more detail.

7.4 The non-agentic child and the permission of the parents

When citing the succumbing of commercial photographers to the patron's desire for an 'idealized self-image'⁴¹ (Barthes, 1980: 13), Van Dijck (2008) challenged Barthes' (1980) perceived lack of control

⁴⁰ <https://slate.com/culture/2013/08/jill-greenberg-end-times-crying-children-photos-became-a-headache-for-the-photographer-photos.html> (accessed: 21.05.20)

⁴¹ In his work *Camera Lucida* (1980) Barthes posited that being photographed was a closed field of forces in which four image repertoires intersect: The 'mental self-image' and the 'idealised self-image' being repertoires of the internalised image, and the 'photographed self-image' and the 'public self-image' referring to the

over the 'photographed self-image'. This agency or power of the subject is now more prominent than at any time previously. Technological advances have facilitated an instant accessibility to digital images created during the practice of photographing. Notwithstanding this, with the visual construction of childhood overwhelmingly established and produced from the perspective of adults, Barthes' noted lack of control continues to dominate for the non-agentive photographed child.

7.4.1 An absence of consent – Photographing the child

As image-capturing technology has advanced, image-sharing practices now predate a child's physical presence. A child's digital presence or footprint frequently makes its initial impression from the womb. Modern-day pregnancies are highly visible and no longer discreetly hidden beneath baggy maternity wear (Nash, 2005). The affordances of social media have provided a platform for women to freely document and share their pregnancy journey. The practice of sharing ultrasound images has become an accepted way of announcing a pregnancy across social media, with almost a quarter (23%) having their 'online births before their actual birth dates'.⁴² Many celebrities, including Katherine Heigl⁴³ and Lauren Conrad⁴⁴ have used it as a way of publicising their pregnancies to their many millions of social media followers.

Before the availability of 'take-home' copies of ultra-scans during the 1990s, the 'unborn human was hidden' (Nicolson and Fleming, 2013). Today children are photographed and have their images shared before they have fully formed. This extension of control, ownership and authority in the adult-child dynamic has become normalised. Often the owner of the image uses their dominant position in the relationship to garner social currency, with the subject not able to consent to having their image shared. When asked their opinion on the sharing of images of children across social media, survey participant R124 (f/40-49) claimed that '... (they) can't give permission - also those documented from prenatal scans onward. It is also a kind of showing off, treating them as possessions.'

external process of capturing an image influenced by the photographer's frame of reference and cultural perspective (ibid:13).

⁴² AVG surveyed mothers in USA, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain in September 2010. Conducted by Research Now among 2200 mothers with young (under two) children. Available at: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20101006006722/en/Digital-Birth-Online-World> (accessed: 02.01.19).

⁴³ https://www.instagram.com/p/BHAOWsytgG1/?utm_source=ig_embed (accessed: 03.02.20).

⁴⁴ https://www.instagram.com/p/BOukSkwgKAY/?utm_source=ig_embed (accessed 03.02.20).

This hierarchical relationship is not exclusive to the photographing of children and traditionally it extends across the practice of photography (Sontag, 1977; Barthes, 1980; Zuromskis, 2013) - those photographed are subject to the control of those taking a photograph, both at the time of capturing and with the future use of the photograph.

Over 147,000 images are shared across Facebook every 60 seconds.⁴⁵ The Pew Research Centre found parents to be especially protective about how images of their children are shared. The research found that 57% of Facebook users with children say that people sharing pictures of their children without their prior permission was something that they 'strongly dislike' about using the platform (2014).⁴⁶ This suggests there remains a high level of investment in the idea that the parent of a photographed child feels they should have ultimate authority over what happens to that image.

A recurrent theme across survey participants' responses was an expectation of permission being requested prior to the photographing of children. When asked how participants would feel if an unknown individual was taking photographs of children known to them 30 participants stated that they would only feel comfortable if the photographer had asked permission before starting to photograph. An additional 21 participants indicated that they would feel uncomfortable with such a situation, due to the lack of consent or permission sought by the photographer. A further 15 participants said they would have no reason to be suspicious of any photographer taking photographs of children they know, regardless of gender, provided permission had been given prior to the photograph being taken. Whereas, a combined total of 32 participants indicated that whether a photographer had permission to photograph a child would or had previously been a consideration in deciding whether or not to confront them.

Of these latter participants, six stated that they would approach the parents or guardians of the child being photographed as a means of clarifying that they were aware of the practice and that permission had been sought. Two of these participants specifically considered how the behaviour of the photographer when photographing as an indicator as to whether permission had been sought or not. Both participant R123 (f/50-59) and R249 (f/50-59) stated that if the photographs were being taken "sneakily" or "covertly" they would suspect that permission may not have been asked for. Additionally, a further two of these participants referenced that requests for permission were the normal protocol or practice they have experienced.

⁴⁵ <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/facebook-statistics/> (accessed: 25.03.19).

⁴⁶ https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Survey-Questions_Facebook.pdf (accessed:25.03.19).

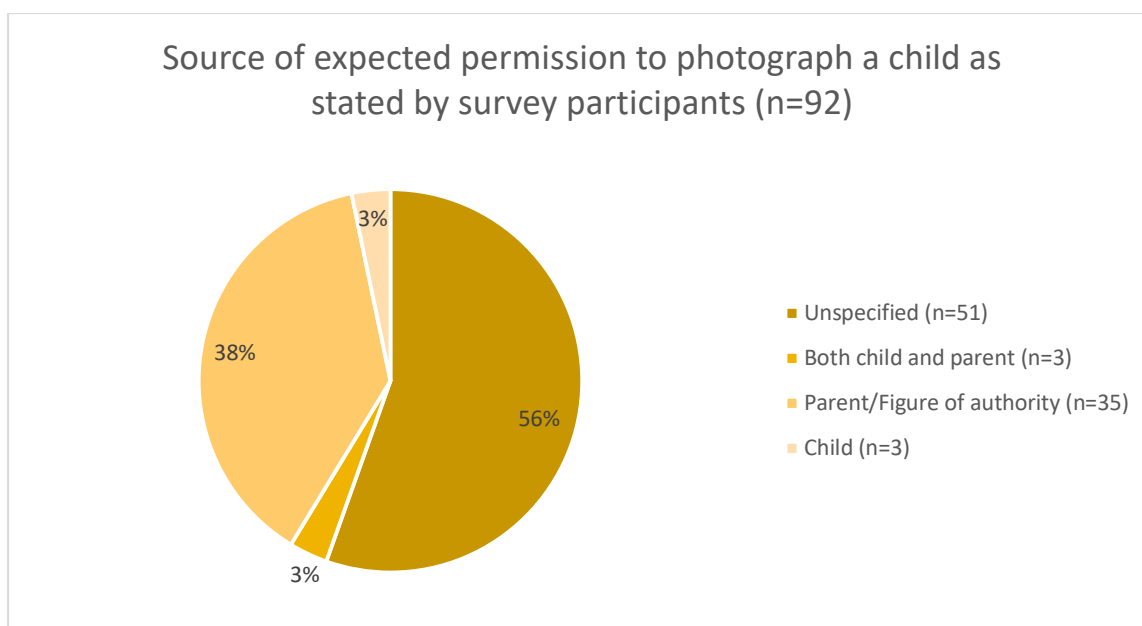


Figure 41: Source of expected permission to photograph a child as stated by survey participants

From those survey participants who specifically felt that permission should be sought prior to photographing a child (n=92) the majority either did not specify who should be asked (56% / n=51) or felt that permission should be granted from a guardian, parent or figure of authority (38% / n=35). Only six participants (five female and one male) made any reference to the consent of the photographed child being as appropriate or important (Figure 41). When interviewed, participant R307 (f/59) elaborated that: “I’m not sure that that’s appropriate, to take photographs of people without their consent. Of adults, and certainly not of children.” However, when queried if they would ask the child, they were photographing for their consent they replied: “I don’t think, well you-sh, you certainly shouldn’t take it without parental consent” (Interviewed 2 July 2018).

The normalised presumption of the need for parental permission to photograph children emphasises the lack of agency attributed to children. Furthermore, on the rare occasions among the data sets that permission to photograph was sought from the photographed child a refusal was not always accepted. Participant R325 (f/29) spoke of a time when they asked if they could take a photograph of their young daughter: “... she has times where she doesn’t want them taken ... she’s not in the mood or whatever, so I try to respect that ... and maybe take a sneaky one of her (laughing)”. This light-hearted response suggests that taking photos of one’s children without consent is not considered to be problematic.

Interestingly, the same participant (R325) was by far the most vocal of all the interviewees about making their child aware of practices related to consent and permission.

Given many of the survey participants' lack of concern about being photographed as children themselves, as discussed in section 6.2.1 of the previous chapter it is unsurprising that they are unconcerned about the consent or opinion of the photographed child. This normalised attitude is a continuance of the adult-child relationship that is generationally hierarchical. As stated previously, traditionally photography entails an unequal power dynamic between the photographer and the subject (Sontag, 1977; Barthes, 1980; Zuromskis, 2013) and when the subject is a child the absence of agency is often presumed. This position aligns with the historical perception of children as innocent subjects who make no attempt to shape their own image (Holland, 2004), remembering that the visual construction of the child and childhood is traditionally and predominantly an adult construct (Kumer and Shoenback, 2015). There have been some exceptions to this, with research conducted through the Photovoice method (Hubbard, 1994; Walton, 1995; Ewald, 2000). Furthermore, the growth of camera phone ownership among children has facilitated an autonomy of visual self-representation among children. The practices of children extend beyond this research but are worthy of revisiting for future studies.

7.4.2 An absence of consent – The online sharing of the photographed child

Similar to the previously discussed practice of photographing children, when sharing images, the consent or consideration of the subject is often replaced by the consent or consideration of the parent or guardian of the subject. Participant R247 (f/30-39) stated that parents' permission should be received on 'behalf of the child', indicating that the photographed child may not be able to grant permission. This was emphasised by participant R027 (f/40-49) when stating that she '... needs to deal with issues of consent on my child's behalf until they are equipped to deal with them, and this involves making decisions for them'. This response seeks to justify an aspect of governance being applied by a parent over the child, under the presumption that the child may not be capable of consciously making an informed decision themselves. This adheres to the perceived role of the parent as a gatekeeper to the content or information about their child being filtered from or shared on social media (Marasli et al., 2017; Wagner and Gasche, 2018).

The parent or guardian giving permission for the child to be photographed was considered a prerequisite for 21 survey participants who stated that the absence of such permission would stop them from sharing images. Both participant R072 (f/30-39) and R109 (f/18-29) clarified this when

stating that they would 'honour her (child's parent) wishes' and that they would 'respect the wishes of the parent'. Whereas, when interviewed, participant R194 (f/39) reflected on how the absence of parental permission had restricted her sharing an image she had previously taken:

'I got like one of my favourite photos I have ever taken, and it was a little kid staring straight into the camera like on his dad's shoulders, like in the middle of this kind of sea of people, and he was just bang in focus, and I'm like – this is like, I know this is a great photo but because it's a strangers child and not... do I not share it? I haven't shared it, I still haven't decided, but um... I tried to get in contact, find out who the parents were, but came up against a dead end, so you know'

(Participant R194 (f/39) Interview 25th June 2018)

Furthermore, when 33% (n=120) of all survey participants stated that the individuals sharing the images would affect their attitudes toward the practice approximately 38.1% (n=47) held the opinion that sharing was only acceptable if the parents or guardians of the photographed child granted permission. A correlation is found here with findings from previous research that showed approximately 57% of 960 surveyed Facebook users 'strongly disliked' when people 'posted pictures of their children without their permission (2014)⁴⁷ Each of these data sets reflect a protectionist discourse in which the parent of the child absorbs any potential the child may have for agency.

⁴⁷ https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Survey-Questions_Facebook.pdf (accessed: 25.05.19)

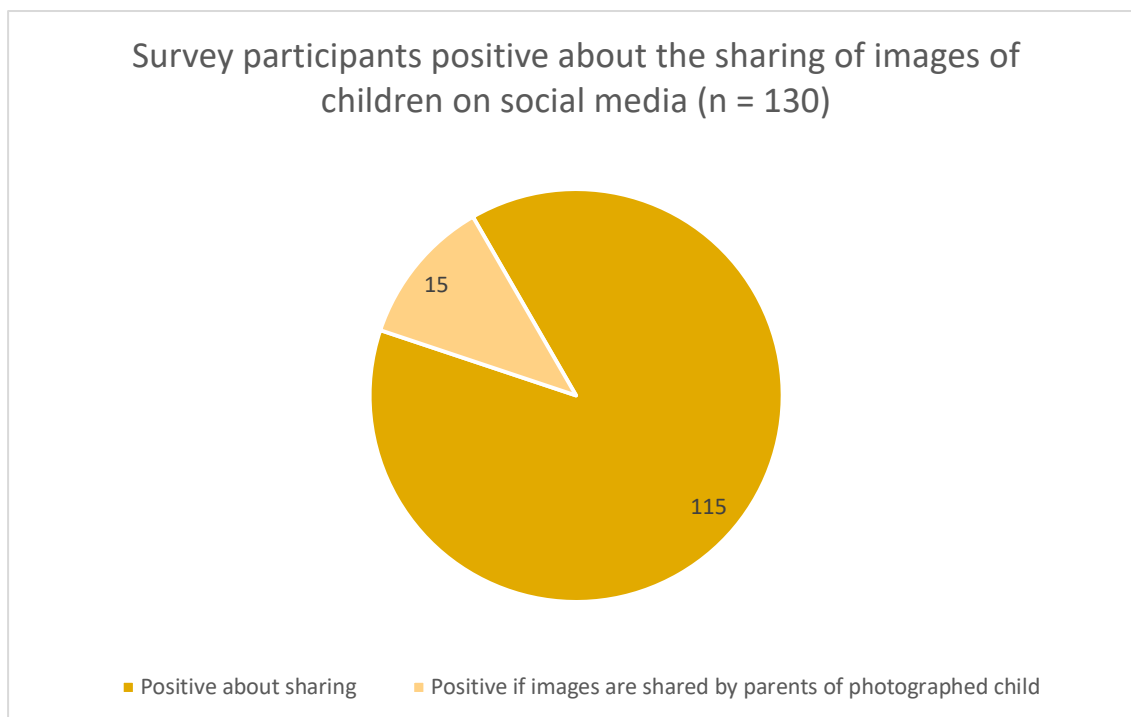


Figure 42: Survey participants positive about the sharing images of children on social media

Other participants went beyond the permission of parents or guardians being the primary influence over the online sharing of a child's image. 11.5% (n=15 from 130) of those survey participants who were positive about sharing a child's image felt that only the parents or guardians of the child should participate in the practice. Two of these participants emphasised that the practise should be restricted; participant R022 (m/18-29) claiming it should 'only be exercised if you are that particular child's guardian ...' and participant R070 (f/40-49) affirming 'only parents should have that choice and no third parties ...'. The remaining participants held the same opinion but were less restrictive in their responses. Participant R067 (m/40-49) typified this when stating that 'It is okay for parents or guardians to do so if they see fit to do so' and R240 (f/40-49) claiming 'I think it is okay if the children are your own and you are sharing the photos ...'. Two additional survey participants spoke from the perspective of their own practice. Participant R078 (f/30-39) stated that 'I share pictures of my own children, I don't have a problem with it ... some people do... that is their choice' whereas participant R278 (f/40-49) claimed to '... share pictures of my own children'.

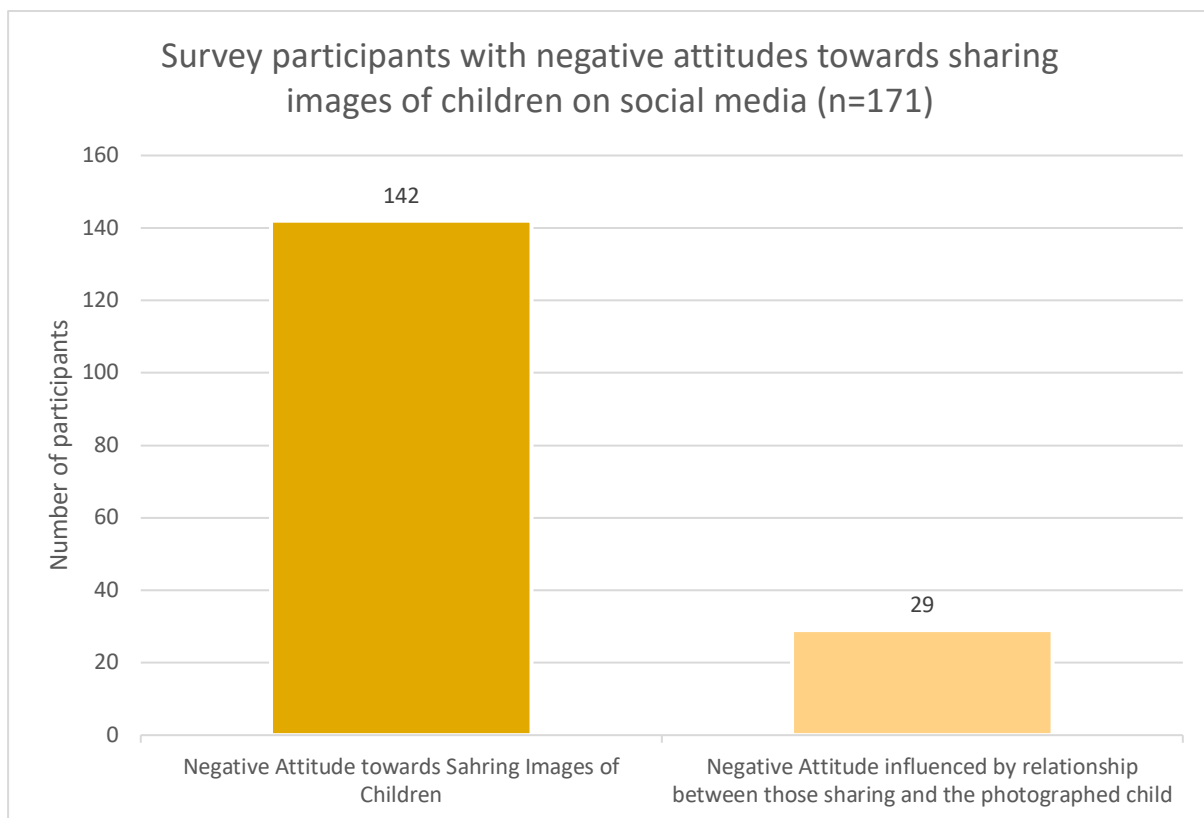


Figure 43: Survey participants with negative attitude towards sharing images of children on social media

From the 171 participants coded as holding a negative attitude toward the practice, approx. 17% (n=29) indicated that the relationship between those sharing the images and the photographed child would influence their opinion on the practice (Figure 43). 18 of these participants related their response to their own child, or children that were known to them. 10 of these participants stated that they shared images of their own children on social media and two stated that they did not agree with others sharing images of their children on social media. The remaining six specified that they only share images of their own children. Furthermore, 10 participants explicitly differentiated the attitude they held between children known to them and children unknown to them. Six of these participants felt that it was acceptable to share photographs of their own children, but they would refrain from doing so if the child were not their own. Participant R027 (f/40-49) explained:

‘I only share photos of my son that I feel are "appropriate" and would not cause him any future distress or embarrassment; however, I appreciate that some parents do not feel it is appropriate to share any photographs, and therefore am very careful about group pictures. For example, I do not take or share any pictures of my stepdaughter, so I do not share any 'joint' pictures of her and my son’.

(Participant R027 (f/40-49))

In this instance the participant is happy to share images of her own son. However, she perceives her non-traditional parental relationship with her stepdaughter as compromising any entitlement she may have had to share her image. This could be perceived as showing consideration for a child that, strictly speaking is not her own, and lending them some form of agency. Yet, it is clear from her statement that consideration is for the parents of her stepdaughter rather than the child herself.

7.4.3 A changing mindset and an agentic child

Despite participants' well-intended sentiments, prioritising the permission of a child's parent or guardian when capturing or sharing their image shows a lack of consideration for the opinions of the photographed child. The prevalence of this among the survey participants reflects a wider social norm, whereby there is an absence of agency being attributed to those below the age of consent (Livingstone, 2019).⁴⁸ 20% (n=26) of the 130 participants coded as having a positive attitude towards the sharing of images of children on social media based their opinion on permission being sought prior to sharing. However, only seven of these believed that the permission should come from the photographed children. Two of these participants believed permission should come from both the parent of the child and the child themselves. Participant R086 (f/50-59) claimed that: 'It is up to the individual parents of the child and the children themselves as to whether they wish for the photos to be shared', while participant R105 (f/40-49) similarly noted that 'Once permission is given by parent and child ... I have no problem with it'. This seeking of consent or permission from both child and parent aligns with the co-ownership of information among families regarding privacy management as proposed by Petronino (2010) and cited in context with the sharing of images of children by Wagner and Gasche (2018).

From the remaining five participants, both participant R322 (m/30-39) and R339 (f/30-39) laid the onus on the child to request the sharer to refrain from sharing their photograph. When stating 'if my children ask me or ask in the future to stop I will' and '... I have a seven-year-old daughter who insists on giving her permission before a photograph of her is posted'. The rhetoric of these two participants

⁴⁸ Livingstone, S. 2019. *Children's personal data and privacy online: it's neither personal nor private*. 17 February, Public Lecture, Trinity College, Dublin

appears contradictory to their practices; claiming that they grant agency to the photographed child while simultaneously sharing images without seeking their permission or consent.

There is, however, evidence that attitudes are changing. 21 survey participants specifically attributed their negative attitude toward the online sharing of images of children to a lack of consideration for the photographed child. Participant R241 (m/60-69) validated their perspective when stating: ‘I would object to someone taking a picture of me without my permission, so it follows that taking a picture of a child without its permission is also unacceptable’. Notwithstanding this, the number of participants explicitly considering the consent of the photographed child remains very small.

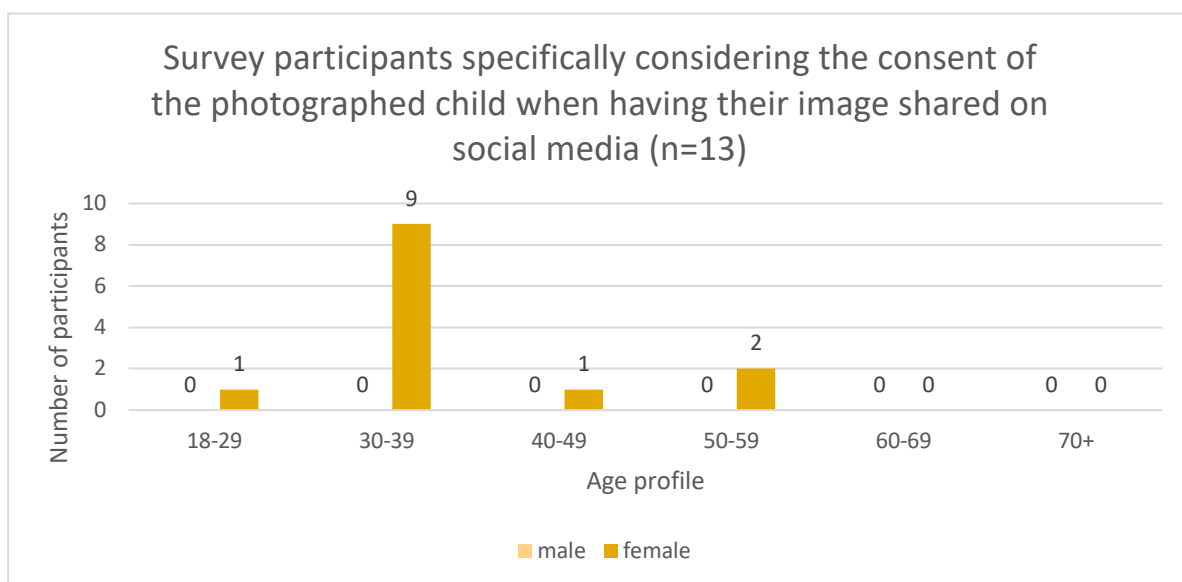


Figure 44: Survey participants specifically considering the consent of the photographed child when having their image shared on social media

Figure 44 details the 4% (n=13) of survey participants who explicitly acknowledged that the consent of the photographed child is of significance when sharing their image on social media. All these survey participants were female, with the majority (n=9) aged between 30-39. Considered alongside findings from previously cited research conducted by the Pew Centre (2014) this highlights an inconsistency concerning adults’ attitudes towards their own image. That study showed that 36% of those surveyed ‘strongly dislike’ the practice of ‘people posting things about them or pictures of them without their permission.’⁴⁹ Yet, the number of survey participants from this study similarly considering the

⁴⁹ https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Survey-Questions_Facebook.pdf (accessed: 24.03.19)

opinions of children whose images are shared is significantly low. When the practice of seeking a photographed child's consent was put to participant R324 (f/72) it was considered inconceivable. She stated: 'No. I'd just do it. I don't see the reason why I would have to ask them' (Interview 19th August 2018).

An additional 25 survey participants attributed their negative attitude towards the sharing of children's images online to a similar lack of agency, without specifically mentioning the 'consent' of the child. Elaborating on their position, participant R047 (f/30-39) felt that the practice of sharing '... can be disempowering to children'. While participant R221 (f/50-59) equally felt that those who share often '... don't take into account how the children may feel in the future about images posted'. This sentiment was echoed further by participant R355 (m/44) when he stated that 'People don't think about... how those children may feel later on as adults with regards to their childhood photos are out there permanently for all to see'. These perspectives relate to the digital afterlife of images once they have been shared. As previously mentioned, this is discussed in more detail in the next chapter as a key issue identified by participants as influencing negative attitudes towards the practice of sharing images of children.

Ten further participants believed that the practice of sharing displayed a disregard for any entitlement to privacy that the children should have. Participant R019 (f/30-39) claimed that 'children have a right to privacy... sharing images violates their privacy'. This sentiment was emphasised by participant R047's (f/30-39) claim that the practice of sharing a photographed child's image '... violates a fundamental right to privacy'. Participant R255 (f/30-39), while sharing this opinion, provided a more passive response: 'the privacy of children should be respected'. When interviewed, participant R307 (f/59) elaborated on her own similar position, in a structured and detailed manner:

'I suppose, for me maybe I think people are entitled to their privacy. I don't think ... people's privacy should be breached without some consultation with them, or consent with them. I also think, I suppose the whole era of social media and those platforms have actually opened up opportunities to use information and data for-for lots of reasons. Both honourable and maybe not-s-honourable.

And for that reason, I think we should be cautious in relation to how we put up there. I also think, um children have a right to their own privacy. And I don't think parents should breach it either. You know, and I often wonder you know, you know those photographs once they go up there, they're there forever... now most of them are very appropriate and there's no problem, but then there's you know, it is an opportunity for people to find, to find information or find, um, find pictures that you now, for whatever reason you know they can do that.

And uh, we should be cautious of children's rights'

In this response the participant refers to the previously mentioned future use and digital afterlife of images once they have been shared. While they also consider the role a parent must play in the privacy of the child. This response was unique among the survey participants, specifically acknowledging that children are entitled to an autonomous privacy, ungoverned by their parents as detailed previously in section 3.7 of chapter 3. Perspectives that specifically refer to the privacy of the photographed child are underrepresented among the survey participants. Yet, this reflects the broader discourse that maintains the child as vulnerable, dependable, non-agentic and in need of protecting.

Notwithstanding this, participant R013 (f/40-49) projected a time in the future when control over the sharing of images of photographed children may reside with those photographed. She specified in her survey response that 'As time goes by, I'm aware it may not be my place to decide whether to post pictures of my children on social media...'. Such a perspective aligns with the progressive policies of Early Childhood Ireland in seeking the consent from the photographed child. A similar position was echoed by participant R002 (f/38) when reflecting on real-world practices from her experience as a childcare worker.

7.5 An over protected child: A contemporary weariness of caution

Ideas, thoughts and practices empowering children in an agentic manner challenge the established construct of them as innocent, vulnerable and requiring protection. Yet, there is a delicate balance between empowering children and what is perceived to be the overzealous protectionist discourse that has emerged within modern society. The issue of consent is at the forefront of this. Emerging mindsets that take cognisance of the restrictions on the photographing and online sharing of images of children extend an authority over the image to the photographed child. This instils them with an autonomy of identity that surpasses the traditional construct of children as being in need of safeguarding. With a limited capability of granting permission themselves, restrictions on practices are normalised and a social norm of requesting consent gathers some momentum in the practices of photographing and sharing images of children. However, the same restrictions and social norms can be interpreted as somewhat draconian or extreme by some. This latter perspective questions the credibility of such impositions and laments a loss of innocence, if not of the child but instead of associated practices in relation to children. When interviewed, participant R324 (f/72) reflected that

‘Everybody’s gone so polite and everything’s overboard now. Now they’re saying, is it all right if I kiss my grandchild? Oh, can I take a photograph? Bring me back to the 50’s. The good old days’ (Interviewed 19 August 2018).

In this instance, participant R324 (f/72) relates her opinion to the broader protectionist discourses surrounding the child in contemporary society. An element of this is the emphasis placed on the consent of the child, an area that the participant further elaborated on:

I think it’s come to the stage, that if you asked me this 20, 30 years ago, I’d say to you, what the hell is he on about? It’s like you’re looking for something to give out about, but now with everything going on, and this that and the other and you can’t take a photograph of a child. And you can’t do this and you can’t do that... to me it’s just a load of codswallop.

(Participant R324 (f/72) Interview 19th August 2018)

This position was not unique among the survey participants. Three additional participants believed any suspicion concerning the practice of photographing or sharing images of children was evidence of a ‘public paranoia’. Participant R081 (m/50-59) felt that the situation was reflective of people feeling ‘too sensitive about people taking photographs’. These participants echo the position of Lumby (2010); Jewkes and Wekes (2012); and Fuerdi (2013) in their criticism of an excessively protective discourse regarding the imaging of children. Each of these participants were male and aged between 40-69 years of age. Participant R034 (f/40-49) held a similar perspective but isolated her criticism to the use of images and associated any negative attitude with there being ‘too much paranoia around social media’. Overall, these sentiments were in the minority among survey participants, and the normalised protectionist discourse concerning children continued to dominate. A consequence of what was occasionally perceived as exaggerated concerns among survey participants was a misunderstanding of the scope of legislation that protects the imaged child through restrictions on the practice of photographing and the online sharing of their image. These misunderstandings are discussed in the next section, before the research unpacks and explores the impact they have on the experiences and practices of the survey participants in the final findings and discussion chapter.

7.6 The right to shoot and share: A misunderstanding of the legislation

From the 237 survey participants who elaborated on why they may question or have previously questioned an individual photographing a child 16% (n=37) referred to the location as a contributing factor. Three of these participants provided no more details other than their reaction would be determined by whether the photograph was taken in a public place or not. Participant R188 (m/30-39) was similarly unspecific, stating that it would “depend upon the location”.

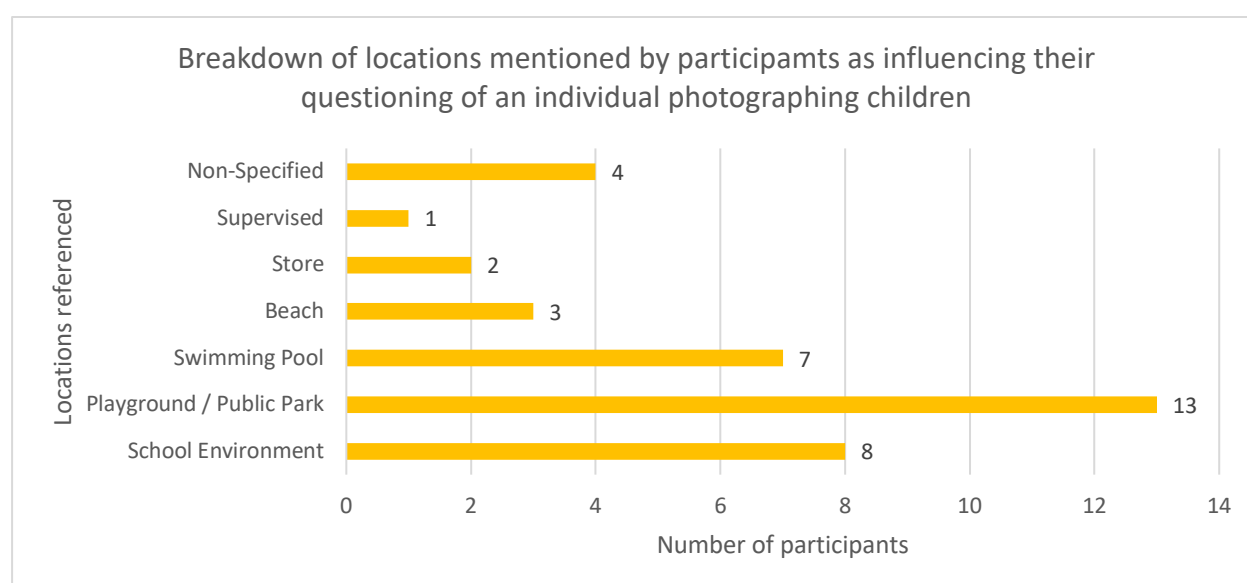


Figure 45: Breakdown of locations mentioned by participants as influencing their questioning of individuals photographing children

Responses in which survey participants claimed their attitudes were or would be influenced by the locations centred on whether the locations were ‘public’ or ‘private’. The distinction between the two categories relates to the expectations of privacy held by those photographed at the time. In locations categorised as private, a level of privacy may be expected. Whereas in public locations this expectation is greatly reduced and ‘persons who are in public places must accept that they are subject to the ordinary and natural incidences of everyday communal living... the casual taking of photographs in a public place should not normally be held to be an invasion of the privacy of a person’.⁵⁰ Public spaces are often populated by surveillance cameras that consistently record people’s image. This is a practice that has been normalised as an accepted practice within contemporary society’s surveillance culture. Locations categorised as private can be private dwellings or locations that are subject to restrictions

⁵⁰ The law reform report on surveillance 1998. Section 2.13 Available at: https://www.lawreform.ie/_fileupload/Reports/rPrivacy.htm (accessed: 26.05.19)

related to the taking of photographs by the proprietors of the properties or authoritative bodies that govern these locations (e.g. Swim Ireland).

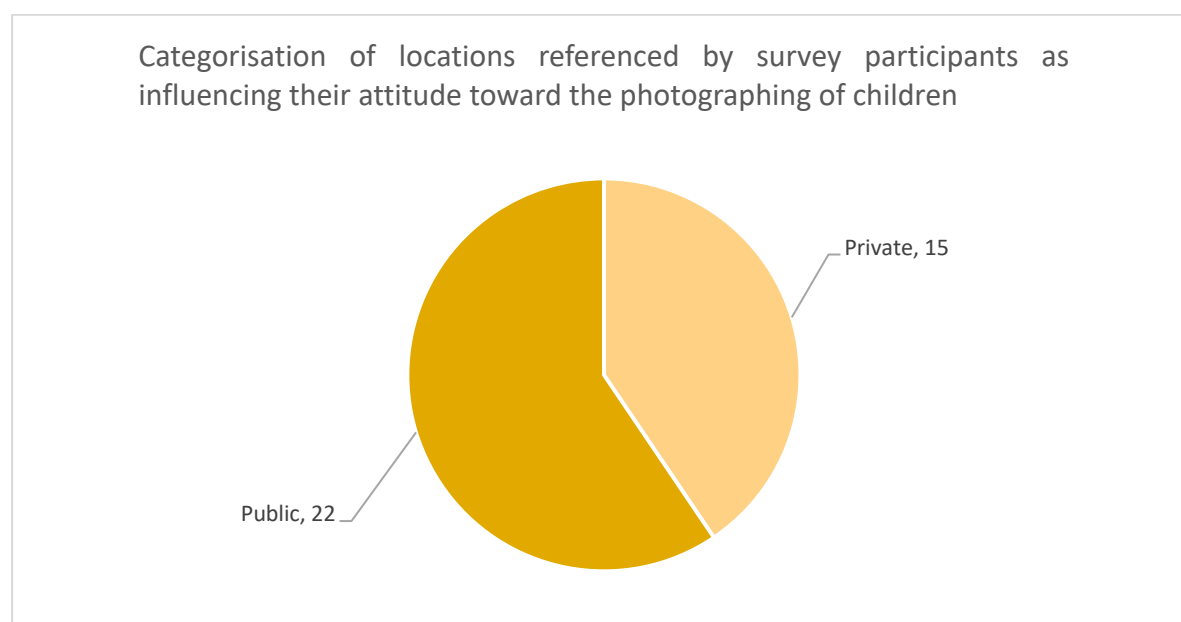


Figure 46: Categorisation of locations referenced by survey participants as influencing their attitudes toward the photographing of children

From these 37 survey participants' responses, approximately 40.7% (n=15) stated that they had previously or may in the future question someone taking photographs of children in a location that was categorised as private or a location subject to restrictions related to the taking of photographs being in place (Figure 46). The locations specified by survey participants were divided between school or crèche related sites (n=8) and swimming pools (n=7). In Ireland, public swimming pools are governed by Swim Ireland's Filming and Photography Policy.⁵¹ This policy restricts the practice of photography through its design to '... minimise the risk of inappropriate taking and use of images' (2016, p. 1). Similarly, in their guidelines concerning the photographing and or videoing of children in an early childhood setting, Early Childhood Ireland requires a consent form and accompanying photograph and video use policy to be authorised by the parents of children.⁵² As previously mentioned in section 7.5.2, this policy encourages photographers to ask how the child feels about having their photograph taken, yet the policy verifies that: "getting consent from the child is not enough". Thus, anyone taking photographs in these locations should expect to be questioned by those

⁵¹ <http://www.swimireland.ie/files/documents/Filmi/ng/-and-Photography-Policy-April-2016.pdf> (accessed: 21.01.19)

⁵² <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/work/operating-childcare-service/guidelines-on-using-imagesvideo-of-children/> (accessed: 01.02.19)

in authority or members of the public who are aware of the restrictions. There are numerous justifications for these policies and predominantly they are related to the protection and privacy of the children.

Notwithstanding this, the majority (approximately 59.4% / n=22) of survey participants who have previously or would in future question individuals photographing children would do so in locations categorised as public places. These locations consist of areas one would traditionally expect to find children: public parks, playgrounds, or beaches. However, as these locations are not governed by any policy or legislation related to the protection of privacy, there can be little if any expectation of privacy when photographs are taken there. The comments passed previously, or potentially in the future by survey participants may have been based on a misunderstanding of the legality surrounding the photographing of children in a public place. Therefore, any objections made to restrict the practice would have been a matter of personal opinion or attributable to a misunderstanding or presumption of legislation concerning photographic practices in a public place. This misunderstanding was justified by participant R002 (f/38) when she spoke of the effect that photographic policies in private places had on her practices in public locations:

‘... if you went to a swimming pool... there’s actually signs up that say, “You can’t take photographs”... in a shopping centre it would be the same. Um, so that I think in turn that probably affected society, therefore like a beach or a playground, you would have the same policy in mind that you’re still in a certain place where it is not acceptable. So, I think they have affected each other’

(Participant R002 (f/38) Interviewed 21 June 2018)

When interviewed, Detective Sergeant Mary McCormack, from the Online Child Exploitation Unit clarified the nuances of the legislation regarding photography in a public place here in Ireland:

‘In some countries, I think there is legislation around, like, taking a picture of a public building that belongs to the state, and all these kinds of things. But, in Ireland, we don't have anything like that. You're open to taking a photo and that's it. And, there's - there's nothing you can really do about it... if you know that there is someone who's a sex offender in your area, and they're taking pictures of a child in the playground they have no reason to, it would be worthwhile reporting it. And, then maybe we will be able to look at their bail conditions or another angle. But there's no offence for the actual taking of the photo...’

(Interview with Detective Sergeant Mary McCormack 22nd August 2018)

Nonetheless, despite there being no legal reason for the practice to be prohibited, Detective Sergeant McCormack elaborated that this should not deter individuals from reporting incidents they are suspicious of:

‘The only thing we would say would be to report it, because it may meet some other angle that you're not thinking of as a normal everyday person in society. Whereas, we would be thinking, "Oh, well, well, we might be able to go back to court and bring him back, 'cause he's... maybe there's an order. So, they... a lot of people who were convicted of offences against children might have like, conditions like do not hang around playgrounds.

So, if we go back and say, "Well, they have breached it, 'cause they were... you told me that they were in the playground." You may have went to court, say, "Yes, they were taking photos of my children at the playground." But that'll get him, or her put back in custody’

(Interview with Detective Sergeant Mary McCormack, 22nd August 2018)

Notwithstanding these misunderstandings, there were some instances in which participants were aware of the law. Participant R002 (f/38) demonstrated this and considered an appropriate way to react to a situation in which a photographer refused to cease photographing children. She stated: “... if it's a public place and there's nothing I can really do about it, then I would probably take my child out of that situation so they would be safe and just it could not continue”. This counters her previous statement regarding the policies in private places influencing her behaviour in public places. Nonetheless, her understandings of the legality of photographing in public were in the minority.

When questioned, ten survey participants who said they would not feel comfortable having photos of children they knew taken by an individual unknown to them focused their concerns on the 'rights' that such a person had to take photographs of children. In the responses these presumed 'rights' varied between the “right to privacy” that the photographed child was entitled to, the lack of a right to photograph children and the right a participant had to contact the Garda due to the (presumed) illegality of the practice. This latter attitude was also identified among eight additional participants, who stated that they would or have previously contacted the Garda or ‘relevant authorities’ when concerned about individuals photographing children known to them.

This misunderstanding was further evidenced by three participants directly referring to the legality of taking photographs in their survey responses. These participants saw the photographed child as having more rights than they actually do. Furthermore, the nature of each of these responses was presented with an air of authority despite being misinformed. The use of phrases such as “...I would explain that it was an invasion of privacy”, “(I would) ...make the photographer aware of IP (Intellectual Property) rights around the taking of photographs” and “the law is don’t ...and (I would) tell them so”

all indicate a presumption of an understanding to such an extent that an alternative perspective would not seem worthy of consideration. However, legislation concerning the photographing of individuals, be it adults or children is often dependent on the location, with different rights being applicable to locations categorised as either private or public.

A similar misunderstanding of the legislation was evident regarding the practice of photographing children in general, irrespective of the location. Concerns among the participants lay with the permission that is assumed to be required when taking photographs of children. The presumption that permission should be sought from either a parent or guardian was frequently expressed by participants as a necessity prior to photographing a child. However, Irish Law makes no distinction between the photographing of an adult or a child in a public place. Therefore, no such permission from a parent or guardian is legally required, as discussed previously.

When asked for their opinion on the online sharing of images of children, a similar misunderstanding of the rights of a photographed child was evident. Seven survey participants explicitly felt that the permission to share images of children was a specific right that the parents or guardians retained. As before, these survey participants presented their opinions with authority; Participant R177 (m/30-39) declared that 'It's the parents right to decide', whereas participant R266 (f/40-49) proclaimed that 'permission is needed if not your own children'. However, as is the case with the photographing of children, there is no such legislation in place. Detective Sergeant McCormack again verified that once an image of a child is taken in a public place and remains outside of the classification of 'child pornography'⁵³ there is no legal restriction on the sharing of that image, provided the sharer of the image retains the copyright⁵⁴ (Interviewed 22nd August 2018).

While the presumption of required parental permission may be attributable to a misunderstanding of legislation, other participants believed it to be a moral issue. These perspectives align with the protectionist discourse that surrounds children as discussed across this chapter. In the next chapter the research explores how these attitudes and opinions related to the photographing and sharing of images of children have influenced the everyday practices of the survey participants.

⁵³ Child Trafficking and Pornography Act, 1998

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/22/section/2/enacted/en/html#sec2> (accessed: 14.06.19)

⁵⁴ Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000. Available at:

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/28/enacted/en/print> (accessed: 10.11.19)

7.7 Conclusion

Recent debates and policies that relate to the privacy rights of the child may encourage or possibly initiate a reconsideration of their status among wider society regarding the capturing and sharing of their image online. Yet, for the majority of those participating in this study the status of the photographed child remains a secondary consideration if a consideration at all. For the most part concerns are continually channelled into the traditional protectionist discourse, whereby it is considered the role of the parent or guardian to make decisions on behalf of the child (Wagner and Gasche, 2018; Brosch, 2018; Choi and Lewallen, 2018). A noticeable consequence of this among participants in this study is a misunderstanding of related legislation, in which permission is presumed to be required from parents or guardians. Privacy entitlements are dependent on the location in which photographs are captured and their subsequent use, whereas consideration for the consent of the photographed child remains almost redundant. However, some consideration of the effects the online sharing of images can have on children's current and future wellbeing is occasionally presented. This is a semblance of progression away from the normalised status of the child as non-agentive.

The practices of contemporary everyday photography in some respects continue to construct childhood in a manner that has changed little since the initial domestication of the practice. These constructs remain largely guided by a conceptualisation of the child as innocent, vulnerable, and lacking agency (Higonnet, 1998; Holland, 2004; Prout, 2008; Fulkner, 2010; Zuromskis, 2013). The continuance of this construction replicates rather than renovates what was established and had been imaged before (Higonnet, 1998; Holland, 2004). Through the mass of 'well-wishers and supporters who follow, comment on, and re-post' constructions are authenticated, and those sharing are endorsed (Steinberg, 2017). The child's online digital presence, that often predates their real-world birth date continues to be shaped from an adult's subjective perspective (Fulkner, 2010) that is more reflective as they grow of their sharing parent's online activity than their real-world lives.

With the expansion of the child's presence from real-world environments to online spaces both differences and similarities emerge with regard to the nature of perceived threats to childhood, and as will be further explored in the next chapter, these concerns have had a tangible impact on the everyday practices of participants. However, this threat arguably looms much larger than ever, facilitated by the technological affordances of social media. Indeed, new to contemporary discourses are a range of specific fears relating to the Internet and social media. These themes are discussed in

detail in chapter 8, which considers how fears about technology work to amplify the established discourse of 'stranger danger'.

8 THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW MORAL PANIC AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE PHOTOGRAPHING AND SHARING OF IMAGES OF CHILDREN

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter acknowledged that for most survey participants (n=171) a negative attitude was held towards the online sharing of images of children. These attitudes reflect the contemporary protectionist discourse that continues to surround children. This chapter presents the key issues and concerns identified by participants as substantiating these negative attitudes. The chapter considers if these attitudes are a consequence of an emerging moral panic related to the photographing and sharing of images of children online.

For participants the predominant key issues of concern were (i) Accessibility; concerns relating to the retention or loss of control over photographs taken or images shared online (ii) The deviant; the reaffirming of the 'stranger' as a threat to children in both real and virtual world spaces (iii) The digital afterlife of images; the permanence of images online and the potential for inappropriate use. This chapter unpacks and explores each of these key issues in detail before detailing the impact that they have had on the practices of the survey participants.

Consistent with previous research (Cohen, 1972; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994; Critcher, 2003) the influence of the media in the shaping of survey participants' attitudes is explored. Reflecting the habits of 'moral crusaders' of previous moral panics (Cohen, 2002; Furedi, 2013) questions have been asked of those photographing and sharing images of children online, which have occasionally escalated to confrontations. Changes in the practice of photographing children and the online sharing habits of survey participants has resulted. Participants have reconsidered the affordances of access to images and the practice of modifying images has increased when the subject is a child. Furthermore, the ceasing of both the photographing of children and the online sharing of images of children is

considered an action worth taking for some participants to alleviate their fear of inappropriate labelling.

The chapter closes by discussing the post-participation sentiments of those interviewed. Here the research considers the impact that engagement with the research area may or may not have had on participants' attitudes and practices in relation to the everyday photographing and online sharing of images of children.

8.2 Key issues of concern

The influence of the media has a traditionally significant role in the emergence of moral panics (Cohen, 1972; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994; Critcher, 2003). Previous research has presented 'sex', 'risk' and 'children' as three of the 12 cardinal news values that continually shape news production in the 21st century (Jewkes, 2010: 7). When used concurrently in media reports they further fuel protectionist discourses that construct the virtual world as a dangerous space for children and innocent images of them. The effect that such media coverage has in shaping public opinion was considered among survey participants. When provided with a space to elaborate on factors potentially influencing their negative attitudes towards the photographing of children and the sharing of their images online, four of those interviewed specifically referred to 'stories' or media 'reports' that relayed the inappropriate use of images of children once they had been shared online. Participant R096 (m/38) elaborated:

'...I suppose the media has been bombarded in the last few years with you know, child sex abuse cases and, you know, erm, paedophiles... all this type of stuff. So, it probably does stick in your brain that little bit more that there are... it's, it's more widespread now in media that there is much more of this stuff going on, so, yes, that would probably stick in your brain to a certain degree, that somebody could be accessing these things for possibly their own use, illicit use even.'

(Participant R096 (m/38) Interview 4th July 2018)

Among the survey responses, participant R204 (m/30-39) claimed that he felt "conditioned to feel that way". Participant R277 (f/60-69) extended their sentiment claiming that: "... we are programmed to feel naturally suspicious of anyone showing any type of interest in children". Whereas, when interviewed, participant R235 (f/52) echoed the previous specific reference to the dominance of media stories associating acts of deviance to uploaded images of children. She stated that it was:

‘...the result of 20 years of cases that have appeared in the media, where you know that these things have happened. I mean, there was just something on the news the other night about some guy who is the, the, the largest distributor of child pornography in the world, and they are trying to extradite him...

... there’s been all these cases of people taking pictures off the Internet, and you’re going, “Actually, I don’t want to share everything with...” I mean yeah, they’re family, but there’s also other people on my Facebook page who are not family.’

(Participant R235 (f/52) Interview 22nd June 2018)

The use of ‘modified images’ of children, created from non-explicit images innocently shared on social media to gratify deviant needs was discussed in section 7.2.1 of the previous chapter. Reports in the media of this increasingly common trend are plentiful (Steinberg, 2018: 911). In 2015 a report was published in the mainstream media of a Russian paedophile website publishing innocent images of children taken from Facebook without the knowledge of the account holders.⁵⁵ Then in 2016 a report circulated concerning Irish teenage girls who had photos harvested from their private Facebook accounts.⁵⁶

Notwithstanding the media influence, 6.8 % (n=18) of participants disassociated their negative attitudes from any external influence. They claimed their opinions were a consequence of their own overall outlook. They were “naturally suspicious”, “suspicious by nature” or that they “just would be suspicious...”. This disassociation of the self from influence aligns with the “third person effect” (TPE) as discussed by Perloff (1999), in which admitting being influenced by an institution like the media is an indication that one is not in control or is a victim of a social environment. Both are viewed as negative characteristics (Haine and Lehman, 1995), where there is a disconnect between the self and others with circulated information perceived as having a greater impact on the latter (Perloff, 1999).

Notwithstanding these differing opinions regarding the influence media coverage may have had, or not, concerns related to unauthorised access to images were prominent. These sentiments align with the traditional negative association between a stranger and danger that first emerged post-WWII in the United States in the public service film ‘The Dangerous Stranger’ (Davies, 1949). Previously chapter 4 detailed the evolution of this public concern through the later decades of the 20th century and the turn of the 21st century as part of a broader moral panic concerning the safety of children. The

⁵⁵ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/11342175/Parents-discover-childrens-Facebook-photos-on-Russian-paedophile-website.html> (accessed: 26.06.19)

⁵⁶ <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/girls-as-young-as-12-among-almost-50-victims-of-image-harvesting-scam-on-porn-website-34366353.html> (accessed:26.06.19)

literature concluded that the migration of the stranger from the physical world outside of the home to the virtual spaces online positioned the Internet predator or 'cyber-paed' as the greatest threat to our children (Wolak et al., 2008; Livingstone and Haddon, 2009; Jewkes, 2010) and the 'perfect moral panic' (Jewkes and Wilkes, 2012).

Within the context of this study, survey participants were initially concerned with unknown individuals photographing children. When asked 44% (n=158) of all survey participants 'would not feel comfortable' with someone unknown to them photographing children they knew. Reaffirming the established negative connotations with the term when used in relation to children, 47 participants used the word 'stranger' to label unknown individuals. Approximately 32% (n=51 from 158) explicitly stated that it was their unfamiliarity with the photographer that would be the cause for their discomfort. Participant R307 (f/59) eloquently reflected on the creation of an unspoken 'contract' exclusively established through a familiar relationship with an individual. Such a connection is not present with strangers. Applying this to the context of photographing children she stated:

'I suppose when people you know are taking photographs, there's a general sense that it's people you know within the family, friends and you know, that there is uh, a relationship contract there. Um, where people outside of that, if there's no relationship contract or no psychological contract, um the risk is, I would imagine the risk. I-I would think the risk is greater, yeah'.

(Participant R307 (f/59) Interview 2nd July 2018)

When presented with a scenario in which an unknown individual was photographing children known to them, participant R015 (f/43) responded emotionally:

'A complete stranger taking photographs of my kids? Absolutely. I straight out... if they were physically, like gathering my two children like, "What the hell are you taking pictures of my kids for? Who are you to them? Why do you want pictures?" I would absolutely, without a shadow of a doubt, ask them why they wanted pictures of my kids. And for what reason? You go and find your own kids or create your own kids. But absolutely, you're not taking pictures of mine. They're not for them to view.

Taking pictures of random children is weird... being a stranger and going up to kids in the park and taking a photograph of them, that to me is... Yah, that needs to be questioned'.

(Participant R015 (f/43) Interview 28th June 2018)

Participant R307 (f/59) held a similar view stating: “I would not feel comfortable ... why would somebody be taking photographs of children they wouldn’t know?”. Echoing this sentiment when interviewed participant R004 (m/42) similarly claimed that “... It’d be strange if someone came along and started photographing kids, you know? It’d be a strange thing... (Laughing) I just think it would be...”.

Ten additional participants similarly felt they would be uncomfortable with an unknown individual photographing a child known to them. Three of these participants struggled to understand why such a practice would occur in the first place. Participants R044 (f/50-59) and R137 (f/50-59) specifically questioned “why would they?” and participant R159 (f/40-49) stating that there was “no reason” for it to happen. Echoing this position participant R151 (f/50-59) considered it “abnormal” and participant R161 (f/40-49) declared that such a practice would be “out of place”, before verifying that: “...of course I am not comfortable”. Furthermore, participant R228 (f/30-39) affirmed that she would “absolutely not” feel comfortable with such a situation occurring. The presentation of these perspectives without consideration authenticates their perceived normality.

This perspective was opposed by 5.3% (n=19) of participants, who claimed that they would not be uncomfortable with an unknown person taking photographs of children known to them.

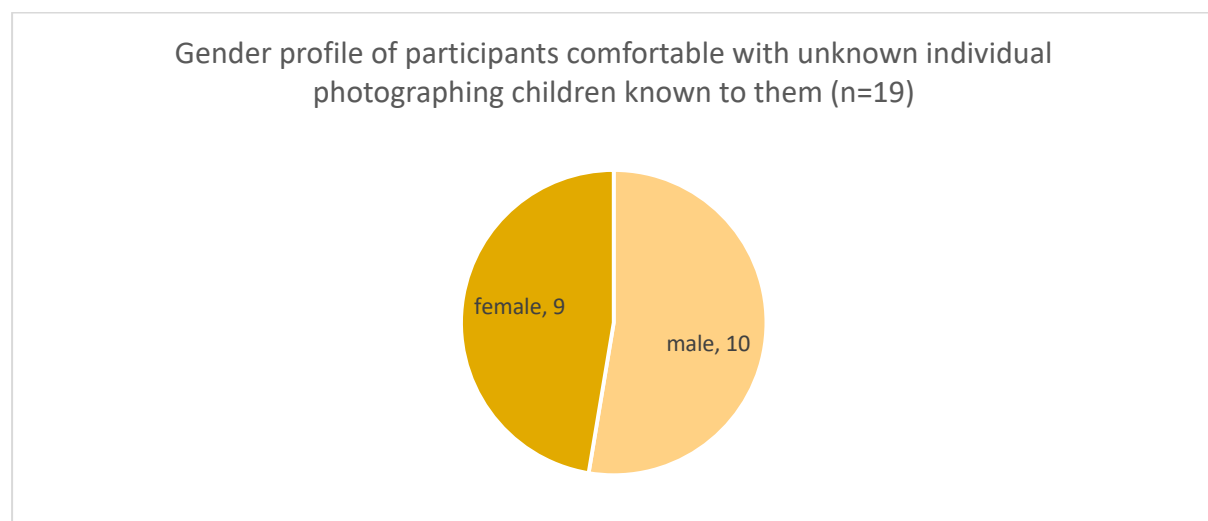


Figure 47: Gender profile of participants who would feel comfortable with an unknown individual taking photographs of children known to them

Figure 47 shows that these participants were almost equally divided by gender with ten male and nine female participants comfortable with the proposed situation.

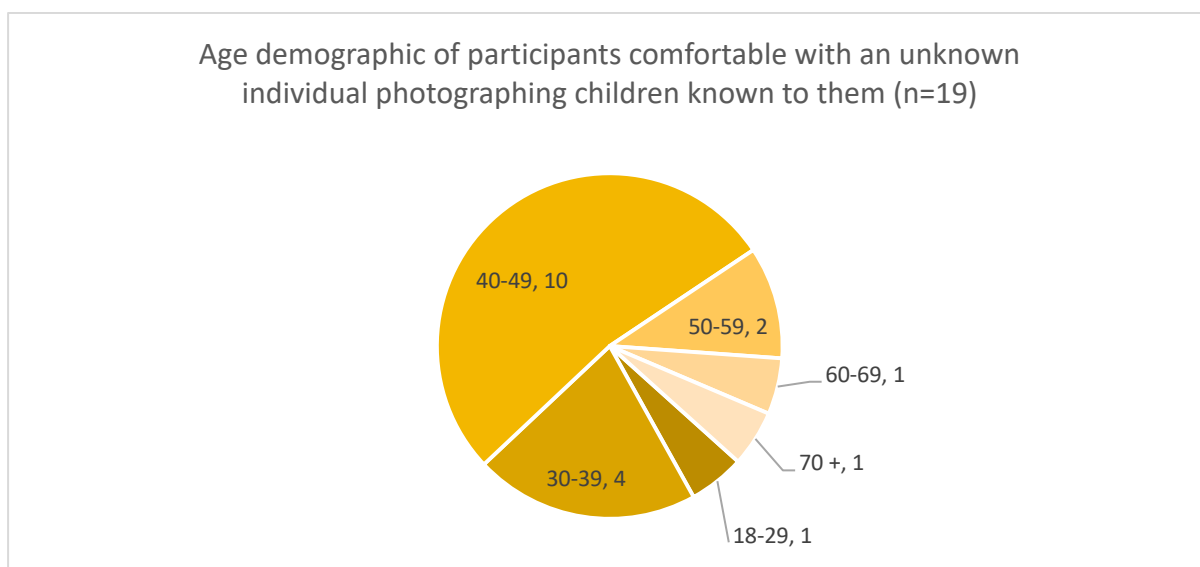


Figure 48: Age demographics of participants comfortable with an unknown individual taking photographs of children known to them

Approximately 73% (n=14) of these participants were over 40 years of age. The social norm concerning the safety of children at the time these participants were children would have been less cautious than contemporary society, with the practice of photography similarly being less pervasive. Their lack of concern with unknown individuals photographing children known to them may reflect a sentiment that has carried from a previous generation as they have become adults. Participant R324 (f/72) elaborated on her perspective when interviewed, saying that “...all these things that you are hearing, I think they’re going a little bit overboard. I really don’t mind anybody taking a photograph of a child. What harm is it?”.

Nonetheless, most participants (n=158) maintained the established cautious attitude toward unknown individuals engaging with children, normalised beneath broader protectionist discourses. Occasionally, participants were authoritative in their negative position, emphasising without any qualification that they ‘would not allow it’, that ‘adults should not photograph...’ or that their answer was ‘the right answer’. Participants R044 (f/50-59) using exclamation marks for emphasis in her survey responses simply stated: ‘stranger danger!!’. These responses presented unequivocally regard alternative perspectives as unworthy of consideration. Previous research has shown that such ‘transcendental truths’ are often orated during a moral panic (Furedi, 2013). This is an area that is further explored in section 8.4 of this chapter when the research engages with the impact negative attitudes have had on participants’ everyday practices of photographing children and sharing their images online.

8.2.1 Losing control - The use and misuse of images

Apprehensions that relate to the photographing of children by unknown individuals reflect a broader issue concerning the control of the photograph or image. As discussed in section 7.2.1 of the previous chapter, rhetoric among participants indicates that a cognitive collapse has occurred between the child and the captured image of the child. This has seen sentiments toward images of the child and the child themselves often being interchangeable. It follows that unknown individuals obtaining possession of images of children may compound negative attitudes. Elaborating on their negative attitude, 15 participants felt uncomfortable with a loss of control over the image. Participant R131 (f/30-39) posited that: "You've no idea what is going to happen to that photo... it can go anywhere. You've no control at all". Similarly, participant R053 (f/30-39) claimed that: "Once the photographs have been taken, I would no longer have any control over how they were used" and participant R060 (m/30-39) stated: "I would not like to lose control over how the images of my children were used".

Such sentiments can manifest an attitude of mistrust towards unknown individuals taking photographs. When interviewed, participant R002 (f/38) spoke of her discomfort, claiming that:

'I wouldn't feel comfortable with a stranger having images of my children, for their own personal use. Um, you know, some of them may be no harm, but others may be for something explicit or something, or maybe to exploit the child anywhere... I don't know what they're using the images for'.

(Participant R002 (f/38) Interview 30th June 2018)

This attitude concerns the ownership of the photographs remaining with the photographer and their freedom to use the images how they choose. Initial concerns related to the loss of control can lead to a mistrust that goes beyond the individual taking the photographs. Participant R015 (f/43) stated that she "...wouldn't be comfortable with anyone unknown to me taking photographs of my children. You have no control over where these pictures can eventually end up, however innocent the photographers' intent". This perspective was also referenced by participant R019 (f/30-39), claiming there may be an "inability to trust the images to be kept confidential". Further alluding to this perceived loss of control, participant R004 (m/42) when interviewed acknowledged that they like to have control over the photographs of their children: "Yeah, I do... absolutely, yeah... controlling it from other peoples, eh, perspective as well. If they have, if they've taken photos of, of kids, of my kids, you know, so I want to control that, yeah. Yeah."

Across these responses, there is an expected sense of entitlement related to the photographs. This is understandable, given the emotional attachment the participants may have with the subjects of the photograph. Yet, the specific use of the term 'control' by participants implies an authority or ownership over the images. However, this is misplaced. As discussed previously in section 7.6 of the previous chapter, legally, if the photographs capture subjects in a 'non-explicit' way and were taken in a public place and not intended for commercial use it is the photographer who predominantly retains copyright ownership and control over them.

Nonetheless, among the participants there remains a concern with the loss of control given the potential for an image to be accessed, used and circulated online by individuals unknown to them. Of the 27.5% (n=99) of survey participants who claimed that their attitudes towards the practice of sharing images of children online was influenced by those gaining access, 55 stated felt it only appropriate for 'friends and family'. 37 of these explicitly stated that the practice should be exclusive to this demographic. 21 participants held reservations regarding the access those outside of their network of 'family and friends' had to the images they shared on social media. Related to these, there were 45 participants concerned with the security and privacy settings on the social media platforms used for sharing images of children. Feeling that the access to the shared images could be restricted 22 of these participants were comfortable with the practice provided the accounts of those sharing were set to private.

Overall, these perspectives indicate that there is a level of trust among participants with those 'known' to them, notably 'friends and family' and those most vulnerable and precious, children. Notably however, only seven survey participants differentiated those they know (friends and family) from those they trust. Using terminology '...trusted network of friends' (Participant R033), '...only friends and family I know and trust' (participant R057) or '...limited to family that are trusted' (participant R163) this small number of participants indicates a limited awareness of the potential risks that may come with such sharing among participants. These risks are explored in more detail in the next section of this chapter.

8.2.2 Stranger danger: Access beyond family and 'friends'

The dominant social media platform used by survey participants to share images of children was Facebook. 83% (n=264) of the 318 participants who share images of children online use it as their chosen platform. Research shows that the average number of friends a user of Facebook has is 155,

with women averaging 165 compared to 145 for men (Dunbar, 2016). However, only approximately 28% of these friends are considered genuine or close friends (ibid). Similar figures are confirmed from those interviewed for this research, with six of the seven interviewees having 100 or more. Both participant R004 (m/42) and R325 (f/29) confirmed that they had in excess of 300. Five of those participants interviewed reflected on their number of Facebook friends, with three confirming that the majority were indeed close friends and/or family and were not merely 'acquaintances'. However, two other participants acknowledged that they did not 'know' a lot of these friends outside of Facebook.

From the survey participants who limited sharing images to 'friends and family' (n=53) only eight specified that the friends and family they felt comfortable sharing images with should be 'actual', 'trusted' or 'close' friends and family. The remaining participants (n=45) in effect attribute a level of trust to their Facebook 'friends', who may actually be mere acquaintances at most rather than friends in the traditional sense of the word. Elaborating on their position three interviewed participants specifically referred to this trust among their Facebook friends. Participant R235 (f/52) stated that:

'I'm conscious that there are other people on my Facebook page who are acquaintances more than family, who are putting up pictures of their own kids. And there's this kind of trust thing going on, where they trust that I'm not going to abuse their pictures, and I'm not going to... I'm trusting that they're not gonna abuse my pictures'

(Participant R235 (f/52) Interview 22nd June 2018)

Similarly, when interviewed Participant R002 (f/38) claimed 'You would have a confidence in people that you're familiar with, or friends that you know, you, you would think that you have more confidence in them...' (Interview 21st June 2018). Whereas participant R307 (f/59) went beyond this expectation of confidence among those closest to you. Speaking of sharing images of children among family, she stated that:

'...there is this kind of um, psychological uh, contract within families, you know there's... you protect your own, what-whatever. And you will share those photographs. And there is that kind of psychological contract...

(Participant R307 (f/59) Interview 2nd July 2018)

Evidence of this trust or confidence among friends or family can be seen with the granting of access to all the information Facebook users have decided to share, inclusive of their photographs. The

affordances of Facebook permit a restriction of access to pre-determined individuals through the activation of specific security and/or privacy settings. These practices are explored further in section 8.4.2.4 of this chapter when the research considers the impact concerns related to the sharing of images of children have had on the management of the content shared. Nonetheless, it is appropriate to consider here that this presumption of trust attributed to friends and family can be as ill-founded in the virtual world as it is in the real world.

8.2.3 The continued construction of the deviant male

Having previously discussed the extension of traditional fears associated with children and the dangerous stranger from the physical world in to virtual spaces where the ‘cyber-paed’ is reconstructed as the ‘monster of our age’ (Jewkes and Wilkes, 2012: 934) participants associated genuine concerns with losing control of their images to the imminent danger of this online folk devil, previously positioned as no more than a few clicks or seconds away (Brown, 2013). Participant R049 (f/30-39) was conscious that the photographs could be used “maliciously”, or even “shared by paedophiles”, as participant R067 (m/40-49) stated. Whereas, other participants feared the images could be used for “predatory behaviour” or “by a pervert”.

The extension of these anxieties online aligns with the wider concerns related to the vulnerability of children occupying virtual spaces (Turrow, 1999; Meyer, 2007; Mascheroni et al. 2010; Jewkes, 2012). This vulnerability is part of the wider protectionist discourse that constructs the child as passive and susceptible, a conception that is reaffirmed online when positioned vis à vis potential predators, who are constructed as active and tech-savvy, utilising the technology for their own nefarious gains. This presents a technological-determinist and socio-individual determinist dichotomy of online participation, shaped by the user being a child or an adult (Meyer, 2007). The extent of the actual danger to children posed by tech-savvy folk devils, as often reported by media has been criticised previously (Wolak, et al, 2008; Hasinoff, 2014). However, this is not to say that such incidents do not occur. Participant R325 (f/29) for example, spoke of her personal experiences of being groomed as a child online:

‘...as a kid growing up on the Internet, like I’ve had so many weird experiences. I’ve had men try to groom me, men send me, you know child porn. I was too young to kind of realise how fucked up that was. You know men have tried to get me interviewed for brothels. And it’s kind

of when you're older and you look back on this and you think, "What the fuck? How do I have so much free rein on the Internet at that age?" but, you know you're at that age (10/11) and you think "Oh, cool" Like this, you know, talk about getting a job, but that's the way they frame it... its work and you're doing a job and you don't really think anything of it at that age, because you know, you're innocent. You're still quite naïve'

(Participant R325 (f/29) Interview 26th June 2018)

This episode was an awful experience for the participant and uncomfortable to hear at the time of the interview, yet it remains the only recounting by a participant of an actual online danger encountered with a stranger. Given the prominent concern among the survey participants with the potentially deviant stranger the lack of reference to incidents was noticeable.

However, statistics from both Rape Crisis Network Irelands (RCNI) Statistics and Annual Report (2015) and the Children at Risk in Ireland (CARI) annual report 2018 show that those most likely to perpetrate abuse towards children are not strangers, but those known to them. The RCNI figures show that family members, relatives, acquaintances or friends were responsible for 85% of the abuse inflicted on sufferers under 13 years of age and 78% of sufferers between the ages of 13-17.⁵⁷ Whereas, the CARI report showed that 80% of alleged perpetrators of abuse had either interfamilial (37%) or extrafamilial (43%) relationships with the abused child.⁵⁸ Given the previously discussed excessive amount of 'friends' accumulated by Facebook users, the authenticity of these 'friends' would be difficult for individuals to monitor. Yet, the 'management' of access to privately set Facebook accounts among survey participants continually relies on the use of the software's friends and family privacy affordances. As stated previously this will be further explored in section 8.4.2.4 of this chapter.

⁵⁷ Ireland, R.C.N., 2016. RCNI-Rape Crisis Statistics and Annual Report 2015. Available at: <https://www.rcni.ie/wp-content/uploads/RCNI-RCC-StatsAR-2015-1.pdf> (accessed: 21.06.19)

⁵⁸ Children at Risk in Ireland (CARI) annual report 2018, available at: <https://www.cari.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/CARI-Annual-Report-2018.pdf> (accessed: 21.06.19).

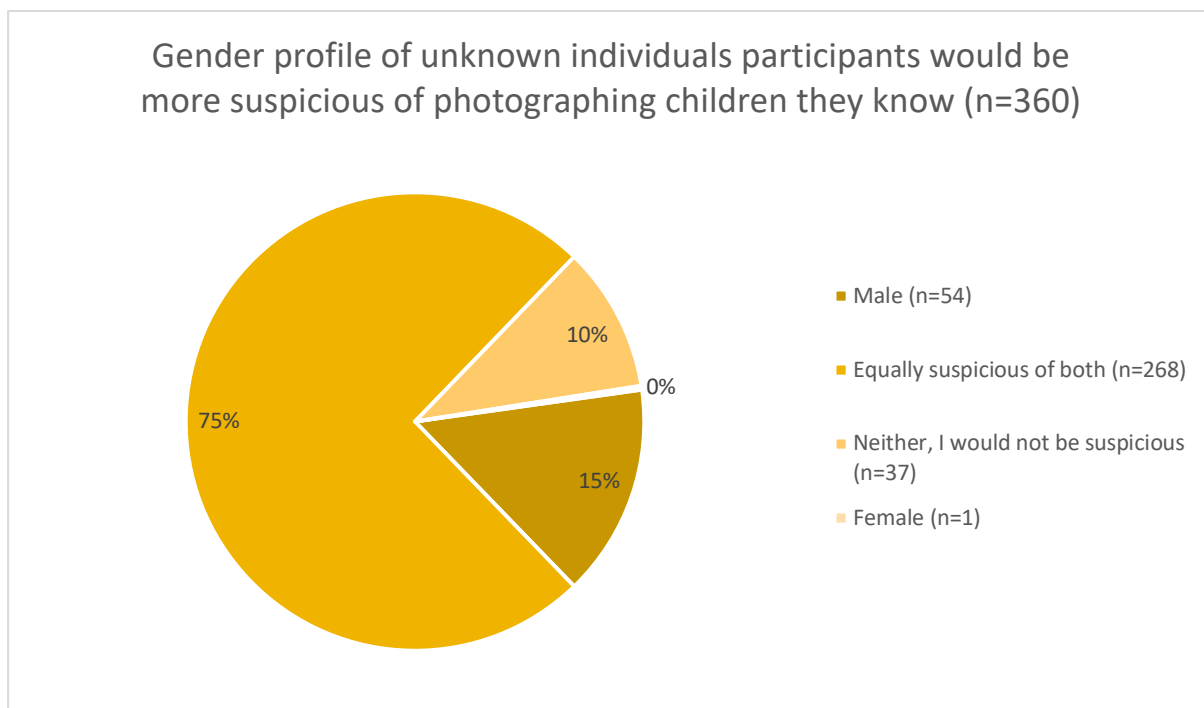


Figure 49: Gender profile of unknown individual participants who would be more suspicious of photographing children they know

When given the hypothetical situation: ‘if an unknown person asked to photograph your child or children known to you would you be more suspicious if they were male, female, equally suspicious of both, or you would not be suspicious’ most survey participants (n=268) claimed that any suspicion they had would be gender-neutral (Figure 49). As participant R167 stated “no sex has a monopoly on perversion”. Reflecting on factors that influenced their perspective, 8.3% of these participants (n=22) felt their views were influenced by external sources. These were diverse, yet some participants were very specific, notably participant R322 (m/30-39) referencing the bi-weekly American crime podcast ‘Sword and Scale’ as influencing him. Other participants claimed to be more generally influenced by the ‘media’, ‘social or online media’ and ‘today’s world and the age of social media’. Mirroring these references to ‘online media’, eight additional participants attributed the non-gendered nature of their suspicion as reflecting ‘modern times’.

Occasionally, participants elaborated more specifically, mentioning the impact of recent disclosures on contemporary attitudes. Participant R089 (f/40-49) provided such an example when she said: “...so many abuse cases revealed over the past decade”. More broadly, participants R180 (f/40-49) and R152 (f/40-49) attributed their tendency to suspect males and females equally to increased gender equality in society. This position was reiterated by participant R358 (f/60-69), who said that “In today’s climate there is a lot of child abuse from women and men”.

Considering the fact that 89%⁵⁹ of those accused of child abuse are men and the appropriate media positioning of men as those most likely to abuse children, previously discussed in chapter 4 this finding was on the surface remarkable. However, on closer examination some participants' responses displayed more of a gender bias than initially perceived. Despite their gender-neutral suspicion six participants disassociated female photographers from potentially deviant practices, stating that females could be working "at the behest of men", "helping men" or "sourcing information for others". Each of these participants were females aged over 30 years. Participant R354 (f/70+) claimed that "women are more innocent than men". The presentation of these attitudes reflects a 'culture of denial' (Tozdan, et al. 2019) among these participants that rejects the less palatable consideration that females, in isolation could be perpetrators of child abuse. This can be seen as an impact of the continued cultural and factual positioning of men as the primary threat to children.

As shown previously in figure 49 for 15% (n=54) of survey participants, the unknown male remained a concern, stating that they would be more suspicious of a male photographer taking photographs of children known to them. These responses comprised 17 male participants and 37 female participants. Nine of these participants specifically acknowledged a pre-existing normalised attitude towards male photographers of children in society. Participant R172 (f/40-49) declared that "males are often seen as predators...", while participant R020 (f/40-49) claimed "men are more likely to be making and using such porn...".

Of the 49 participants elaborating on their opinion, eight displayed a pre-existing negative opinion of men photographing children. Two participants felt that it would be either "bizarre" or "sinister" for a man to be photographing children. While two other participants stated that they would be more 'wary' of a male photographer. When interviewed Participant R004 (m/42) explained his sentiments regarding this:

'Eh, it's just the nature of, the nature of men and women really and the history... guys are more inclined to do harm to kids than women... I'd say the majority of society that are out to harm children are male, opposed to female'

(Participant R004 (m/42) Interview 6th August 2018)

⁵⁹ Children at Risk in Ireland (CARI) annual report 2018, available at: <https://www.cari.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/CARI-Annual-Report-2018.pdf> (accessed: 21.06.19).

Here the participant presents his gender-biased suspicion as a cultural norm. An additional 11 participants similarly projected a normalised perspective, relating to a “stereotypical association”, that was “perceived” “traditionally” in society, making it “more common or likely” to be suspicious of men when taking photographs of children. Participant R138 (f/30-39) emphasised this when stating that it was for “obvious reasons” she would be more suspicious of men, again without elaborating on these reasons.

These sentiments can act as a catalyst for more extreme perspectives, particularly here in relation to men unknown to the participants. From those surveyed, 20 participants associated men with a likelihood of being the perpetrators of child abuse or abduction when labelling men as potential “paedophiles”, “child abusers”, “predators” and producers of “child pornography”. This perceived association between the practice of men photographing children and abuse was replicated by four additional participants who felt men were more likely to use the photographs for the wrong or illegal reasons. These associations were provided without any reference to the misuse of images or the abuse of children in the circulated surveys or interview questions. Yet, two participants when expanding on their survey response recognised the influence of surrounding culture on their attitude. Participant R258 (f/40-49) stated that she was “more cautious of men, due to the media and past scandals” whereas, when interviewed participant R235 (f/52) associated “years of cultural in doctrine that makes me as a women suspicious of ulterior motives of a male who may want to take pictures of a child for sexual reasons” (Interview 22nd June 2018). The acknowledgement of the effects of cultural, social and personal influences on the attitudes of participants echo the positions of both Kitzinger (2004) and McCarten (2010) when they discuss the role the media has in shaping individuals’ attitudes.

As well as seeking to justify their suspicion of men, ten additional survey participants reflected on their opinion with a sense of regret. Specifically, three acknowledged that their attitude was an “unfair” one to hold, whereas two others accepted that it was “unfortunate”. A further three participants felt that they “should be equally suspicious of both genders”. Reflecting on their position, 2 additional participants admitted that their opinion was “terrible” and even “sexist”. Participant R324 (f/72), when asked during her interview if she felt the same way about women, elaborated:

‘You see I don’t think like that. If something goes wrong, it’s always a man. I’m always thinking a man... but I should be thinking of women as well. But women are motherly, so I’d think it would more men I’d be wary of’.

Participant R324 (f/72) Interview 19th August 2019

Nonetheless, in spite of this remorse, these sentiments remain and reflect a conscience among these participants of voicing an opinion that may differ to the perceived social norm concerning such a sensitive and delicate issue concerning those most vulnerable members of society, children. Noelle-Newman (1993) theorises such a position as in effect a ‘Spiral of Silence’. Applied here, the participants regretfully echo what they perceived to be the appropriate mindset in society, conscious of possible negative reactions or repercussion towards them if presenting an alternative view. Such repercussions are most likely to be activated during a moral panic by scapegoating moral crusaders, who hold their perspective as a “...‘transcendental truth’ that must not be burdened with conventional norms of proof” (Furedi, 2013: 63). Such practices are explored further when the research discusses the questioning and confrontations implemented and experienced by survey participants in section 8.3.1 of this chapter.

8.2.4 The afterlife of the digital image: Permanency and the future use of images shared online

The potential for images of children to be used for deviant purposes was not an isolated fear among survey participants when discussing their concerns related to the photographing and sharing of images of children. The permanency and afterlife of the digital image once shared was similarly presented by survey participants as an influencing factor over their negative attitudes. This correlates with a heightened awareness in society concerning data privacy, data security and intellectual property, of which images are part. Such an awareness can be contributed to the emergence of a surveillance capitalism and the resulting surveillance culture that has become a way of life, witnessed also with the ‘complacent data donation’ (Lyon, 2019) through individuals ‘onlife’ (Floridi, 2015) activities. It is the permanent residue of a child’s unauthorised digital footprint that this section of the research unpacks and explores.

Balancing the benefits and risks of sharing images of children online has been previously presented as a dichotomy those sharing images of children must consider. Both in this study and previously (Steinberg, 2017), research participants have acknowledged the permanency of images once shared as a key issue of concern. The potential for digital kidnapping, cyber bullying and the susceptibility of a permanently accessible digital presence are much more relevant in the digital age (ibid). This is a perspective that is not always fully appreciated. In her research on sharenting and children’s privacy in the age of social media Stacey Steinberg (2017) discussed the sharing of images to discipline children

with the goal of achieving behavioural change through public shaming. Acknowledging that shaming as a form of behavioural punishment has been around for thousands of years, Steinberg warns that social networks provide new avenues that are inevitably more visible and amplified, with the effects being more harmful and permanent (p.854). This perspective was emphasised by Choi and Lewellan (2018), who claim that 'even though these acts can have a positive intention to teach children a valuable lesson, it can render permanent psychological damage to children' (p.160) and can be associated with tragic consequences.⁶⁰

Acknowledging the changing platforms and environments in which images are used and shared, participant R235 (f/52) emphasised the potential consequence of losing control of everyday photographs of children:

'It's the lack of control. You see, before the Internet, you took a picture, it was yours, you had it in an album, you put it on the wall, that was it. Now you have a picture, you share it with your friends on the Internet, and unless it's in a protected space, you don't know where it's going. And it could be innocent, you know? A little girl in a dress doing a tutu dance, but it's that creep factor there, you know? Is that somebody's fetish? Do they, they like pictures of toddlers doing tutu dances and they got off on that?'

Participant R235 (f/52) Interview 16th June 2018

However, this attitude towards the use of the photographs is not limited to the potentially deviant use of the photographs by individuals unknown to participants or the children being photographed. Survey participants also presented issues relating to the use of social media and the Internet as platforms for storage, display and sharing of everyday photographs of children. Of concern here is how the initiation of a child's online presence can establish a 'digital shadow' (Leaver, 2015) given the digital afterlife of an image can be less transitory than the original intention (Van Dijck, 2008: 58). Steinberg notes of this afterlife of digital images that once shared the potential for emotional harm is already established: 'Information shared on the Internet has the potential to exist long after the value of disclosure remains, and therefore disclosures made during childhood have potential to last a life time' (2017: 846). She concludes that once images have been shared there is 'no unringing of the bell' (ibid: 872).

⁶⁰ Corcoran, K. (2015) Girl, 13, commits suicide by jumping from bridge after her dad recorded video cutting her hair off – but cops deny it drove her to kill herself *Daily Mail Online* 5 June 2015. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3111907/Girl-13-commits-suicide-jumping-bridge-video-dad-cutting-hair-punishment-posted-online.html> (accessed: 21.09.19)

Several survey participants (n=22) attributed their concerns to the creation of an online presence of the child by the sharers of their information. This has been positioned previously as a consequence of the over sharing practices of parents, or 'sharenting'. The practice of sharenting is discussed previously both in chapter 4's review of associated literature and empirically in chapter 6 when the research explored the impact mobile technology and social media had on the domestication of photography and the sharing of images of children. Participant R031 (f/18-29) claimed that 'the Internet is not safe and kids should remain anonymous as long as possible', whereas participant R355 (m/44) considering potential future implications stated that '... people don't think about how those children feel later on as adults with regards to their childhood photos out there permanently for all to see'. Participant R289 (f/18-29) emotively reflected that she thought it was '...quite sad for children to grow up and look back at all the images of them shared on social media during their childhood'. Other participants believed that the sharing of identifiable information could potentially accommodate individuals with ulterior motives. Participant R015 (f/43) specifically mentioned individuals gaining access and knowing details about her child:

'... people knowing where they are, what school they go to, its, it's terribly, terribly easy to figure out. It doesn't take long to, to link things back to "ah, right well they were there. And that's the crest on their school jumper" and you know, "she lives five minutes away from that". Easy to incept, and it's kinda a worry, not that I'm there with them every minute, but it takes two minutes to turn around and they're gone. Yeah'

(Participant R015 (f/43) Interview 28th June 2018)

These perspectives echo the sentiments expressed by Facebook users participating in previous research (Minkus et al., 2015) that such a practice compromises a child's ability to hide their online presence in later years. The potential consequences of which were foreseen by 22 additional participants. They considered potential real-world consequences in the virtual sharing of inappropriate or embarrassing images when discussing an uncertainty about the future. Five of these participants specifically referred to such sharing as having the potential to facilitate bullying in the future. Elaborating on their survey response, participant R109 (f/18-29) emphasised:

'I think there's a fine line between what you should put up and maybe what should be for your own personal albums as one day, these children will be on social media and might feel embarrassed or could be picked on by other kids for photos taken of them as kids! Or maybe they might not feel comfortable having them up there for everyone to see'.

(Participant R109 (f/18-29) survey response)

In this context, concerns related to bullying are presented as a potential consequence of the perceived permanence of images once shared on social media. Three other participants specifically emphasised that caution should be applied when sharing because images ‘...are permanent’, ‘...are there forever’ and ‘childhood photos (are) permanently there for all to see’.

Participant R089 (f/40-49) was more specific with her concerns, elaborating: ‘...privacy, bullying or their safety, I feel it is safer not to post online’. Four additional survey participants also cited future bullying that may result from images shared that may have been embarrassing to the children or shared despite an absence of permission from the photographed child. Participant R047 (f/30-39) noted that ‘...images that can be viewed negatively and misconstrued can lead to online bullying or worse’, while participant R109 (f/ 18-29) was concerned that ‘...one day these children will be on social media and might feel embarrassed or could be picked on by other kids for photos taken of them as kids’. Participant R178 (f/40-49), while conscious of her own part in the practice of sharing, showed similar concerns, stating that:

‘If I post what I see as a funny photo of my child or actually any photo it may come back to haunt them when they reach an older age and end up getting teased or bullied because of the photo I have put up’.

(Participant R178 (f/40-49) survey response)

The concern with future bullying is not unique to the findings of this research. Previously, Wagner and Gasche (2018) referred to potential future bullying as an issue to consider when sharing images of children on social media. Classifying cyberbullying as an aspect of ‘face-risks for the child’ (ibid: 983), their research considered the potential for embarrassing photographs to be used as a tool for future bullying. When interviewed for this research, participant R015 (f/43) elaborated on how she felt that social media accommodated the potential for bullying through a lack, or loss of control over access to images shared. She elaborated on her approach to neutralising the practice:

‘...it’s worrying, I know they have huge issues with it in the school at the moment. Definitely. Massive, massive issues. They’re trying to ban all the kids from having phones altogether. Um, because, it, every day there’s another kid coming up with massive bullying problems. And it’s all being done online... you know you can’t stop them from being bullied, but you can limit the resources that the bullies have to get at them.

If they (uploaded images) were, you know they're all there for them to find later on. They can use anything against them. So, I think, all of that, even, you know if somebody wants to do your child harm essentially in one way or another. Be it another child, be it another adult um, it definitely doesn't help it. Definitely doesn't help it. And I want to kind of, not eradicate it, there's no way it's gonna be eradicated, but definitely kind of minimise it as much as I can. Yeah.'

(Participant R015 (f/43) Interview 28th June 2018)

Across each of these testimonies the potential for cyberbullying resided in the access granted by the permanence of shared images and the lack of control over the use of digital images once shared, affirming the previously cited less than transitory nature of the shared digital image (Van Dijck, 2008). Previous research has noted that such cyberbullying is not a practice exclusively perpetrated by other children with some groups on Facebook using authentic images of children shared online as a platform for 'toddler bashing' and mocking 'ugly babies' (Steinberg, 2017: 854)⁶¹, although there was no reference to such incidents among the survey participants for this study.

Notwithstanding the potential risks that the afterlife of shared digital images of children presents, the practice has become normalised and even expected, with a pressure to share being presented in previous research (Bourke, et al, 2013; Mouser et al., 2017) and among the empirical findings. This has been previously discussed in section 6.5.2 when unpacking the sharing experiences of the survey participants. However, worryingly, the severity of the resulting effect on the subjects of these often-embarrassing images is not always fully appreciated by those who hold powerful executive positions in digital companies facilitating the unauthorised creation of this digital presence. Steinberg (2017) cites former CEO of Google, Eric Schmidt's acceptance that in the future every single person will have embarrassing information or a visualised online presence from their past posted on social media. The possibility is that one day adults will be entitled to change their name to hide from embarrassing content shared online during teenage years⁶² (Steinberg 2017: 854).

This perspective aligned with Marc Zuckerberg's 2010 statement concerning people's online sharing activities evolving to form a new social norm in which traditional perceptions of privacy had adapted

⁶¹ Angry mum uncovers 'toddler bashing' Facebook group that makes fun of 'ugly' babies. Huffington post (8 November 2013) Available at: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/toddler-bashing-facebook-group-ugly-babies_n_4241706.html (accessed: 30.05.19)

⁶² Bershad, J., 2010 'Google's CEO Proposes a future where people will have to change their names to escape social media'. MARYSUE (18 August 2010) Available at: <https://www.themarysue.com/googles-ceo-name-change/> (accessed: 20.09.19)

to individuals' levels of social media engagement.⁶³ This seems to have been commonly accepted with individuals' 'complacent data donation' (Lyon, 2019) through their 'onlife' (Floridi, 2015) activities, as previously cited at the beginning of this section. However, it is when the 'onlife' of an individual also encompasses that of a child that the non-agentic status of the photographed and shared child is reinforced.

There were eight survey participants who acknowledged an obligation to the photographed child. Discussing an agency that was lacking overall, three participants emphasised that those sharing should consider the '... child's rights to a say', that 'kids are entitled to privacy', and, specifically from a personal perspective, participant R160 (m/30-39) clarified that '...there are no photos of my niece... until she decides'. These participants acknowledge that children are entitled to consultation before having their images shared online, considering it a primary concern regarding a child's emerging online presence. Unfortunately, this represents a paltry number of participants who grant the photographed child such agency and their construction as non-agentic remains.

8.3 Moral crusaders, confronting and being confronted

Having identified the key issues of concern which influence survey participants' negative attitude towards the photographing and sharing of images of children, here the research unpacks and explores the impact they have had on the related everyday practices of survey participants. Consistent with previous moral panics, the activities of individuals labelled as moral crusaders (Cohen, 2002; Furedi, 2013) responding in what they perceive to be the 'right' way was recounted by survey participants. The experiences of survey participants themselves questioning and confronting practices of others as well as being the subject of similar occurrences is unpacked and explored in this section. Furthermore, the impact on both the mindset and practices of affected participants is also considered.

⁶³ Mark Zuckerberg has since reflected on this perspective, and in 2019 spoke of his belief that privacy-focused communication platforms would become even more important for the future of the Internet than contemporary open platforms. Issac, M. 2019 'Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg says he'll shift focus to users' privacy'. New York Times Online 6 March 2019. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/06/technology/mark-zuckerberg-facebook-privacy.html> (accessed: 21.09.19).

8.3.1 The questioning of those photographing children

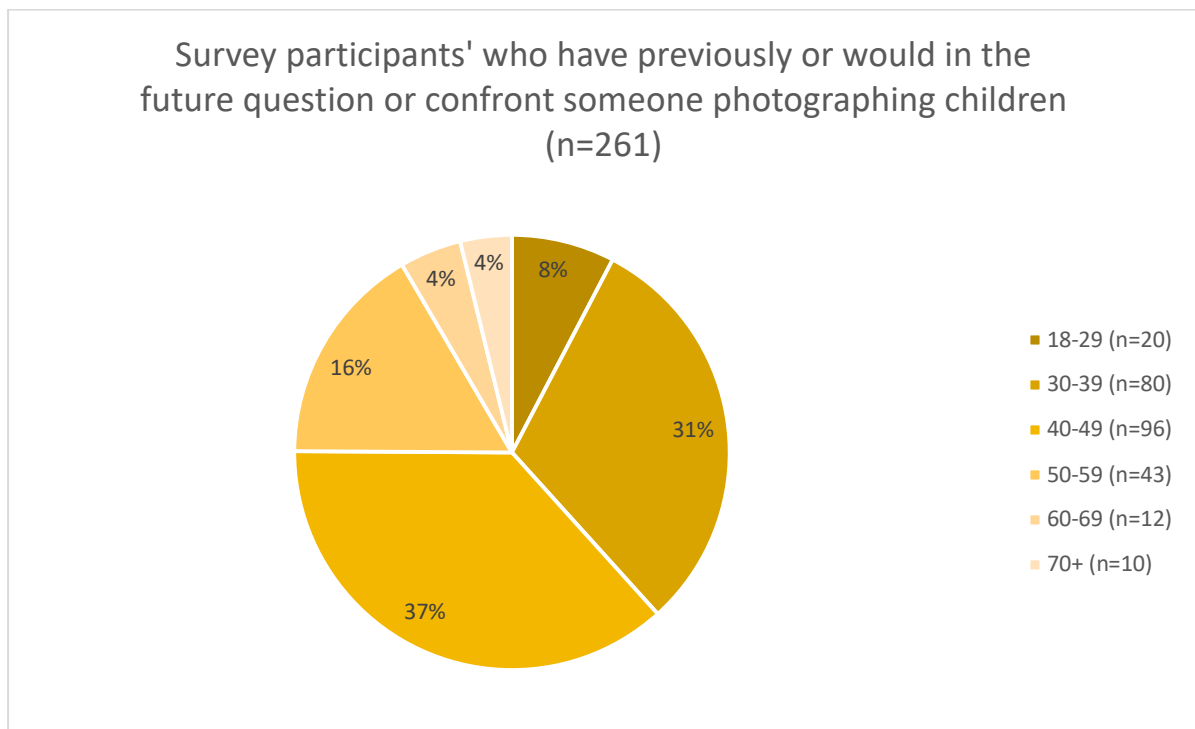


Figure 50: Survey participants who have previously or would in the future question or confront someone taking photographs of children

When asked, a combined figure of 72.5% (n=261) of survey participants claimed that they would or 'maybe' would question someone photographing children. These responses represented approximately 72.9% (n=191) of all female participants and approximately 71.4% (n=70) of male participants, indicating that proportionally the attitude was similarly dominant across both genders.

The dominance of such a level of concern to warrant the questioning of what was for previous generations considered an accepted and expected practice, as discussed previously in section 6.2.1, is further evidence of the maintained positioning of children "as a concern of the nation" (Prout: 2005: 28). The juxtaposed practice of photographing children with something more disconcerting platforms a situation in which a perceived moral regulation is ingrained through aspects of everyday life (Hier, 2008). Given context, this moral regulation is seen with the enactment of a perceived obligation to question those photographing children. This was shown with most survey participants stating that they would (n=93) or maybe would (n=168) question individuals taking photographs. One must consider if this was perceived as the appropriate way to respond when completing the survey.

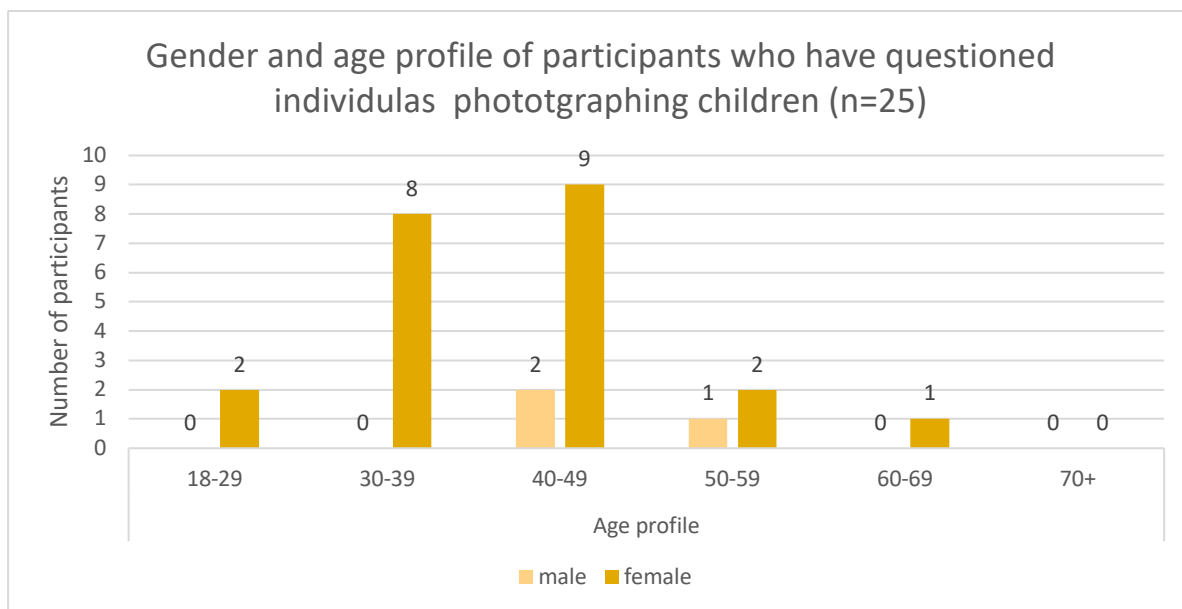


Figure 51: Gender and age profile of participants who have questioned individuals photographing children

Despite most survey participants stating that they would (n=93) or maybe would question individuals (n=168) photographing children, the findings showed that only 9.5% (n=25) of these participants specifically referred to incidents that had occurred. Conscious of the heteronormative coupling of women and children's culturally established, predefined gender roles it was unsurprising that 88% (n=22) of those that questioned individuals photographing children were female.

Figure 51 shows that the only age demographic not to be represented were those aged 70 and over. In total only 16% (n=4 from 25) of those who have questioned a photographer were over the age of 50. As discussed in the first section of this chapter, this demographic emerged from a generation when there was a less cautious discourse concerning children. The legacy of this mindset potentially remains among these participants, resulting in a perspective that means they are less likely to question a practice they may perceive as unproblematic.

Elaborating on the incidents, ten of those challenged by participants were male photographers and two were female, the remaining participants made no reference to the gender of the photographer they questioned. Despite the skewing of these incidents towards challenges made to male photographers, the presence of two female photographers authenticates the position of participants being suspicious of both genders photographing children as previously discussed in section 8.2.3.

Detailing the specifics of the occurrences, 52% (n=13) of participants were familiar with the children they perceived to have been photographed. Seven of the encounters took place in public areas with a further two made in stores. Prohibitive photography laws govern neither of these locations, although

storeowners can request that individuals vacate their store if their behaviour is considered inappropriate. Of the incidents occurring in locations where restrictive policies were in place, two occurred in school environments, one in a crèche and a further two occurred in swimming pools. Participant R015 (f/43) expanded on her own experience when working in a school. They detailed their frustration with having to ask people to stop taking photographs on multiple occasions:

‘It does bug me when people are told not to take photographs in the school... they are, straight out with the phone, you know straight out with the phone. They’re told by the teacher “Look we’re not allowed. You don’t... they don’t do it”. They have actually asked for expressed written consent to take photographs of your children and to possibly publish them within the school, or only to a newsletter or something like that. Um, so you know, why do they have, why are they special? They can go and take photos. “Oh, but I just wanna take that. Oh, but I just wanna take that.” There’s 20 other kids in that photo... that bugs me’

(Participant R015 (f/43) Interview 28th June 2018)

When asked how someone reacted to being confronted, participant R015 (f/43) clarified that she ‘apologised and sat down. They knew they were not supposed to be doing it’. In this instance, those continuing to take photographs are doing so with a mindset that their practice is harmless and that they can continue until they get the image they want. However, when the request is repeated to them personally, they acknowledge their wrongdoing, and they cease. Being individually challenged in public has more of an impact than being part of a collective audience requested to stop.

53% (n=13) of the challenges made by participants to photographers were passive in tone, simply enquiring as to the nature of the practice. However, three participants claimed to follow up their initial questioning by contacting or threatening to contact the Gardaí. Notwithstanding this, as each of these incidents occurred in public areas (a beach, a park and a skate park) such reporting was a moral decision by each participant rather than based on the legality of the practice. Participant R048 (f/44) elaborated on her specific encounter when interviewed:

‘...there was a person taking photographs in the playground. He had no children of his own. He was just taking photographs when the little girls were going up the slide, up the steps, and up the ladders. So, I was on the other side, and I noticed this and another daddy, who was in the park as well, noticed this as well. And um, I was going over that direction because ‘X’⁶⁴ was going over to play over there. I was a bit uncomfortable and I followed her over and I stood there about four foot away from the guy and he was again, still taking photographs. So, I just approached him and said: “You taking photographs?” And he was like a deer in the headlights and started ‘foostering’ “Me

⁶⁴ ‘X’ replaces redacted name of interviewees child.

no speak no English". I'm like, "That's fine. Give me a look at your camera then if you don't speak English. Are you taking photographs of my daughter?" And then he was starting to back away and one of the other daddies came over and said, "Give me your phone or I'm calling the guards." And the man ran away'

(Participant R048 (f/44) Interview 4th July 2018)

This represents a misunderstanding of the legal rights of an individual to take photographs in public places, a misunderstanding repeated when participant R112 (f/40-49) called the Gardaí after seeing a 'man photographing children in a playground with a long lens'. Just as people are within their rights to ask a photographer to stop, the photographer is within their rights to refuse to do so, provided they are not harassing the subject of the photograph.

In addition to these passive requests, five other participants confronted individuals in a sterner manner, demanding that individuals stop photographing children. Often these incidents occurred in public places, and those taking the photographs were within their rights to refuse to cease and continue shooting or ignore those challenging their practice. Here, it is the specifics of each incident that are of relevance; participant R205 (f/40-49) stated that she was 'in a shop in Gran Canaria and a man in the shop took a photo of my daughter in her buggy, I asked him what he was doing, he said he collected photos of the customers, I demanded he deleted photo there and then'. In this instance the photographer may have been photographing children in their shop for posterity reasons: he may have been a hobbyist photographer and thought nothing untoward of his practice, given that he was photographing openly and not in a covert manner.

However, when compared to participant R048's (f/44) recollection of a more surreptitious individual photographing her child in a store, the incidents are very different. When interviewed participant R048 (f/44) elaborated on her experience in detail:

'... we were doing the shopping. 'X' was walking ahead of us... I had noticed this guy. He had no family with him, he had no shopping bag with him, he wasn't carrying a basket, he was just wandering around. I don't know why but he was on the same aisle as us and he kept on the same aisle as us. And 'X' again walked ahead... I just kept an eye on her because he just made me feel uncomfortable. And I was walking by and I heard a pen noise, I was, what the hell was that? Right? What was that... a counter, maybe he's doing one of them step things you know?

So when 'Y'⁶⁵ came up to me he was actually looking at whatever tools they had that week and I said, "that guy he's a bit strange." He says, "Why is he?" "It's like as if he's clicking something in his hand." And 'Y' says, "Betcha that's a fucking camera." I said, well, he said,

⁶⁵ 'Y' replaces the redacted name of interviewees male partner

"There's something in his hand." He walked down there and pretended he was getting tea bags or whatever and came back up and he said, "He has something in his hand." I said, "Did you see it?" He said, "No." And he said, "It's small and black and I've heard clicking, like that." And he said, "That's a camera." He says, "Like go- GoPro I use for my bike." I went, "Okay." I said, "He's after been like, hovering around 'X'."

So we went up another bit where it was a bit quieter and he was following us around again picking up things putting them back not buying anything he hadn't a basket or anything like that... and 'Y' went over to him... "what are you doing?" And he said, "Can I see what's in your hand?" And he went, "No." And he said, "Show me what's in your hand." "No, I'm not showing you anything." He said, "Show me what's in your hand." He said, "That's a camera you shouldn't be... he turned around and he flashed something." And 'Y' said it looked like a camera. 'Y' says call the guards I'm bringing the guards right now. You're taking photographs of little girls in the shop and he called them, you know, dirty old bastard whatever he did and he and he ra- ran but he ran into the security guard. The security guard was actually monitoring him because he thought it was strange, but your man ran out of the shop and they called the guards then on him.'

(Participant R048 (f/44) Interview 4th July 2018)

In each of these recounted incidents, the participant or their partners confronted individuals they had categorised as strangers. This was a commonality across the majority of participants who claimed they would or maybe would question someone photographing children.

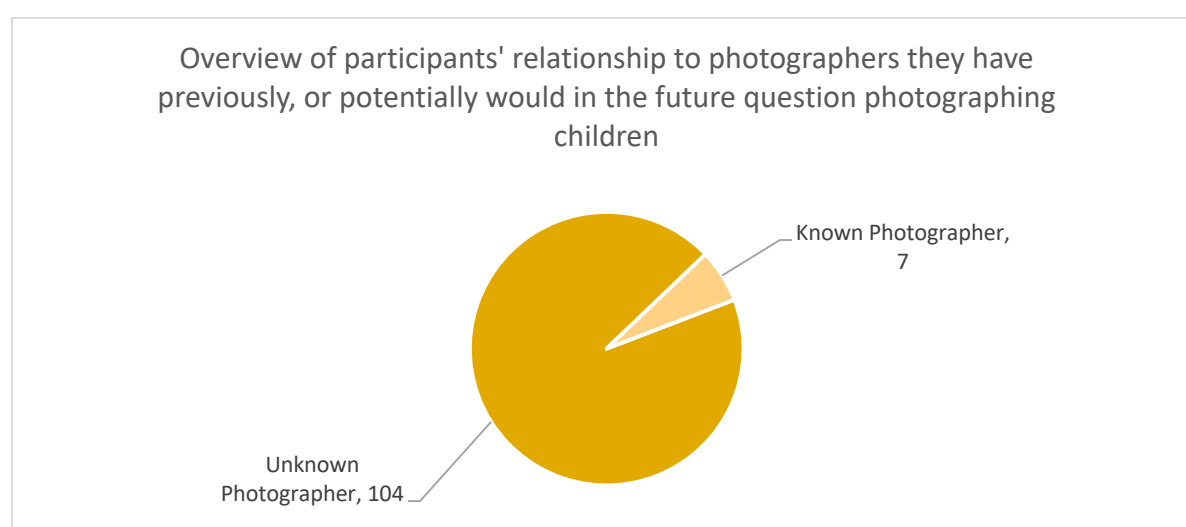


Figure 52: Overview of participants' relationship to photographers they have previously, or potentially would in the future question photographing children

From the 261 participants who claimed they would in the future or have previously questioned someone taking photographs of children approximately 42.5% (n=111) claimed that their relationship to the individual taking the photographs would influence their behaviour. Figure 52 above shows approximately 94% (n=104) of these participants have previously or would in the future confront unknown individuals (n=78f/26m). Whereas, only 7 (n=6f/1m) participants have previously questioned individuals they had known in real-world encounters. These 'known' relationships varied between school representatives, family members, fellow parents and/or club members. This practice of questioning known photographers represents 28% of the 25 participants who confirmed that they had previously questioned someone taking photographs of children. These findings show that most confrontations, and potential confrontations are indicative of the previously cited protectionist discourse surrounding children, in which the traditional 'stranger' is continually construed as the dominant threat.

8.3.2 Comments passed to those sharing online

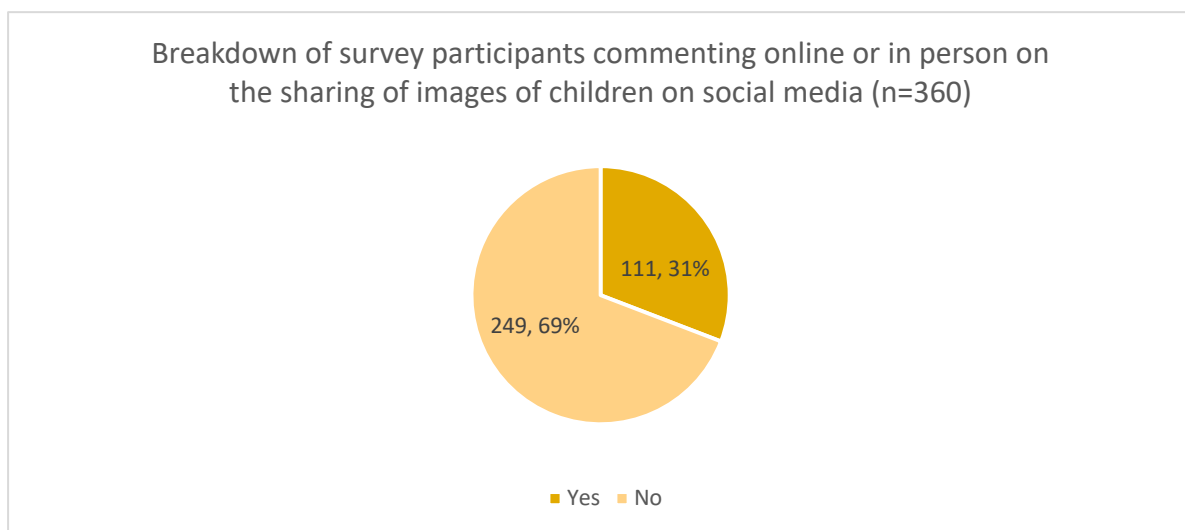


Figure 53: Breakdown of survey participants commenting online or in person on the sharing of images of children on social media

In total, approximately 31% (n=111) of survey participants have previously passed comment online or in person about the sharing of images of children on social media. This figure indicates that most survey participants (approximately 69%/n=249) were less inclined to pass a comment, whether positive or negative. This finding is surprising considering that 64.2% (n=204) of the survey participants who use social media (n=318) confirmed that they 'observe, comment upon and create the content', as detailed previously in section 6.3.1.

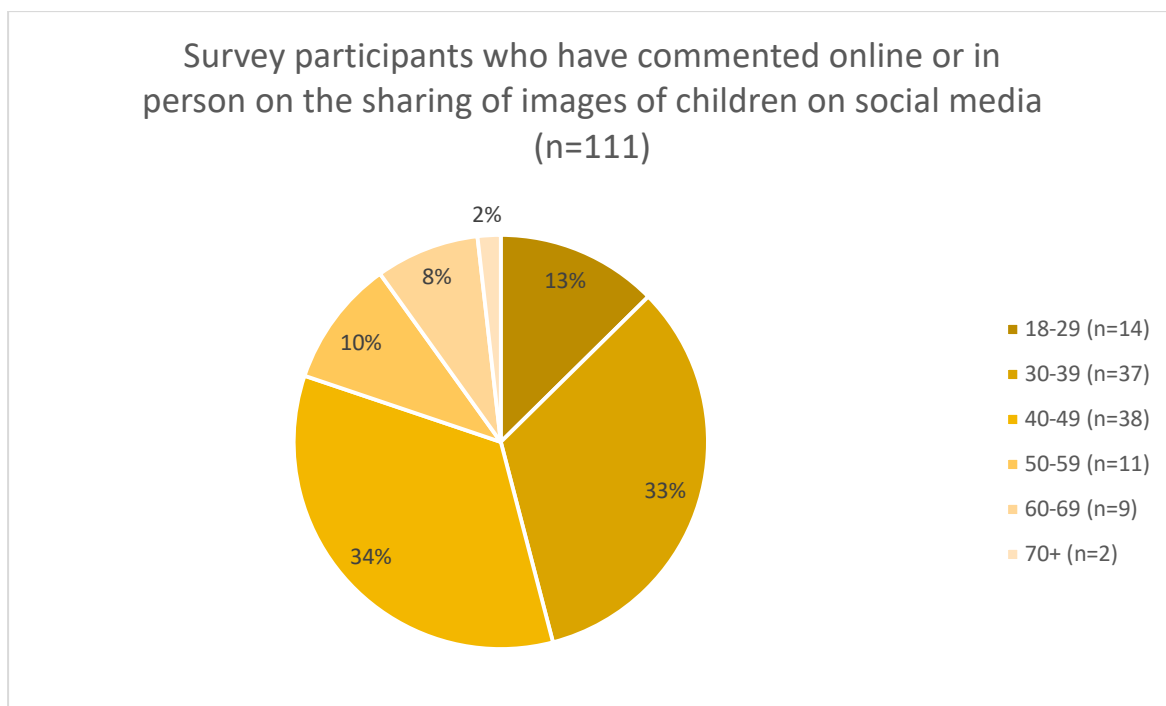


Figure 54: Profile of survey participants who have commented online or in person on the sharing of images of children on social media

From those 111 participants who have passed comment approximately 82% (n=91) were female and approximately 18% (n=20) were male. It was also noticeable that female participants across each of the predefined age categories had passed comments, whereas no male participants aged 70 years or over commenting online or in person to individuals sharing images of children. However, with only two male participants over the age of 70 using social media this is unsurprising.

As previously discussed in section 7.1 approximately 32% (n=36) of the 111 comments made to those sharing images of children online were positive. However, approximately 53% (n=59) were negative. These comments were made by 52 female participants and seven male participants. A thematic analysis of these comments elicited six sub-themes signifying areas of concern among the participants; excessive sharing practices, unauthorised access to shared images, online presence of the photographed child, how the photographed child is represented in the photographs, the permanency or afterlife of the digital image and personal perspectives held by those passing comment. These themes align with the previously discussed key issues that shape negative attitudes among participants towards the online sharing of images of children. Yet, they are only representative of the 111 participants who voiced their concerns by passing comments to those sharing images online.

Notwithstanding this, the comparative figures between the 59 survey participants who passed a comment on social media and the 25 who questioned those photographing children in a real-world scenario evidence the differing practicalities of the exchanges. The nature of passing comment online is less arduous and uncomfortable than questioning an individual in a real-life situation. Yet there are similarities in both incidents, with commentators often steadfast in considering their comments as appropriate and the right thing to do.

Notwithstanding these incidents initiated by survey participants, the research sought to explore the experiences of being the subject of question and how such experiences can affect both the attitude and practices of participants. This is explored in the next section of this chapter.

8.3.2.1 Being the subject of question: A presumption of perversion?

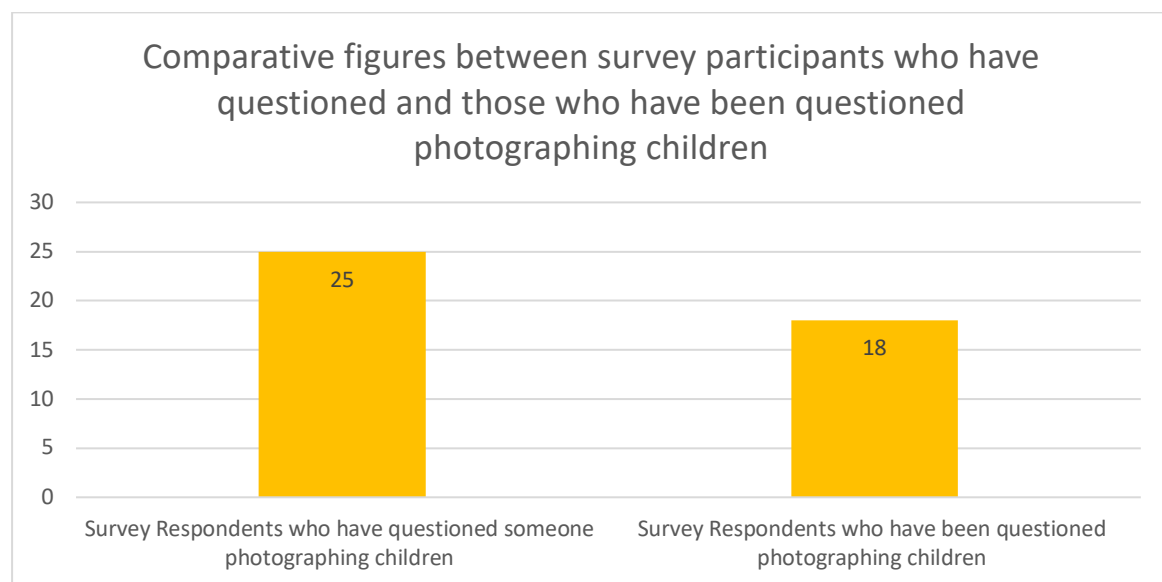


Figure 55: Comparative figures between survey participants who have questioned and those who have been questioned photographing children

Previously the findings showed that 261 survey participants claimed that they would in the future or have in the past questioned an individual photographing children. However, despite these declared intentions only 9.5% (n=25) engaged in actual real-world exchanges with photographers. This figure compares to only 5% (n=18) of all survey participants being questioned themselves while photographing children.

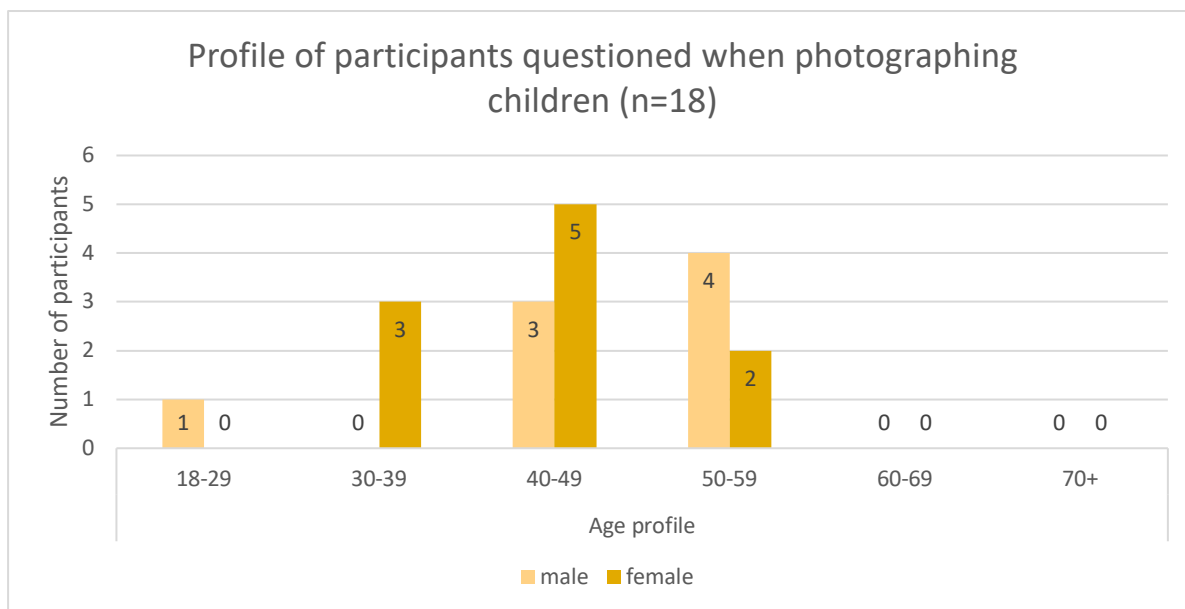


Figure 56: Profile of participants questioned when photographing children

Figure 56 shows that ten female and eight male participants were previously questioned when photographing children. This finding was somewhat surprising considering the traditional construction of men (appropriately) as those most likely to be the perpetrators of the misuse of images captured of children. However, such a non-gendered representation did mirror the previous dominant gender-neutral suspicion attributed to unknown individuals photographing children known to participants, as previously detailed in section 8.2.3

The frequency of these encounters indicates that such occurrences are rare in practice. Compared with the 72.5% (n=261) of survey participants who claimed that they would, or maybe would confront someone taking photographs of children the difference is significant. The number of participants intending to be proactive here is unsurprising. Such a response may be considered the appropriate or correct response to give when participants are questioned about their attitudes towards an activity that potentially compromises those at the heart of the protectionist discourses, children.

The disparity between those saying they would question others and those who have been questioned indicates that despite well-meaning intentions dominating the survey participants' responses, they can only be acted on if such a situation is perceived to present itself. Furthermore, the practice of confronting an individual in a real-life situation is an unnerving prospect for the majority of people, and despite the intention to question being well-intended the possibility of following it through is less likely. This is reflected in two participants being primarily concerned for their own safety when considering confronting someone taking photographs of children. Participant R018 (f/18-29) clarified that if the situation were 'not threatening' to her, she would 'intervene' whereas participant R050

(f/30-39) indicated that she might challenge someone if it 'felt safe to do so' in the situation. A real-world example of such a concern was referenced in the previous experience detailed by participant R048 (f/44). In the cited incident, she decided not to approach the individual she perceived to be taking photographs, instead asking her male partner to do so.

Notwithstanding the experiences of those questioning individuals, the research considered the experiences of those who found themselves questioned when photographing children. When asked to elaborate on the situation in which participants were challenged, 16 provided an answer detailing the incidents to various degrees.

Referring to the individuals who challenged their practice there was an equal split between those known to the participant and those unknown to them (n=5 unknown/5 known). The six remaining participants did not clarify. Six of the participants specified that those challenging them were related to the photographed child, with neighbours, swimming pool attendants and dance teachers making up the rest. It was noticeable that only one participant was challenged by the child they were photographing, with the daughter of participant R101 (f/40-49) contesting her practice.

Detailing their experiences, six comments were passed to participants referring to policies or legislation related to the practice of photographing children. Three cited the prohibition of photography in swimming pools, whereas three other comments were non-specific, simply citing 'child protection', 'IP legislation' or general 'legal reasons'. Four other participants had their practice challenged in public locations ungoverned by prohibitive laws or policies. Three additional comments were passed to participants taking photographs in swimming pools, while participant R235 (f/52) referred to an incident at a school dance when parents were requested not to take photographs due to "legal reasons". Each of these comments drew reference to specific policies that prohibit the photographic practice.

An additional three participants were questioned in relation to their use of the captured images, as opposed to the actual practice of photography itself. Whereas the six remaining participants did not disclose the specifics of the complaints made to them during their practice. However, participant R045 (m/50-59) stated that the nature of the comment was advisory. The individual, who was known to the participant, commented at a surfing competition that they should be 'cautious taking photographs of the children as people are concerned about child abuse'.

These concerns were echoed, albeit in a hostile manner by two additional participants claiming to have been labelled a 'pervert' or a 'paedophile' when photographing children. These participants elaborated that the complainants were confrontational and aggressive in their manner. Furthermore,

one incident continued despite an explanation from the participant clarifying that nothing 'sinister' or illegal, as implied by the comments had been done. This behaviour is further evidence of a rigid mindset among the complainants, decisive in their determination that they are doing the 'right thing'. The gender balance of one male and one female participant being the recipients of these challenges reauthenticates the gender-neutral mindset among most of those surveyed participants suspicious of those photographing children, as discussed previously in section 8.2.3.

There are also occasions when the passing of comments can become excessive and morph into abuse. When interviewed, participant R319 (m/26) spoke specifically of his experiences of being trolled online, having previously made what he perceived to be a constructive comment on an image shared on Instagram.

'I was just curious, you know, asking her (the sharer of the image) how did she get, you know the kids so comfortable and they looked like they were enjoying themselves in the shot ... then a random third party just like, you know, out of nowhere just started attacking me... my first comment, as in to "What does he mean that he likes the composition of these kids? What is he getting at in this shot?" You're just like, "What?", Like, "What's going on here?"

It was really interesting because the photographer herself ...was trying to defend the point of ..."like it's just like this composition is like, when we, like, you know, position the subject..." He's like, "I know what it is". It's like, you know... but the way he phrased it there seemed like he was getting at something else.

Like it was a double meaning. And I was just like, "Why?". You know? But this is the kind of thing that happens, like, all the time... if you look online... I've just kind of stopped giving feedback on Instagram.

Erm, it's funny and like that guy, I ended up having to block him because he then came to my page and started, like, going through photographs and just leaving really weird, kind of fairly vulgar comments on some of the shots'

(Participant R319 (m/26) Interview 6th August 2018)

In this example the commentator believed it appropriate to actively pursue and 'troll' the participant beyond the original exchange. This occurrence was unique among the data sets. Nonetheless, it mirrors the real-world experiences of participants who were aggressively challenged when photographing children, as previously detailed. When such commentators are adamant in their mindset the appropriateness of, or the 'collateral damage' (Furedi, 2013: 63) caused by their actions are less considered than the 'moral cause' they feel they are pursuing.

The dominant protectionist discourse that surrounds children within contemporary society has seen a paradoxical relationship between adults and children emerge. While children's previously discussed positioning as a concern for the nation (Prout, 2008) has become established, simultaneously a fundamental erosion of trust in the motives of adults towards children emerged. The dominant sentiment to protect children is expressed through the questioning of practices and engagements that are perceived to be inappropriate. The lack of empathy regarding any potential consequences for the subjects of such allegations is evidence of the 'collateral damage' deemed acceptable in the protection of children (Furedi, 2013: 63). It is easy to associate the worst possible readings (Lumby, 2010:8) with a practice and accusations of inappropriate behaviour towards children are not difficult to cast, particularly online but they are extremely difficult to ignore.

This leads to a fear of being associated with or labelled as a perpetrator of inappropriateness, given the potential consequences that accompany such accusations (Jewkes and Wykes, 2012; Furedi, 2013). Such a labelling of deviance is an application of a mindset by moral crusaders opposed to the actual practices of the individuals; for previous generations, the practices of photographing and sharing images of children was absent of such labelling. Thus, "Deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label" (Becker, 1963).

The resulting broader disengagement between adults and children, particularly men has occasionally led to tragic consequences. One such incident was the non-intervention of Clive Peachy having witnessed 2-year-old Abigail Rae wandering alone a short time before her tragic accidental drowning, for fear of being accused of trying to abduct her (Pook, 22 March 2006). The impacts of such attitudes and experiences on the practices of photographing and sharing images of children among survey participants are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

8.3.2.2 Sentiments of participants after having photographic practices challenged.

17 of the 18 survey participants questioned when photographing children elaborated when asked how the confrontation made them feel. 35.3% (n=6) claimed that their practice was unaffected or unphased by the encounter. Participant R235 (f/52) stated she was 'happy enough' with the comment passed to her, while participant R081 (m/50-59) claimed that he was 'used to it'. This response indicates that the passing of comments may have been more of a common occurrence than suggested among the participants. Furthermore, an additional six participants concurred with or appreciated the comments made to them. Notwithstanding this, participant R092 (f/40-49) stated that she was upset,

describing the experience as 'horrible', yet confirmed that the experience had not affected how she continues to photograph children.

The majority (64.7% / n=11) of those questioned felt that their mindset or practice had been affected after their experience. The effect of these comments ranged from participant R283 (f/50-59) feeling 'a bit stupid' having taken photos at a swimming pool and been unaware of the prohibiting policies, to participant R299 (m/40-49) being 'wary about doing it again'. The remaining participants indicating that they were conscious of the comments, feeling 'irritated', 'vulnerable' and 'startled'. This latter response of being 'startled' was unique in its indication that the passing of a comment genuinely surprised the participant. Such an isolated reaction reflects a normalised mindset in society that consideration should be expected when photographing children.

Six participants acknowledged that they were now more aware of either the subject of their photographs or a negative attitude in society towards the practice of photographing children. Specifically, participant R045 (m/50-59) mentioned being '... more conscious of the mass hysteria...', while participant R075 (m/40-49) stated that he was 'more attentive to the issue'. Participant R235 (f/52), reflective of the broader societal attitude, felt the 'whole culture has changed' surrounding the photographing of children. Emphasising the positive nature of this protective position, participant R319 (m/26) stated that he now tries to 'protect the child's privacy (and) consider their perspective', while participant R097 (m/50-59) consciously seeks permission before shooting, albeit from the child's guardian rather than the child. However, these constructive changes in mindset were limited among survey participants.

8.4 Impacts on the everyday practices of photographing and sharing images of children

The negative attitudes, that occasionally led to the questioning of those photographing and sharing images of children online also had an impact on the practices of participants. Participant R299 (m/40-49) clarified that the experience of being questioned made him 'wary about doing it (photographing children) again' and that they 'do not bother' anymore. Similarly, participant R319 (m/26) considered if taking photographs of children were 'worth the extra hassle' he had experienced. This non-practice is the ultimate effect negative attitudes and resulting confrontations can have for those photographing or sharing images of children online.

8.4.1 The decision not to share

When considering the non-sharing of images of children online, participants presented numerous concerns and negative attitudes that influenced their decision.

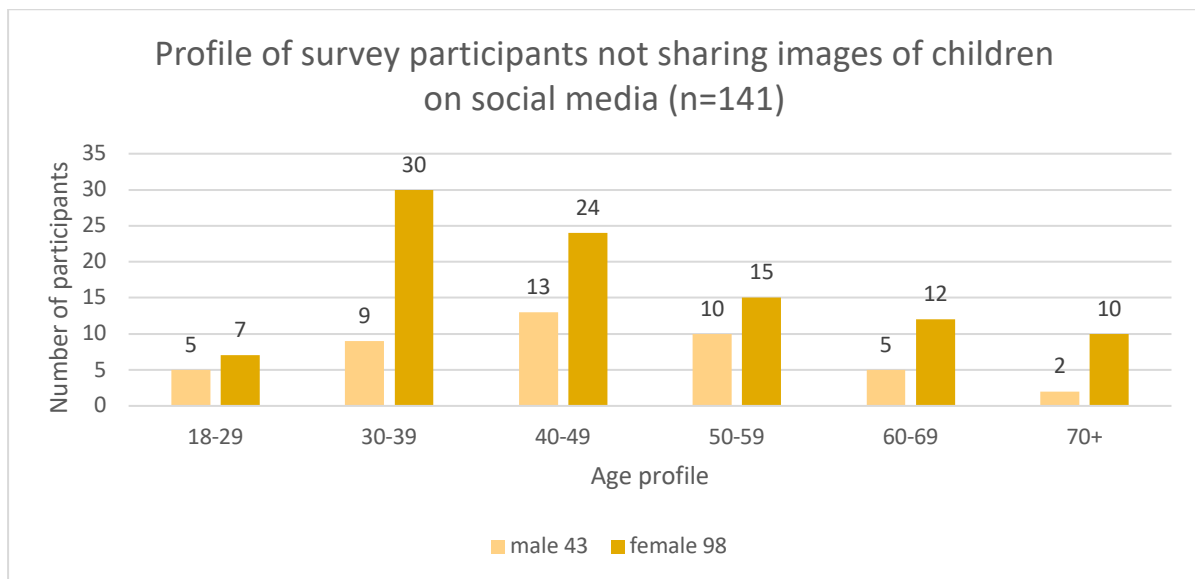


Figure 57: Profile of survey participants not sharing images of children on social

Detailing these figures, of the 39.1% (n=141) of survey participants who did not share images of children online approximately 69% (n=98) were female, with the remaining 30.4% (n=43) being male. Additionally, each of the pre-determined age demographics were represented among these responses. Figure 57 shows that the age bracket of 30-49 represented the largest figure with a combined 53.5% (n=76) of those participants choosing not to share images of children on social media. This may have been a consequence of approximately 70% of participants using social media also coming from within this age demographic (n=224 from 319).

Notwithstanding these figures, when given the opportunity to elaborate on their position, 21 of these non-sharing participants claimed their lack of access to or interest in social media affected their practice, with 16 of these participants not using social media in any context. Reflecting on these numbers, a more accurate figure of 120 participants consciously choose not to share images of children across the platforms.

An analysis of the elaborated responses found the justifications for the non-sharing of images of children aligned with the previously discussed negative attitudes and key issues of concern towards the practice. The access to the images, the initial permission to share, the sharers' relationship to the

child, the agency of the child photographed, the perceived dangers of the Internet and a fear of inappropriate labelling are engaged with as themes across the following paragraphs of this section of the chapter.

Ten participants' chose not to share images of children across social media because of concerns they had related to the access to those images once uploaded. Three of these participants were explicitly apprehensive about the lack of control over 'who sees them...', whereas other concerns related to '...where the images would end up'. Emphasising this perspective, participant R296 (m/50-59) unequivocally stated that the photos could 'get into the wrong hands'. These anxieties and the perceived lack of assurance align with the privacy-related concerns presented by a further 17 participants. For these participants, an emphasis was placed on the 'child's right to privacy', with it mentioned as a 'concern' or that participants were 'worried' about it. A further six of these participants felt that their opinions, related to the child's privacy reflected their private nature as an individual. Participant R260 (f/40-49) elaborated that she does not '...use online platforms for images of myself as I value my privacy, and I would have misgivings about sharing images of my children...'. Four additional participants echoed this perspective. Despite not aligning any specific fear or consequence, a cautiousness remained evident among these responses. As stated by participant R211 (f/50-59), a child should '...not have a social media presence' and that they did not think '...innocent children should have pictures on any social media platform'. These privacy-related concerns mirror previous research (Wagner and Gasche, 2018) as influencing the online sharing of images of children.

Three additional participants directly attributed their withdrawal from sharing images of children to their fear of being labelled inappropriately. Similar to the previously discussed non-photographing of children this reaction of ceasing sharing is extreme, and there were alternative changes in practice used by participants to mitigate the negative attitudes they had that were less destructive than ceasing the practice altogether.

8.4.2 Modifying practices; changes in the production of the image

The launch of Facebook in 2004 and its subsequent dominance of social media resulted in seismic shifts in the practices of sharing photographs. Prior to its launch and its pervasive use among social media, subscribers' digital images were shared through email, as SMS attachments, on personal web spaces or printed and shared physically as photographs. Changes in the practice of sharing images have occurred continuously as communication technology has progressed. In the context of this study, the research is more concerned with changes in the sharing habits of participants, influenced by their

attitudes towards the sharing of images of children as opposed to changes that have been impacted solely by determining technology.

The ceasing of photographing children or sharing images of them online as a reaction to negative attitudes nullifies any of the potential benefits the practices can bring. Echoing the findings of previous research (Minkus et al., 2015; Moser et al., 2017; Wagner and Gasche, 2018) participants who sought to retain these benefits adopted various creative techniques in the management and manipulation of the images they chose to continue to capture and share.

Changes in practice initially concerned the content of the images themselves, with survey participants adopting techniques to anonymise the children in the images they chose to share. The second change in practice saw an increased awareness of the inclusion of children in the images shared. The final change saw participants attempting to retain more control over the access to the images they were sharing. Regarding this latter practice, the research presents an alternative perspective by distinguishing between the previous practice of 'sharing' images and the adopted practice of 'sending' images.

8.4.2.1 Anonymising the photographed child

The practice of protecting the identity of the photographed child while maintaining the benefits of sharing their image was tackled by some participants through the non-disclosure of their identifiable details. Two participants specifically referenced the omission of the child's name. Five others were less explicit, clarifying that they only share with 'clear anonymity', 'not too much detail in the picture' or that they share once the child 'cannot be identified'. Furthermore, participant R235 (f/52) felt that if a child's location was identifiable from an image shared, there was the possibility of harm coming to them. When interviewed, she discussed a hypothetical situation in which her daughter could be located and alluded to possible consequences:

'The idea that somebody will download a picture of my daughter and recognise where she is and the location she is in... it's that stranger danger thing you know? ... If somebody sees on the Internet we're having lunch in (location), and they think "Oh, you know, I'll go and hang around", or she has got her location services up she's going ... they know she's in the (location) now, and they, they're texting her, and they have seen her... you know?'

(Participant R235 (f/52) Interview 22nd June 2018)

Similar fears were given a real-world context by participant R325 (f/29) when interviewed. She spoke of individuals that she knew, who were required not to disclose their own, or their children's locations online because of safety fears:

'I've known a couple of women who don't allow anything of their kids on Facebook, they're careful about what they post of themselves on Facebook because they're in a dangerous situation.

They're keeping themselves safe from a certain person, and having like, you know, pictures uploaded or they can be saved without their consent, um, you know, and people could find where they are or know who their kids are, it's just something.'

(Participant R325 (f/29) Interview 26th June 2018)

These examples were unique among the participants' responses, however the practice of anonymising the photographed child through the considered construction of the photograph or the manipulation of the image before sharing was a more common occurrence.

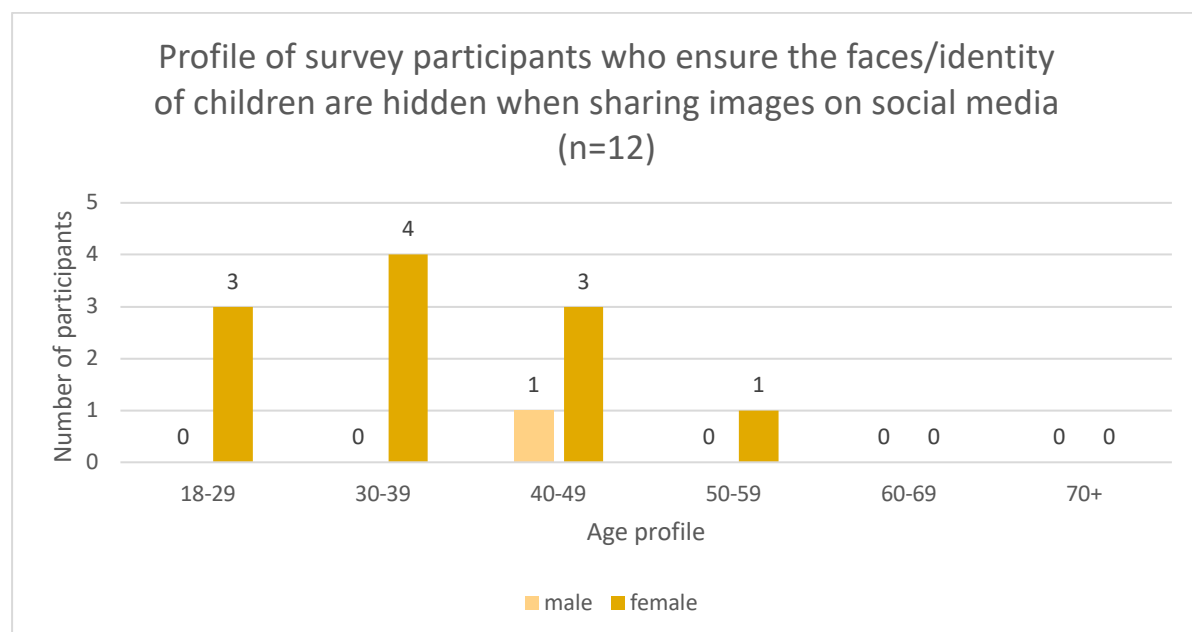


Figure 58: Profile of survey participants who ensure the faces/identity of children are hidden when sharing images on social media

Having confirmed that 60.8% (n=219) of participants shared images of children across social media 5.4% (n=12) confirmed that they 'share images in their social media network, ensuring that the faces/identities of the children are hidden'. One of these participants was male, with the remaining

11 being female. Additionally, none of the participants were over the age of 60 years at the time of taking the survey.

When ensuring that the faces/identities of the children are hidden, two participants verified that they were adhering to work-based policies. Acknowledging the practice of anonymising photographed children becoming policy in certain workplace environments, participant R002 (f/38) elaborated on her practice as a crèche worker:

‘Our policy is that we can upload the photographs onto Facebook, but the children’s faces can’t be visible. So, we can put like a little star on their face, or we can take pictures from behind. That’s in our crèche, but we also have an after school service and all the parents have consented, have written consent, that our children can be on Facebook, so we actually do post photos of children’s faces, of their after school service, but not the preschool age service because those parents have not all given written consent... All parents must sign consent, um for their photograph to be used in any format. And, um part of policy is, you must do regular observations of children, it’s part of the Tusla inspection’

(Participant R002 (f/38) Interview 21st June 2018)

Outside of work-based policies ten participants elaborated on and justified their personal practice. Predominantly they saw the practice of ‘hiding the faces/identities’ as a way of protecting the child's identity and avoiding the creation of an online presence. Specifically, participant R207 (f/30-39) clarified in her survey response that:

Although it is rare for me to post images of my children on Facebook, and my account is fully private, I only ever post them facing away from the camera. I believe in my children's right to privacy. Their generation will be the first to grow up with a digital footprint and no one knows the future impact any images may have on their lives.

When interviewed, participant R004 (m/42) discussed in more detail his similar practice of only sharing images of their children in which their anonymity was protected by hiding their faces discreetly from view. He elaborated:

‘... it might be the back of their heads, or it might be, their head might be ... there might be a kettle in front of their head or something like that, you know? ... When I do, it’s the same reason as anyone, any parent has. It’s an impulse just to show, look these... We’re having fun with the kids. This is where we are. But I just don’t have their faces on there, you know?’

So, it's... That's where I'd sort of draw the line. It's their, it's their digital footprint that they're going to have to create themselves. It's ... they're their own people and they'll decide if and when they want to share their images online'

(Participant R004 (m/42) Interview 6th August 2018)

The adoption of this practice maintains the child's anonymity and allows them to retain the ability to create their own online presence when they are more capable of doing so. Participant 004 (m/42) further elaborated that the photographs he took were pre-visualised and governed by self-imposed compositional guidelines. This allowed for the creation of images he felt acceptable to share on social media. He elaborated:

'... it's done in a, in an artistic sort of way. Like, you know, one kid might be filling the kettle and the other kid is a little bit lower and he's filling it with a tap and both their faces are covered or something, you know? So, I'll come across a photo and I'll say. "Oh yeah, I can use that one okay." I've made a rule about what I can share... I might get a photo, eh, I might get a birds-eye view photo of them. Like a couple of months ago, I did that, and I knew they were getting the head down and they were doing a jigsaw, so I took the photo with the intention of putting it online".

(Participant R004 (m/42) Interview 6th August 2018)

Those who adopt such a practice feel they are protecting children from potential consequences arising from being identifiable online. However, other participants questioned the validity of the practice. Participant R035 (f/40-49) specifically stated they felt it is 'pointless to hide faces etc..', yet without further elaborating on their position it is difficult to attribute a justification for it.

Images that have the face of a child pixelated or blurred are treated after the photograph has been taken, thus the original image in which the child is identifiable is retained. This image may be viewed in a more controlled environment, sent directly to a specific receiver or printed for display in the future. Whereas, composing a photograph in such a way that the child is not identifiable results in an image that cannot be made 'identifiable' at a later stage. These photographs will always feature an anonymised child and one should consider if these images are actual visual representations of childhood and in the future what purpose will these images serve.

8.4.2.2. The inclusion and exclusion of children

Apart from this modification of images a consciousness regarding the inclusion and exclusion of children in images has evolved among some of the survey participants. Most participants claim to photograph (91.4% / n=329) and share (60.6% / n=218) images of children to varying degrees. Yet, some of those interviewed elaborated that they have become more mindful of the children in their photographs, either at the time of photographing or at the later stage when considering what to share on social media. Participants mentioned the practice of consciously composing photographs to exclude children who were unrelated or not known to those taking the photographs as a way in which their attitudes influenced their practices. Participant R235 (f/52) reflected that she has become more conscious of the subjects when taking photographs of children than she had been previously:

‘Do you know what? Sometimes it's really hard to go back into yourself as you were 10 years ago or 15 years ago and think about how did you react to these things because you are conscious of where you are now. And, I know that I would be much more aware of, “I’m taking pictures of a child. There are other children in the background...”’.

(Participant R235 (f/52) Interview 22nd June 2018)

Similarly, participant R307 (f/59) explained ‘... I probably wouldn’t take photographs of other people’s children that I wouldn’t know’, before questioning ‘why would I?’ When presented with the hypothetical situation of being at a child’s party and questioned if they would be conscious of the inclusion of children that they did not know she confirmed ‘Yeah, I probably would’, before clarifying that in a previous generation, she ‘Probably wouldn’t have been conscious of it’. Furthermore, participant R325 (f/29) also elaborated on her practice of excluding other people’s children when photographing her daughter, stating that:

‘Most of the time I do (exclude other children), depending on how desperate I am to get the picture quickly. Like I might get a couple of people in the background and try and crop them out. Um, but if I take my time, I tend to just try and focus on her. I try to keep everything else out’

(Participant R325 (f/29) Interview 26th June 2018)

When participant R325 (f/29) mentions trying to 'crop them out' she refers to the technique of cropping an image after the photograph has been taken and before it is shared. Expanding further on her practice, she stated '...I'm even more careful about not posting other people's kids and trying to crop them out of a picture if I post it online'. This response displays a consciousness of children that may have been included in the photograph unintentionally, and the measures resorted to, to ensure the image is not shared across social media.

Notwithstanding these examples of practices changing in line with attitudes, participant R048 (f/44) clarified that her practices had not changed, despite acknowledging that there has been a change in society. When asked during the interview if she thought that her practice had changed, she replied:

'No. I've always been like that because for me photographs... like I grew up in a family where there were photographs all the time and of millions of people and you wouldn't know who they are. So, I am more selective, I like photographs of immediate family... I wouldn't be taking photographs of the world and their wives... and its always been like that, I've always liked it even in the kid's photographs'

(Participant R048 (f/44) Interview 4th July 2018)

These habits of excluding children from photographs are a result of those intending to share the images avoiding an unintentional creation of an unauthorised online presence of children not related to them. This grants these children a potential authority over their online presence that is absent elsewhere among participants' responses. Furthermore, such habits simultaneously avoid objections or the potential for the previously discussed derogatory labelling often associated with the practice of sharing images of children on social media.

While these changes in composition and editing preserve the practice of sharing images, they also facilitate control over the content at the point of photographing and sharing. Yet, it remains evident that reservations regarding the access to these images once shared were still apparent. Other changes in practice, unrelated to the content of the images, concerned their distribution. More specifically, whether images continued to be 'shared' with receivers or whether they were now 'sent' to them.

8.4.2.3 Sending not sharing

As previously discussed in section 6.3.1, approximately 76.3% (n=275) of survey participants actively use social media to share images of children. Among these 7.6% (n=21) selected 'other' as a response

when presented with a list of software and applications used to share photos online. The dominant platforms referred to were Snapchat (n=7) and WhatsApp (n=5). These platforms differ from the traditional social media platforms, in that they are messaging applications, with their own specific 'sharing' affordances. Essentially, they are private communications portals rather than the more public communications portals. While they are used to share images, both Snapchat and WhatsApp are restricted to a pre-determined and authorised receiver of the content, as selected by the sharer. In a similar way that an email or SMS is sent to a group of recipients with an attachment, in this instance the image itself is the message. Rather than sharing images that can be viewed publicly, as is the case with social media platforms these private communications are sending the images directly to receivers. There is a marked difference between the two processes. When interviewed participant R307 (f/59) discussed her practice of sending rather than sharing images of children:

'The only time I might put something on WhatsApp would be if I was babysitting for my daughter and I'd send her an image of the kids doing things. That's purely communication purposes... But that's the only time I would put kids up.'

(Participant R307 (f/59) Interview 2nd July 2018)

When specifically questioned if she would similarly share these images on Facebook, having established that she was a user of the platform, she stated:

'No, I wouldn't, No I'd just be cautious of it...I suppose... I worked in nursing and I just would have a strong value around personal privacy and confidentiality. I think it's a really important um, I think it's really important to any individual... I think a child is no different'

(Participant R307 (f/59) Interview 2nd July 2018)

In this instance, the personal experiences of the participant working in nursing influenced her attitude concerning the sharing of information, and this in turn has affected her practice. Participant R048 (f/44) practised a comparable process of sending images of children, rather than sharing them. Clarifying her practice and lauding the benefits of it when interviewed she stated that:

'...I don't get the kids on Facebook... we have our own family WhatsApp group, um, so it's my immediate siblings and my dad who just learned how to use a phone. So, he gets what we get which means we can share a photograph between us and what the kids are doing. So, it's great, you know what I mean?

...it makes the connection to them (siblings, children) more real, you know? Instead of just sitting there going, "Oh, I wonder what he looks like now", we can see it. Like years ago, we couldn't unless you send actual photographs to a relative abroad by post you wouldn't know what your cousins looked like if they lived in a different country. Whereas now, because of media, it's amazing it's brilliant you're not so distant, you know? ...But again, that's just immediate family, you know?'

(Participant R048 (f/44) Interview 4th July 2018)

Snapchat was a similar messaging application mentioned by participants as an alternative means of sending images of children. However, messages or images sent through Snapchat referred to as 'memories' disappear after a designated time determined by those sending the information. This feature empowers those sending the 'memory' to restrict access beyond the pre-set time of one to ten seconds. Participant R319 (m/26) referred to the appeal of this feature when interviewed stating:

'I think Snapchat, the reason we like it so much is because for the most part no one really saves any memories... So, it's just like, you know, you see it and you have a good laugh and then it... you move on. There's no incriminating evidence (laughs). You know that kind of thing.'

(Participant R319 (m/26) Interview 6th August 2018)

Notwithstanding this, there remains the possibility of the receiver of the image saving the content by selecting an option on the application's interface. The omission of such a consideration among these participants is further evidence of the trust instilled in those known to us. This trust may be ill-founded, as previously discussed in section 8.2.3 when considering the statistics of those most likely to be perpetrators of abuse and misuse images of children. However, when aligned with the issues of concerns that relate to the permanence of images shared online the affordance of a 'shelf-life' is a fundamental difference in the context of this research.

8.4.2.4 Security affordances of social media

Using the security and privacy affordances of social media permit participants to restrict access to the images of children they share. Seven survey participants explicitly referred to using such affordances to limit access to individuals they perceived to 'know'. These participants ensured that 'only friends

and family' or members of a 'group' or 'network' could access the images, or alternatively they had their social media account set to 'private'. However, as all ten participants interviewed who were active on social media had their accounts set to private or 'friends only', the practice among survey participants was possibly more popular than disclosed. Furthermore, in 2014, Facebook changed its default security settings to 'friends' for new accounts (Magid, 2014).

An additional 45 survey participants referenced their ability to control access to the images they share as an influence over their attitude towards the practice. Approx. 47% (n=21) of these explicitly stated that having their accounts set to private was a way of ensuring access remained controlled. Four of these participants did not agree with the sharing of images publicly. Participant R053 (f/30-39) was adamant in stating, regarding her son, that they 'would never publicly post an image of him online'. Responses of this nature imply a presumption of control over the image when access is limited to 'friends and family' or 'private' security settings are selected. The use of these security settings may be perceived as an attempt to apply a similar control that is afforded to physical photographs displayed in the home to digital images in virtual locations. Using the 'friends and family' security setting or only sharing in 'private groups' provides a sense of access management similar to that which survey participants may have previously had when displaying photographs in their homes. The authorisation of access to individuals 'known' is considered as sufficient a means of retaining control of the images as it is in the real world. Notwithstanding the previously discussed concerns related to the authenticity of those categorised as a 'friends' on social media, such security affordances only restrict the initial access to the shared image. There are no restrictions in place concerning the 'digital afterlife' of shared images and those granted access have the capability to duplicate and/or further circulate these images without the knowledge of the original sharer.

Cognisant of this, three survey participants believed that no security setting sufficiently controls access to images uploaded through social media. Participant R264 (f/18-29) emphasised '... I feel social media is not the right place for these images because once shared one has no control over what happens to them'. Whereas participant R251 (m/40-49) stated that he felt 'Current controls over distribution, recall, deletion, and usage are insufficient'. Again, this concern, associated with a lack, or loss of control over the digital afterlife of images relates to the potential for unknown individuals, beyond those perceived to be 'family and friends' accessing the images. Furthermore, 21 survey participants specifically referred to such access by third parties as directly influencing their attitude. This perspective mirrors the previously raised concern among participants related to the

photographing of children by unknown individuals. This is similarly associated with the perceived online dangers the Internet presents, particularly for children.

8.5 Research participation reflection

The research has, up to this point, considered the first two phases of data-gathering. The thematic analysis of both the survey responses and semi-structured interviews also took cognisance of the observational field notes gathered during and after the interview process. Triangulating the findings facilitated this study of the emergence and influence of attitudes among the data sets toward the everyday photographing of children and the sharing of those images. However, these methods of data collection constrained the potential for appropriate reflection by participants. When interviewed, participant R194 (f/39) explicitly mentioned spending time thinking about issues related to the content of the research. She reflected that she tended to:

‘... go back and forth like you know? Sometimes I’ll ... you know, it’d be like I feel a little bit differently about it, like on this I’m like moving it up, over, and back on this kind of what’s acceptable, what’s not acceptable, and then it’s like what’s acceptable and what I feel is okay isn’t always inline’

(Participant R194 (f/39) Interview 25th June 2018)

This process was reflective of the current nature and evolving context of the research area. Culminating her interview, participant R194 (F/39) elaborated that she ‘likes the fact that it (her research participation) makes me think about it more and, does, even to question my motives as to why I do things. Um, yeah so that’s good. Definitely’. When acknowledging these perspectives, a post-interview questionnaire was considered appropriate to afford participants the benefit of enough time to process and consider their thoughts on the research area further.

Allowing the interviewees five months to reflect on feelings that may have arisen during or following their participation, a follow-up email was sent asking if they had noticed any changes in their attitude or practices related to the photographing or sharing images of children since being interviewed. With no obligation to participate, eight of the 12 interviewees provided feedback with the remaining four not responding to the request. Two participants replied that their views remained the same without providing any further detail in their response. However, five participants confirmed that their participation in the research encouraged them to reflect and think about their related attitudes and practices. Participant R194 (f/39) claimed she ‘thought about it a lot over the intervening time but

haven't had any substantial change in opinion' (emailed response 7th February 2019). Whereas, participant R307 (f/59) stated that 'Prior to my interview... I possibly hadn't thought about the issues too much... However, reflecting on our conversation after my interview I was possibly surprised...' (emailed response 7th February 2019), before acknowledging that her perspective had changed about particular areas of the research. These responses validate the benefits of both the initial research engagement as a catalyst for appropriately related reflection and the follow-up correspondence, which provided an opportunity to express thoughts or note changes in practice after a sufficient time.

Three of the participants provided a more detailed reflection in their response. Participant R355 (m/44) used the email as a means of emphasising that his sentiment on the matter had not changed and he reiterated his opinion. However, both participant R307 (f/59) and R048 (f/44) elaborated how their involvement in the research was an influential experience. Participant R048 (f/44) detailed how her change in attitude and practice evolved, having previously been 'very strict regards posting pictures of my children on my Facebook page'. She reflected that her increased use of online technology, notably using her phone to access social media and her children's online access via Xbox, led her to 'subconsciously fall for the general scaremongering that predators are lurking around every corner/site'. Acknowledging this, they consciously 'let go' and realised that because of their limited interaction with 'certain sites and specific pages' their children were not 'subject to potential kidnapping and murder'.

This change in attitude resulted in participant R048 (f/44) proceeding to share an image of her children on Facebook, verifying that 'this was a change to my normal rule of not posting them at all or anything identifiable'. The image was one of their children meeting a Nickelodeon star at Comic-Con. When recalling the event, the participant reflected that they had changed their practice firstly because the images were shared to their own Facebook page, which they limited access to personally known friends and family. Secondly, they took cognisance of their children asking them to share the image, because they were 'so excited they wanted everyone to know and asked me to show certain people, such as my sister in Canada'. This emphasises the previously discussed benefits of sharing images with those remotely located from the sharer (Ellison et al., 2007; Mc Daniel, et al. 2012; Duggan et al., 2015; Steinberg, 2016; Brosch, 2018; Wagner and Gasche, 2019). Participant R048 (f/44) proceeded to laud the benefits of reading the positive online comments that followed, stating that the children 'couldn't believe the number of likes' the photo had received.

Concluding her response, she clarified the extent to which her participation in the research had 'opened (her) mind to my overprotectiveness of children regarding the cyber world', before confirming that in future she would 'consider posting a picture if I feel that its epic. But... I'm mindful

of my children's own right to privacy and will always ask them and use my own strict judgement as to what, if anything, will be posted' (emailed response 9th February 2019). Here the participant not only considers her own opinion but extends her sentiment to the opinion of her children regarding their rights to privacy and a say in the construction of their own online presence. Such a change in attitude and practice is progressive and highlights the benefits that can come as a result of engaging with this research area of interest.

Participant R307 (f/59) similarly reflected on the impact her participation had on her attitude towards the practices of sharing images of children. She acknowledged in her response that she had '... lost sight of the importance of our rights within society to freedoms'. She presented the ability to be spontaneous and take photographs of 'whatever and whomever we wish' as one such 'freedom'. She attributed this 'loss of sight' to 'media coverage of paedophiles, child abuse and the potential risks associated with social media...'. On reflection, she felt that the 'intention of the photographer and the purpose for which the photographs are being taken is critical in this debate'. She felt that the 'bad intention of a minority of individuals' can influence legislation and result in 'as many disadvantages as advantages for society as a whole and contribute to greater social restrictions'.

Related to this, she emphasised that social media organisations should have to take 'greater responsibility around governance and accountability', that they should have 'strict transparent policies... [regarding] access to children and the use of children's photographs being uploaded and used indiscriminately'. Suggestions of this nature echo the calls by Prof. Sonia Livingstone who suggested that social media companies should be required to fund an independent body that informs children about keeping their data safe online⁶⁶. While anchoring the context of this suggestion to the funding of such progressive steps, the sentiment of increasing the awareness of those whose images (data) are shared is well-considered. However, concerning the context of this research, a similar increase in awareness of image-related rights, both online and offline would be of benefit to adults and children alike. Participant R048 (f/44) similarly suggested that it would be beneficial if information and education related to the area were available to all individuals, including young parents. She specifically called for an increase in awareness of the 'possibilities that can occur if photographs of children are shared without the control of the audience receiving them' (emailed response 7th February 2019).

⁶⁶ Lecture at Psychology Society of Ireland, Trinity College 17 February 2019, Dublin

These requests were not unique to this post-interview email response. Participant R319 (m/26) had previously called for similar services when interviewed. From the perspective of an individual who takes photographs, he stated:

‘... kinda wish that there was a better way or a better... maybe we just need to have, erm, almost like information centres or... or kind of a bit of education on, like the perception of photography or something like that. Or, trying to educate just people as a whole. Like that, the majority of people actually aren’t out to do kind of devious, nasty things with... with photos’

(Participant R319 (m/26) Interview 6th August 2018)

Facilitating such awareness among society concerning the *actual* risks associated with the photographing and sharing of images of children would encourage a reflective critique of the concerns presented within this study. Considering the reported changes in attitude and practice following engagement in the research process among participants, further engagement across wider society could be of benefit. However, acknowledging the limited scope of this research, ensuring access to, and generating engagement with such information would be an obstacle to overcome for it to be in any way effective.

8.4 Conclusion

Concluding the findings and discussion section of the research, this chapter unpacked and explored the negative attitudes presented by survey participants towards the practices of photographing and sharing images of children online. Despite acknowledging that there were benefits to the practices, most participants presented a negative perspective. When analysed, the key issues identified were familiar. Echoing previously established concerns, consistent with the broader protectionist discourse surrounding children, the fear associated with the danger of strangers persisted.

The potentially unauthorised access to images represented a loss of control that was worrying for participants. These fears were accentuated as participants recognised that the permanency, or ‘afterlife’ of the online image extended its potential to be used inappropriately. Concerns related to cyberbullying and more deviant purposes were prominent among survey participants, with the

unauthorised creation of a child's digital presence also presented as a key issue affecting negative attitudes.

Most participants surprisingly presented a gender-neutral suspicion of those unknown to them photographing children. However, when expanding on their perspective, areas of participants' rhetoric aligned with the traditional framing of the unknown male as the dominant threat to children. This perspective extended to those potentially gaining access to images of children once shared online, continuing a disproportionate deflection of concerns away from those statistically most likely to abuse children: known males.

The chapter highlighted how these dominant negative attitudes had influenced the practices of participants in numerous ways. The number of participants (n=261) who claimed that they would question individuals photographing children vastly exceeded the number of participants (n=25) who actually engaged in such exchanges, a difference mirrored in the small number (n=18) of participants who had their own photographic practices questioned. However, the high number of participants stating that they would question individuals photographing children may have reflected a perceived 'appropriate' way to respond when considering the dominant protectionist discourse surrounding children.

A similar negative attitude was attributed to the sharing of images of children online, with 53% (n=59 from 111) of comments passed on the issue being negative. The practical ease of passing a comment online can account for the increased numbers between real-world and online negative comments passed by participants. The escalation of these comments reflected the practices of moral crusaders (Cohen, 2002; Furedi, 2013) holding those they perceive to be inappropriately engaging with children to account. These actions echo the practice of 'symbolisation' in which those targeted are stripped of any neutral connotations to become scapegoated as folk devils (Cohen, 1972), consistent with previous moral panics. Complainants are sensitised and transform ambiguous activities into potent generalised threats.

These high levels of concern over the photographing and online sharing of images of children represent a consensus that the 'problem' is serious enough to result in an increased level of hostility and a disproportionate reaction. Mirroring the criteria set out by Good and Ben-Yehuda (1994) this study concludes that a moral panic concerning the photographing and online sharing of images of children is evident among the data sets. This moral panic has affected the practices of participants with the use of content management techniques related to both the capturing and sharing of images being used by some, whereas for others it has led to the curtailing of both practices altogether. Furthermore, this contemporary moral panic has the potential to have broader implications for the

everyday photographing of children and the online sharing of their images as social practices in the future.

The concluding findings of this chapter presented the opinions of those interviewed after their participation in the research. Provided with time to reflect on their engagement in the research, participants spoke of an increased awareness of the legal entitlements of individuals to photograph and share 'appropriate' images of children in addition to a re-evaluated appreciation for the agency of photographed children. The application of 'think time' after their initial engagement facilitated a consideration for these areas of the research that had predominantly become dormant. As the protectionist discourse concerning children consumed most participants' perspectives, elements of 'paranoid parenting' (Furedi, 2013) became normalised. A recognition of this among those providing post-research participation feedback displayed the worth of any discussions related to the research area.

Requests for further discussions and clarity of information in relation to the rights of both individuals to photograph and share images of children and the rights of the photographed child displayed a lack of awareness of the existing availability of such information. 'Digitalrights.ie', 'cybersafeireland.org' and the findings of the EU Kids Online Network are among numerous resources that relate to and extended beyond the scope of this study and provide a wealth of information. Nonetheless, the findings of this research indicate that the information provided through these resources is under-accessed and rarely engaged with. Thus, there is a lack of appropriate discussion that could address the continued disproportionate concern and misunderstanding of the rights to photograph and share images of children, which in turn, has an impact on the related attitudes and practices among the participants in this research.

9 CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

Reflecting on a series of photographs taken of children in late 1990s Dublin (see Appendix D), I considered at the time (2011) if I would be able to take a similar set of photographs? Personal engagements and a notable media discourse indicated there had been a shift in the moral and cultural climate since the photographs were taken. This study set out to uncover the attitudes towards quotidian practices of photographing and sharing images of children in Ireland. Using a sequential exploratory design, the qualitatively focused approach allowed each stage of data collection and analysis to inform the next. Comprising of 360 valid responses, the qualitatively focused survey was supported consecutively by 12 in-depth interviews. Accompanying field notes were taken in-situ during and directly after the interviews. The final stage of data collection provided participants with a platform to detail any changes they had in related attitudes or practice following their participation in the study. This use of a mixed-methods approach provided a sufficient level of engagement with the data to provide an appropriate depth of understanding. Considering the research aims, this chapter briefly discusses the relevant findings. It presents the studies original contributions before concluding with a discussion of the limitations of the research and recommendations for future related research.

9.2 Research questions and original contribution

Cognisant of previous research in domestic photographic and sharing practices (Musselo, 1980; Chalfen, 1987; Rose, 2003) this study provided an overdue analysis of contemporary quotidian photographic practices, further drawing the academic gaze toward this previously under-researched area of 'ordinary' photography (Batchen, 2000; Zuromskis, 2013). The seismic shift in the cultural landscape of this type of photography had rendered some elements of previous research outdated. I felt that advances in technology and the emergence of a pervasive social media required a more conscious modern-day study to be undertaken. Chapter 2 discussed in detail how the research area of 'sharenting' is developing an increased presence among academic literature. Calls have been made for studies to extend beyond the cultural contexts of previous research conducted in the US, Australia, the UK and Eastern Europe (Lipu and Siibak, 2019). This research offers an original contribution to this field of research, providing a detailed study from an Irish perspective. The use of an inclusive research design facilitated the uniquely concurrent study of both the photographic and sharing practices of

participants. Noting an absence in existing research this inclusive design, considering all aspects of the capturing-sharing photographic production cycle provides a study that is novel among the existing studies in the field that have, up to this point lacked appropriate consideration for the aspect of capturing photographs of children. The comparative analysis of participants practices of photographing children today and their recollection of similar practices when they were children provides a unique context to an under represented area of study in the wider field of photography.

As well as presenting a comprehensive overview of participants' practices of and attitudes toward the photographing and sharing images of children, the research acknowledges their own experiences of being the photographed child. Furthermore, the qualitatively focused sequential design of the fieldwork facilitated the identification and exploration of strategies participants used to mitigate anxieties they relate to the practices of photographing and sharing images of children. The use of a mixed-methods research design allowed the study to also explore the impact disclosed attitudes had on the research participants' practices.

Cognisant of the research aims presented in section 1.2 these attitudes and practices were mapped across the three broad areas of the findings and discussion chapters:

- Chapter 6: The domestication of photography - how mobile phone technology and social media has affected the photographing and sharing of images of children
- Chapter 7: The construction of childhood – has it changed?
- Chapter 8: The emergence of a new moral panic and its influence on the photographing and sharing of images of children

Each of these findings chapters presented practices of participants influenced by societal changes, be it technological, cultural or legislative. My analysis of the data sets found there to be several key determinant areas and discourses around the photographing of children and the sharing of their images.

Chapter 6 discussed the impact mobile phone technology and social media has had on practices of photographing, storing and sharing photographs and images of children. These advances in technology not only facilitated a vast increase in practice but also accommodated a migration, for the most part from the physical world of the photograph to the digital world of the pixelated image. Furthermore, a key finding for the research showed a shift among participants in the traditional positioning of women as the visual documenters of family life (Smith, 1998; Holland, 2008; Kamal, 2012). Bucking the gender-skewed trend of previous generations a proportionally similar number of male and female survey participants engaged in the photographing and sharing of images of children.

On the surface, this is progressive and indicates fractures, even if they are somewhat hairline in this heteronormative positioning of women. The influence of the changing platforms used for these practices is a noteworthy consideration here. Traditionally, as detailed in section 2.3 the domestication of visual family documentation was targeted towards a female practitioner. Affordability and ease of use were presented as affordances of camera use that appealed to women in the domestic setting encouraged to capture and store their families evolving history. The practice of storing printed photographs in physical photo albums to be shared among friends was traditionally a creative one. The process of creating artistically decorative photo albums that would include notes and other additional aesthetic elements was historically an effeminate role rarely taken on by a man. As discussed in section 6.2.1 this was culturally reflective of previous generations in which binary gender roles were and continue to be normalised. However, the digitised migration of the storage and sharing of images of children to predominantly online platforms has coincided with an increase in male participation. Section 6.4 detailed this cultural change from the perspective of participants in this research. Conscious of traditional gender roles this de-domesticating shift from a predominantly home based tactile practice to a more technological online practice incorporating digital technology may appeal more to men. This may have contributed to men being more comfortable embracing a role previously aligned with women.

Future research in the area of photographing and sharing of images of children should consider this shift by extending the scope of studies beyond the female-centred demographics that have frequented the research landscape previously (Holland, 2008; Chalken and Anderson, 2017; Wagner and Gasche, 2018; Lipu and Siibak, 2019).

The shift to digital technology and social media saw the practice of online self-disclosure become a reciprocal process (Brosch, 2018) that encompassed the practice of sharing images of children. Similar to previous research (Bourke et al., 2013; Moser et al., 2017), the findings showed evidence of this practice of sharing to have become a social norm, and occasionally pressured practice. In chapter 6 section 6.5.2 discussed participant's sentiments concerning the expectation on them to share images online among family and friends. The extent of this was evidenced through the occasional questioning of participants who had not adhered to the now normalised practice. Challenges of this nature further reflect the non-agentic positioning of the photographed child, with complainants displaying a somewhat selfish perspective as to why images were not shared with them. Little if any consideration being given to the child

The dichotomy presented in previous research in which the benefits of sharing were weighed against the perceived risks and dangers presented by the Internet (Lipu and Siibak, 2019) was comparably

presented in these findings. Mirroring the traditional use of photographs in the real world to strengthen relationships (Sarvas and Frohlich, 2011; Mc Daniel, 2012) the use of digital images of children to maintain relationships and stay connected were presented as benefits. Similarly, the continued use of images of children in garnering social-cultural capital echoed previous historical practices, albeit by a less 'middle-brow' sector of society than previously associated with photography (Bourdieu, 1965). Nonetheless, these benefits were countered by the traditional anxieties associated with children and online activity.

The previously established constructs of children as innocent, the property of adults and non-agentic (Higonnet, 1998; Holland, 2004; Prout, 2008; Fulkner, 2010; Zuromskis, 2013) persist as dominant tropes within the data. As presented in section 7.2 and 7.3 participants neutralise entitlements children may have for acquiring agency when maintaining established normalised representations of childhood. Visually this is continually done from an adults perspective (Kumar and Shoenback, 2015) with shared images aligning with pre-existing representations that have become expected and preferred culturally. Section 3.7 detailed this construction of pseudo-authentic images of childhood with photographer Nick Kelsh appropriately capturing the process in his referenced images (2015; 2017). Furthermore, the use of social media 'likes' to validate a shared image of 'childhood' extends the previous theories of Sontag (1977) and Higonnet (1998) regarding a preference within society for the representation over the real.

Chapter 7 engaged with the dominant discourses that developed from the thematic analysis of data. Beneath the traditional protectionist discourse that surrounds children, the responsibility for their safety is continually undertaken by adults, with the child's position as a 'concern for the nation' (Prout, 2008) persistent across both real-world and online spaces. Cognisant of this perceived 'duty of care' participants adopted and implement children's 'cybersafety' through the variety of ways in which they manage and censor their shared images of children, often optimising afforded security settings.

The continued elevated positioning of the 'othered' folk devils of society as the prominent dangers to children results in social discourses that obscure the reality. Participants' continued to internalise the 'stranger danger' discourse through the misappropriated trust put in the 'friends and family' privacy security setting afforded by Facebook. This was considered an adequate way of restricting access to images by strangers. Reflecting on this, a seismic cultural reframing that extends beyond the confines of this research topic is necessary. One that is informative of the authentic misappropriated trust attributed to those least associated with being a concern for our children. However, due to the less palatable reality that those among us, our 'friends and family' are those most likely to be the

perpetrators in the abuse of children, as discussed in section 8.2.3 it is unlikely to materialise. The absence of such an understanding among participants was notable and worrisome as the stranger remained firmly positioned at the forefront of participants fears. A cross cultural understanding and appreciation of the statistical data provided by organisations like RCNI and CARI would clarify that these normalised fears are misappropriated.

Notwithstanding this, when sharing images of children online and across social media research participants echo the 'balancing act' practices of similar previous research. Chapter 8 discussed in detail how participants considered the benefits of staying connected and reinforcing social bonds while being conscious of potentially subjecting children to established risks associated with the internet. However, despite this the elevation of sharing images of children online to an expected practice, as previously discussed suggest that participants were less conversant with digital ethics and displayed contradictory positions. Their rhetoric projects a sentiment of concern for the children whose image they share, and it may have been authentic, yet in real-world practice little consultation or consideration is given to the photographed child. This may have been a result of a misunderstanding or under appreciation of the potential implications for those children shared. However, the responses indicate there to be an awareness of perceived dangers associated with the practice.

Alternatively, these contradictory practices may evidence a more selfish mind set, providing an example of Perloffs' (1999) '3rd Person Effect' theory in which individual participant's practices are considered 'different' or 'separate' to the practices of wider society. A case of participants projecting an adherence to a social norm while contradicting their position in practice. Section 7.4.1 specifically provided an example of this when participant R325 (f/29) spoke of 'sneakily' photographing her young daughter despite passionately citing the importance of a child's consent within her interview. Participant R015 (f/43) also alluded to this when recalling her observation of parents continuing to photograph at school events despite being asked not to.

The prevailing sense of responsibility among participants for children may be well-intended, yet it maintains an adult's dominant position in the adult-child dynamic. There was very little evidence of a discourse of childhood agency, digital rights or digital citizenship presented among the findings. Rarely were the benefits of online sharing aligned with the photographed child, as their contemporary visual construction very much remain the homogenised construct of adults (Kumer and Shoenbeck, 2015). In the domain of photographing and sharing images of children, permission from a parent continues to be sought before any consideration is given to the perspective of the child. Adults are continually positioned to make decisions on behalf of the child (Wagner and Gasche, 2018; Brosch, 2018; Choi

and Lewallen, 2018) and as their commands of children continue to supersede consent from the child, performances opposed to realities are presented as representations of childhood (Zuromskis, 2013).

The practice of seeking an adult's approval to photograph a child was a normalised expectation across the data set, with the omission of such a request often presented as a catalyst for suspicion among participants. However, as shown in chapter 8 such permission is unwarranted provided the rights to privacy for those photographed are not breached. Most of the real-world questioning of individuals photographing children were premised on a misunderstanding or unawareness of legal prohibitions or the perceived inappropriate nature of the practice. Negative comments passed to those sharing images similarly reflected a presumption of ill-doing on the part of the sharer. Akin to previously researched moral panics (Cohen, 1972; Good and Ben Yahuda, 1994; Critcher, 2003) a disproportionate escalation of the protectionist discourse concerning children 'symbolises' (Cohen, 1972) traditionally innocent activities of photographing and sharing images of children into presumed activities of potential immorality. There is little concern for the possible 'collateral damage' bestowed on those capturing or sharing the images.

A notable consequence of this increased protectionist discourse extending across online spaces has seen a cognitive or affective collapse between the digital image of the child and the child itself. In itself, this is paradoxical, given that pixels are less tangible or material than traditional photographs. Nonetheless, it may be the ephemeral and ubiquitous nature of digital images, their replicability, their susceptibility to distortion and the difficulty in controlling their dissemination and use as discussed across this research that provokes such an emotive response. In this regard, it could be argued that everyday photographing, storage and sharing of images has become a much more carefully managed and emotionally-charged social practice that it used to be.

9.3 Limitations

Culminating this study and reflecting on the methods adopted in the data-gathering stage of the process, I feel that a deeper level of engagement with interview participants would have benefited the study. The intention of using observational field notes during and reflectively after the interviews in participant's homes was to extend the engagement with the data beyond their initial survey and interview responses. As discussed in section 5.2 and 5.3.3 of the methodology chapter the use of field notes intended to gather and present data of more ethnographic intent. However, despite this data

contributing to the findings in section 6.3: 'The photograph to the image: The changing landscape of storage and sharing' and providing empirical evidence of participants real world practices of photographing and sharing images of children, this method in hindsight was underdeveloped.

In retrospect, a more prolonged engagement with participants regarding their related online and offline practices would have proved more fruitful for the research overall. A more ethnographically focused research design to support the mixed-methods adopted would have facilitated an engaged one-to-one process with interviewees concerning their image management and sharing habits. This could have been supported additionally by a more active and engaged observation of the techniques participants adopted to mitigate concerns they associated with the digital afterlife of images and the identification of photographed children. Such an approach would benefit similar studies in the future.

Furthermore, a content analysis and targeted engagement with the participants concerning their choice of photographs and images to be displayed in homes and shared online would have accommodated a more rounded understanding of their selections. I also found that limiting the observational field notes to the home locations underappreciated the portability of the physical photographs. It became apparent that the physical display of photographs of children often extended beyond the domestic spaces viewable during interviews and into locations where participants spent a large portion of their time. Practices of creating personal spaces in work environments through the display of both physical photographs and images as 'screen savers' is an area worthy of further research.

Finally, despite providing a unique study of participants' practices of photographing children, a further gap in the knowledge area emerged following this research. Despite this study consciously adopting an inclusive approach and somewhat uniquely considering the full photographic production cycle from capturing to sharing images of children a future study that engages with the subjects of the photographs is needed. This would provide a worthy contribution to this evolving research area. Having provided a comprehensive analysis of the sentiments and practices of those taking the photographs future research should extend its focus to garner the perspective of the photographed children. As discussed in section 2.5.2 previous studies have adopted such a child-centred approach to the online sharing of images of children. However, the initial practice of photographing children is an area that at the time of writing remains unexplored from the perspective of the photographed subject. Engaging in frameworks previously considered; permission, consent and the power dynamics of the adult-child relationship, such a study would appropriately accompany the findings presented here, providing a more conclusive and rounded body of research. Such a study would continue the progressively inclusive approach, as recently adopted in the area of sharenting to consider children's

opinions in areas that directly concern them and in turn shift their traditional non-agentive secondary positioning in the capturing and sharing of their image.

Concluding this study, this area of research is a rich field of enquiry that is ever-expanding as both the mobility of camera technology and the affordances of social media platforms co-develop and are put to a range of both innovative and pernicious uses. Adapting an interpretivist framework for the research appreciated that presented attitudes and practices are consistently shifting.

9.4 Implications for future practice

This area of research is vibrant and current, in which the narrative is consistently evolving. Yet, the nuances of previous moral panics persistently surface. It is appropriate to take a step back and consider what the meta implications of this are for the quotidian photographing children and the sharing of their images.

When considering the implications for photography mobile technology has facilitated its democratisation. The pervasive presence and use of the camera phone have been well documented, and the increase in men photographing and sharing images of children should be welcomed. Simultaneously, the research has also shown the traditional protectionist discourse concerning children to be increasing with the obligation to protect children intensifying. This wave of concern has encompassed the everyday photographing of children that for previous generations was seen as a reliable crutch of support for the potential fallibility of personal memory. The practice of photographing children is now often accompanied by an air of conscience and even a presumption of perversion. Consequentially, anxiety and concern of being labelled as a perpetrator of inappropriateness towards children is common. Occasionally this has resulted in a withdrawal or ceasing of the practice. Such self-censorship is an extreme reaction and unfortunately has the potential to have a significant impact on the candid visual documentation of children and its rich history in photography.

Notwithstanding this, the reaction of withdrawal and non-practice is also understandable when considering the potential for accusations to escalate and have lasting consequences. Such accusations become 'transcendental truths' unburdened with conventional norms of truth (Furedi, 2013: 63). Reflecting on the initial premise on which this body of research was undertaken, the question may not be whether I could take a similar series of photographs of children (see Appendix D), but rather whether I would.

Considering broader implications for practices of sharing, the use of technology to mitigate the perceived dangers facilitated by online technology present more longitudinal concerns. The compositional and digital manipulation of images may serve to protect the identities of children. Still, the permanence of the process also affects the memories triggered when they are revisited after the initial sharing experience. Reflecting on the anonymising practices adopted by participants, it is appropriate to question the purpose of composing and sharing images of children with their faces omitted or pixelated. For what benefit are these images shared if the featured children are unidentifiable to those given access?

Furthermore, as the externalising of memory towards technology continues (Zeiler, 1995), our dependence on it increases. Our memories become susceptible to the trust we bestow on technology for the documentation, storage and sharing of images of childhood. Further studies into Facebook technology's use of nudge behavioural protocols to prompt the online sharing of 'pseudo' visual memories on users' timelines are an emerging area worthy of future research.

A consequence of the increasing practicality of technology and accessibility of social media platforms has been the rapid erosion of the traditional photo album. Technology has negated the previous necessity to print or physically store photographs. As we edge toward 'platform dependency' most images are now captured, stored, and shared digitally. Increasingly with a shift towards the more privacy-focused sharing platforms, WhatsApp and Snapchat, for example, we see digital images become more transient than ever before. However, despite Snapchat permitting the sharer to impose a time limit of up to 10 seconds to view the initial 'snap' this does not negate how susceptible images are to a digital afterlife. These images are easily duplicated and stored for future use (or misuse) by those permitted to access them. This potential loss of control over the digital image is a persistent key issue of concern.

Concluding this body of research, one must consider the future of photographing and sharing images of children as a social practice. The emphasised protectionist discourses that surround children in modern society has seen a new moral panic emerge that has witnessed negative attitudes toward both practices dominate despite associated concerns being disproportionately misdirected. Furthermore, unlike the traditions of moral regulators in seeking a "character reformation of moral deviants" (Hier, 2002: 329), here moral crusaders have a difficulty accepting that the issues at hand can be resolved. The photographing and sharing of images of children has become yet another of the many discoveries of 'new crimes against children' (Furedi, 2013: 8) that are a testament to this protectionist moral panic surrounding children. While paradoxically technology and social media have facilitated a pervasive engagement in which both practices have become a social norm. A consequence

of this is the balancing act that sees the benefits of staying connected and reinforcing social bonds weighed against subjecting images of children and potentially the children themselves to well-established risks associated with the Internet.

Despite this dilemma and the protectionist discourse projected across this research, concerns of the photographed child are predominantly a secondary consideration. Their non-agentic position dominates the perspectives of participants and appears normalised. The rhetoric of participants is often contradictory to their practices. The sentiment or consent of the child is rarely sought and what is seen as of benefit to them continues to be from an adult perspective. A child's continued construction as being vulnerable, innocent and a 'concern of the nation' (Prout, 2008) may on the surface be well-intended. Yet, such a homogenised positioning neutralises any entitlement they may have for acquiring agency.

A dramatic shift in social conscience is required if children are to be provided with an appropriate platform of agency in the future. However, this presents an enormous challenge when dominant discourses continue to dictate those most vulnerable in society need protecting, even if it is at the consequence of their autonomy. The origins of this predicament reside in the opposing frameworks of Locke and Rousseau concerning the construction of childhood. As discussed in detail in chapter 3 these countering positions centre on questions of self-efficiency, freedom and agency against dependency, protection and vulnerability.

Recently there has been a broader consideration for the child in related areas of research. The various perspectives on children's navigation of the virtual world and their participation within it are key areas of research that extend beyond the scope of this study but are worthy of consideration for future related studies.

A shift in focus has also occurred in directly related research, with adopted child-centred approaches across numerous recent studies (Moser et al., 2017; Steinberg, 2017; Lipu and Siiback, 2019; Smahael et al., 2020). Interestingly, some of these studies presented issues of interfamilial privacy divides (Steinberg, 2017) between image-sharing parents and photographed children coming of age. These and similar studies should be commended, and as suggested previously their child-centred framework should continue in future research. However, if the conceptual framework related to the construction of childhood is to accommodate an appropriate sense of autonomy for the child, then these debates must extend beyond academia and into the domain of the general public.

There is evidence that this may have already begun. An anecdotal report of an Austrian teenager taking a legal case against her parents recently received a lot of media traction.⁶⁷ Despite the story being based on a hypothetical event, the global coverage it received encouraged some form of discussion among sectors of the general public regarding the agency of the photographed child.

The launch of Facebook over 15 years ago means that the majority of children who have their images shared online have grown up in a culture and society saturated with social media and online activity. Despite age restrictions being in place for the creation of social media accounts, there are no such restrictions on the creation of a child's online presence, which has on occasion predated their real-world birth. Notwithstanding the duty of care, those sharing images of children should consider, I feel that there is also a necessary onus of responsibility to be placed on the social media service providers facilitating this continued sharing of children's images. The form this responsibility takes going forward I am unsure of, yet if Facebook can encourage members to share their 'Facebook memories', then these same members can also be encouraged to pause and consider the content or subject of the images they share. There have been progressive developments as recently as September 2020 with the introduction of the Age Appropriate Design Code⁶⁸ in the UK. Although not exclusively related to the specific practice of sharing images of children this statutory code proposes to serve as a 'best practice' reference for relevant tech companies to ensure that children's safety and rights online are protected. It provides a list of 15 standards of age appropriate design companies are required to apply to their designs to assure the safeguarding of children's personal data.

The extension of a similar code would be a progressive step here in Ireland. However, the success of such processes of accountability for online tech companies would be bolstered by an increased consciousness among those sharing the images. The findings of this research emphasize an apparent disconnect between participants and the digital ethics of sharing images of children online. For an appropriate change in both wider public discourse and real-world practices to occur concerns with the cyber safety of children should not exclusively focus on reactionary responses, as seen with the implementation of policies. Adopting a more holistic approach that incorporates the informing and education of those continuing to practice the predominantly non-consensual capturing and online

⁶⁷ May, A., 2016. 18-year-old sues parents for posting baby pictures on Facebook. Available at: <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2016/09/16/18-year-old-sues-parents-posting-baby-pictures-facebook/90479402/> (accessed: 03.02.19)

⁶⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/explanatory-memorandum-to-the-age-appropriate-design-code-2020-2020/explanatory-memorandum-to-the-age-appropriate-design-code-2020-2020> (accessed:17.11.20)

sharing of photographs and images of children would more progressively challenge their established non-agentic positioning.

Shifting the focus of research from the concerns of those sharing images of children toward the interests of the photographed child themselves is a progressive step beyond a child's traditional non-agentic and dependent construction. It is commendable that recent research has considered a more child-centred approach when discussing practices of parenting in a digital world. While not explicitly focused on the photographing and sharing of images of children both Livingstone and Blum-Ross (2020) in the UK (2020) and Steinberg (2020) in the US publishing texts that appropriately considered the perspectives of children. However, initiating engagement and refocusing the dominant perspective beyond academia and among the general public presents a different challenge. Motivating a broader demographic to consider an alternative view to one that has been established would initially require a willingness to do so among a potential audience.

A focus on information and education with regard to the ethics of sharing online images of children has the potential to affect the current wider public discourse. Continuing a more child centred emphasis on empathy, understanding and real world testimonies with may prove a more effective approach and more palatable to a wider catchment.

After conducting this research, I feel that the launch of an awareness campaign, informing the public not only of the evolving digital rights of the child, but also to clarify the legality of capturing and sharing of images of children could be an accessible platform upon which to initiate empathy for a photographed child and a willingness to engage with related information. Considering the benefits of participating in discussions as previously displayed by interviewees the distribution of information in an accessible manner across appropriately targeted traditional and online media and communication platforms could be of benefit. Utilising my experience across the spaces of communications and creative media, I consider myself ideally positioned to explore further the feasibility of such a project following the completion of this current research. The aims and potential benefits of extending the research in such a future direction would be:

- To emphasise the potential impact the sharing of images of children online may have to a broader public audience
- To clarify the legal rights of those who photograph and share images of children on social media related to permission and ownership of the images
- To encourage the general public to adopt a child-centred perspective and foster a sense of reflection on previous practices of 'inviting the world into their child's lives without first obtaining informed consent' (Steinberg, 2017; 878)

Progressively, an awareness campaign of this nature, accessible to a cross-section of society responds to previous calls for appropriate public statements concerning the effects of subjecting children to digital media (Guernsey, 2014; Choi and Lewallen, 2018). Such a format has the potential to not only extend the related educational and digital literacy levels beyond the traditional targeted audience of academic publications but simultaneously stimulate a broader public debate regarding the quotidian photographing of children and the sharing of their images online.

Concluding this study and acknowledging the dynamic interdisciplinary nature of the research area, I believe there is scope for a new academic journal (e.g. Photography and New Media). Post-PhD, I am keen to forge new collaborations and build on my existing networks with national and international peers toward potentially developing such an initiative. This will provide an appropriate academic platform for current and emerging research in this field.

Related studies are ongoing, with many established and fellow early career researchers currently actively engaged across different stages of the research process. The culmination of this study and its presented findings is a worthy contribution to this vibrant area of research that provides a unique perspective that considers the practices of photographing children and the sharing of their images from an Irish perspective.

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11 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

A Study of Adult Attitudes to Photographing Children and Their Impact on Everyday Photography Practices and Online Image Sharing

The purpose of this survey is to ask you about your attitudes and practices regarding photographing and sharing images of children.

The principal investigator is Glenn Doyle and the research is being conducted as a PhD in the School of Communications, Dublin City University, under the supervision of Dr. Debbie Ging.

The survey is anonymous. However, you are given the option of participating in an interview later on, in which case you will be asked to provide your contact details. All information will be treated in strictest confidence (within the legal limits) and all stored data and published findings will be anonymised.

If you require any clarification about anything, please contact Glenn Doyle at before completing the survey (glen.doyle33@mail.dcu.ie) Your participation is voluntary basis and you free to withdraw at any time during the research. If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000, email rec@dcu.ie

By pressing the 'Take the survey' button below, you are confirming that you have understood the above and consent to take part in this research project

[Take the survey](#)

Q1. Are you:

- Male
- Female
- Other

Q2. Age:

- 18 – 29
- 30 – 39
- 40 – 49
- 50- 59
- 60 – 69

- over 70

Q. 3 Was there a camera in your home when you were a child

- Yes
- No

Q. 4 How often were photographs taken in your family when you were a child

- Almost every day
- Very Often
- Often
- Occasionally
- Seldom
- Only on special occasions
- Never
- Other (Please specify)

Q. 5 If there were photographs taken in your family when you were a child who usually took the photographs?

- Father
- Mother
- Both father and Mother would take photographs
- Both, but more often Father
- Both, but more often Mother
- Sister
- Brother
- You
- Other (Please specify)

Q. 6 Were these photographs printed?

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Only photos from special events
- Rarely
- Never

Q. 7 If these photographs were printed, how were they stored?

- In photo albums with notes and/or dates accompanying the photographs
- In photo albums randomly, without much order
- Stored in boxes and/or drawers out of sight
- In frames displayed around the home
- Other (please specify)

Q. 8 Who took responsibility for the printing and the framing of the photographs and/or creation of the photo albums?

- Father
- Mother
- Both Mother and Father
- Both Mother and Father, but mostly Mother
- Both Mother and Father, but mostly Father
- You
- Brother
- Sister
- All of the family
- Other combinations of the above (please specify)

Q. 9 How often do you take photographs nowadays?

- Everyday
- Almost every day
- Weekly
- Sometimes
- Only on special occasions
- Seldom
- Never

Q.10 Which of the following would you use most often to take your photographs?

- Camera Phone
- Digital Tablet
- Digital camera
- DSLR Camera
- Traditional Film Camera
- Other (please specify)

Q. 11 Where do you store the photographs that you take?

- They remain stored on the camera
- They are transferred to a Personal Computer or external hard drive (USB stick etc.)
- They are uploaded to an online storage space

- You Use social media sites, like Facebook, to create albums and store the there
- Print the photographs and store them physically
- Other (please specify)

Q.12 Do you use social media networks (Facebook, twitter, Instagram etc.)?

- Yes
- No

If you have answered 'No' to this question, please skip ahead to question 19 of the survey.

Q. 13 If you have answered yes to question 12, which of the following best describes your usage of social media Networks?

- You post your own content, read and/or view uploaded content and also comment upon uploaded content
- You post your own content, read and/or view uploaded content but don't comment upon uploaded content
- You read and/or view uploaded content and also comment upon uploaded content, but never upload your own content
- You read and/or view uploaded content but never comment upon uploaded content or upload your own content
- Other (please specify)

Q. 14 If you have answered 'yes' to question 12, how often do you use social media Networks?

- Multiple times every day
- Every Day
- Most days
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely

Q. 15 What would you say is your primary reason for using social media networks?

- You use it to stay in touch with friends and family
- You use it to keep up to date with events and news that are of interest to you
- You use it as a member of a specific Social Network group
- You use it for work related reasons
- You use it for the promotional
- Other (please specify)

Q. 16 What social media platform(s), if any, do you use for sharing your photographs?

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Flickr
- Photobucket
- Personal Blog/Website
- Other (please specify)
- You don't use social media to share photographs

Q. 17 If you use social media Networks to share photographs, how regularly would you upload photographs to share?

- You share most of your images on social media
- You sometimes share images on social media
- It would depend upon the content of the photograph as to whether you would share it on social media

Q. 18 From the categories provided below please indicate which are the most applicable to your relationship with children.

- Parent/Stepparent
- Family Relation (Auntie/Uncle/Niece/Nephew/Cousin/Sibling/Step Sibling)
- You are in a relationship with somebody who has children
- You are in a relationship with somebody who is related to children and you are familiar with these children
- You are acquainted with children through your employment
- You are acquainted with children through your membership of a club or an association
- You have no close acquaintances with children
- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to answer

Q. 19 Do you, or have you ever taken photographs that have purposely included children

- Yes
- No

Q. 20 If you have answered yes, please specify if these children have been:

- Your own children
- Related to you
- Known to you
- Unknown to you
- All of the above

Q. 21 If you have answered yes to question 20 previously, how often would you take photographs that feature children

- Everyday
- Weekly
- Often
- Seldom
- Only on special occasions
- Never

Q. 22 How often would you print these images?

- You print most of these images
- You often print these images
- You Sometimes print these images
- It is only on special occasions that you would print these images
- You never print these Images

Q. 23 Where do you store these Images?

- Once printed you store these photographs in traditional photography albums, in personal places or you display them within your home
- Once printed you store these photographs in boxes or other locations out of sight
- You keep these images on your camera phone/digital camera or tablet
- You store these images on a PC, storage device or virtual storage space (Icloud, email address etc...)
- You upload these images to folders on a social media Platform like Facebook
- Other (please specify)

Q. 24 Have you ever used a social media Platform to share Images of Children?

- Yes
- No

Q. 25 If you have answered no to the previous question, can you explain the reason behind your answer

Q. 26 If you have answered yes to question 24 previously, can you please specify which of the following is most applicable to you

- I only share Images of special occasions on my social media Network
- I only share Images with specific individuals in my social media Network
- I share Images in my social media Network ensuring that the faces/identity of the children are hidden

- I like to share the images in which the children look good/funny/cute on my social media Network
- I like to share as many images as I can on my social media Account
- Prefer not to answer

Q. 27 If you have answered 'I share Images in my social media account ensuring that the faces of the children are hidden' to question 26 previously, can you please elaborate upon the reason behind your answer

Q. 28 Have you ever commented upon the posting of photographs of children on Social Network Sites, be it to a 3rd party through 'real world' communication and/or online communication?

- Yes
- No

Q. 29 If you have answered yes to the previous question, can you please elaborate upon the circumstances and the engagement you had regarding the uploaded Images

Q. 30 What is your opinion on the sharing of photographs of children online through social media networks?

Q. 31 When taking photographs of children, have you ever been challenged by a member of the public or other person of authority concerning your practice?

- Yes
- No

Q. 32 If you answered yes to the previous question, can you please describe the event and as to whether a resolution was reached?

Q. 33 How did this situation make you feel?

Q. 34 Has this experience affected the way in which you now photograph children?

- Yes
- No

Q. 35 If you have answered yes can you please elaborate upon how it has affected your photographic practice when photographing children

Q. 36 Have you previously, or would you question or confront someone taking photographs of children?

- Yes
- No

Q. 37 If you have answered yes to the previous question can you please elaborate upon the circumstances and the actions that you took/would take at the time.

Q. 38 Would you feel comfortable with someone, not known to you, taking photographs of your children/children you know?

- Yes
- I would feel comfortable If they asked for permission before starting to photograph
- I would be comfortable If I could see the images
- I would feel comfortable if I knew the reason why they were taking these photographs
- I would not feel comfortable
- Prefer not to answer

Q. 39 If you answered 'I would not feel comfortable' to the previous question can you please elaborate upon the reason behind your answer?

Q. 40 If a person unknown to you asked to take a photograph of your child/children or a child/children known to you would you be more 'suspicious' if they were:

- Male
- Female
- Equally suspicious of both
- Neither, I wouldn't be suspicious

Q 41. Can you please give a reason as to why you answered the previous question in the manner that you did?

Thank You very much for the time you have taken to complete this survey, your contribution will be of significant benefit to the research.

If you would be willing to participate in an interview regarding this topic, please provide your email/contact details here:

All contact details will be in strictest confidence and anonymity will be protected. If you have any further questions with regard to this research, please contact me at the email address below.

With kind regards,

Glenn Doyle

Glen.doyle33@mail.dcu.ie

APPENDIX B: PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT FOR INTERVIEWS

The title of this research project is 'A Study of Adult Attitudes to Photographing Children and Their Impact on Everyday Photography Practices and Online Image Sharing.' The principal investigator is Glenn Doyle and the research is being conducted as a PhD in the School of Communications under the supervision of Dr. Debbie Ging (debbie.ging@dcu.ie).

There is currently a lot of social concern about photographing children and sharing images of children online. Although we often read about this in the media, there is very little academic research being done on the topic. We don't know how fears about photographing children are being understood by parents and other adults who interact with children. Nor do we know how these concerns affect adults' everyday photographic and image-sharing practices online.

This study will survey and interview parents and other adults who interact with children about their attitudes towards photographing children, their everyday practices of photographing children and their experiences of sharing photographs of children online. The research asks what kinds of concerns people have and why, and what kinds of choices they make and why.

The findings from this study will help us understand how new technologies and social concerns are shaping the way we think about photographing children, how we actually take photographs of children and how we store and share these photos.

If you agree to take part in this research, you will initially be required to complete an anonymous survey that has is available either online or in hard copy. The last question asks whether you would be willing to take part in a face-to-face interview. If you are willing to do this, you are asked to provide contact details (an email or phone number) so that the researcher can get in touch. If you agree to take part in an interview, it will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. All the data will be anonymised and the audio files destroyed. Your name will not appear in any of the published research and you will not be identifiable in any way.

If you agree to take part in an interview, you may be asked if you would be willing to keep a diary of your photography practices for a month. If you do this, the diary will also be anonymised so that nobody can identify you or anybody you mention in the diary. Your participation in any stage of the research is on a voluntary basis and you are free to withdraw at any time during the research. If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000, email rec@dcu.ie

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEWS

Dublin City University - Informed Consent Form

Research Study Title

The title of this research project is 'A Study of Adult Attitudes to Photographing Children and Their Impact on Everyday Photography Practices and Online Image Sharing.' The principal investigator is Glenn Doyle and the research is being conducted as a PhD in the School of Communications under the supervision of Dr. Debbie Ging (debbie.ging@dcu.ie).

II. Clarification of the purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to investigate current attitudes towards the everyday photographing of children, and how attitudes affect people's practices of photographing and sharing images of children.

III. Confirmation of particular requirements as highlighted in the Plain Language Statement

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me) Yes/No

I understand the information provided Yes/No

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study Yes/No

I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions Yes/No

I am aware that my interview will be audiotaped Yes/No

IV. Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary

I may withdraw from the Research Study at any point.

V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations

All data will be anonymised and the confidentiality of all participants will be protected within the legal limitations.

VII. Signature:

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

Participants Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D: ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT (SAMPLE)



'He ain't heavy' – Doyle (1998)



'School Days' – Doyle (1998)



'Through the looking glass' – Doyle (1998)

APPENDIX E: OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES (SAMPLE)

Observer: Glenn Doyle

Date of Observation: 22/06/2018

Time: 11.00am

Actors: Participant R 235

Location (Notes):

Interviewees home – Kitchen area

Only one image on display in the area. A small frame photograph of one of the children at a young age.

Second room, where a lot more photographs were on framed and on display was viewed post interview. Populated by images of family members and children across numerous ages.

Point of note: Very few Images featuring the interviewee, as she often took the photographs.

Activities/Behaviour:

Very warm and open interviewee – Made tea

Openly discussed the topic and their opinions on it.

Point of note: Interviewee made reference to there being far many more images on display in her office workspace. This is where the children are not present but represented through their photographs

More photographs were referenced 'upstairs' yet there was no invitation to view these images.

Mentioned the favourite image was one of 'the boys' playing (candid).