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# *Photography as Family Ritual: Visual Narratives in a Finnish Family Photo Album*

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**Abstract**

In this essay, I analyze photography as family ritual, particularly the act of posing as repetitive acts that construct girl- and womanhood. I focus my analysis of a Finnish family photo album and an autobiographical interview of one of the sisters in the photographs on points of resistance to cultural ideals. I posit that the family photographs shape memories, family relations, and cultural meanings associated with gender. Although the family photographs convey expectations of daughters within Finnish family cultural contexts, my close reading of the photographs recast the cultural norms and ideals commonly associated with girls. I assert that family photographs can be understood not just as a site objectifying girls, but also as enabling participation in reshaping family life. The contradictions exposed in the analysis between representation and experience provides an example of deconstructing the construction of images of daughters.

*Keywords: family; photograph; pose; gender; memory; girlhood*

## Feminist Analysis of Tensions in Daughters Performing Cultural Ideals in Family Photographs

I am looking at two photos, each presenting a group of sisters: three girls sit on a couch side-by-side, posing obediently for the camera. In one picture the girls are children, in the other they are adults. The time span is exactly twenty years: the earlier picture is from 1979, and the more recent one is from 1999.

Figure 1. Typical photograph from a Finnish family album in late 1970s: children.

In the picture taken in the 1970s (Figure 1), an approximately two-year-old child is holding her newborn sister. Next to the girls sits the family's oldest child, exhibiting what looks like a toy Santa. The photo taken in the 1990s (Figure 2) repeats the pattern, except that the youngest child is not being held anymore; she is seated between her sisters. Both photos are quite typical family portraits taken during Christmas, which is considered among Christian family's to be a traditional time for family

photos. Both the props and the people's positions are surprisingly similar in the two pictures. The only difference is that, in the newer photo, the siblings are grown-ups, the reddish-brown leather couch is now a textile-covered couch, the Santa is an elf, and the 1970's style clothing is now the clothing of the 1990s. The girls' clothing fashion, the décor, as well as the physical changes in them are part of the nostalgic attraction of these pictures. The beholder of these kinds of amateur photos does not usually evaluate them with respect to their artistic and technical merits, but by the details and memories the images evoke.


Figure 2. The photograph of siblings serves as a proof of harmonious relationship between sisters and emphasizes the family union.

In both pictures, the daughters have been persuaded to pose for the camera by their father who, year after year, has collected material about his daughters in the family's photo archives. From my perspective, the pictures demonstrate how the father–as well as the immediate family, relatives, and culture–expects and desires to see girls conform as passive pillars of the family and community, a Finnish model of femininity. As a Finnish daughter, brought up in a middle-class family in a dormitory town, this kind of a camera shooting situation is familiar. I remember how I used to pose in pictures at my Sunday best, and I knew how to smile to look pretty in my parent's eyes. It was me, who embodied the promises for a better future for my family: the prettier I looked as their daughter, the closer we were to rise up in Finnish social hierarchy.

As I look at the photos I am analyzing in this essay, I see the daughters posing in a neat line, a composition, which emphasizes unity and similarity rather than differences between the sisters. Both photographs represent a happy and coherent family life; there are no signs of loud and quarrelsome siblings in the images, nor are there marks of deviation or disagreement. The constructive nature of these two photographs reminds me of what Sara Ahmed (2008) calls a "happy object" (p. 12). "The family […] is a happy object, not because it causes happiness, or even because we are affected by the family in a good way, but because of a shared orientation towards the family as being good, as being what promises happiness in return for loyalty" (2008, p. 12). Loyalty and being a good and happy girl represent the ideals of White middle-class family life in late-20th century Scandinavia. The two photographs also signify the family's social space where the girls and young women are cultivated; where they learn manners, proper gestures, and appearances. The two pictures also remind me of how the family's reputation, happiness, and hopes for the future are placed in the daughters, and how the pictures construct ideals of happiness and harmonious family life.

In this article, in which I discuss the gendering processes in family photography, I interpret what kinds of cultural norms and expectations are included in family photos and everyday photography practices. The photos examined here are an excellent example of the repetitive, coercive and normative production of gender in the context of Finnish middle-class family life. The taken-for-granted and stereotypically traditional nature of the two photographs of the daughters inspired me to seek out ways to challenge that order. Since photographs are open to multiple interpretations, I seek to challenge the dominant form of representation and intend to analyze how women are guided towards certain identities and practices, but also how it is possible to reformulate them.

I am inspired by Judith Butler (1995), who states that social

agency becomes concrete and real in the variation of cultural models and in the possibilities of altered repetition. The idea is based on Michel Foucault's (1980) conception on the productivity of power: power not only limits but it also enables individuals to function within culture and gives space for alternative self-definitions and self-presentations. Visual representations directly affect the meanings associated with gender, class, ethnicity or sexuality. The family photographs examined here are constructed as ordinary, and at the same time they portray hidden and unconscious gendered practices that have a strong impact on peoples' lives; they denote and determine what kinds of performances are accepted within this White middle-class Scandinavian family. The productive concept of power, however, enables the idea in which the hegemonic visual representations offer us the models to identify, but they also provide the space for resistance. Identities of the three sisters sitting on the couch are, thus, not stable or static, but are constantly reshaped in relation to the communities in which they take part, as well as by the cultural representations they see and the locality they inhabit (Karkulehto, 2011). In my analysis, I emphasize the dynamics of examining photographs to look for alternative representations and identity models of the daughter(s) represented in the family photos, since this kind of action enables their agency.

As I look at the sisters' visual performances in the photos, I have a strong sense of awareness: they must know how to pose in a proper way; they seem to realize what kinds of gestures are expected from them in front of the camera. Posing in these pictures doesn't only seem to be an immaterial representation or visual performance, but a corporeal act: the cultural conceptions and the presence of the camera affect how their bodies take shape in these photos and in the family's social space. I am focusing analysis on the visual representations of the sisters in the photos, but the bodily subjects, the daughters in the photos, can't be separated from their materialness, the lived corporality, the specificity of the body. The material individual, an individual's experiences, representations, and cultural definitions are intertwined and cannot be detached.

## Between Intimate and Public

The two family photographs studied here belong to a woman born in 1978. I interviewed her in 2003 in order to find out what kinds of stories she will tell about herself based on her personal photos[1]. My interview is rooted in the understanding that autobiographical photographs are visual narratives that people construct throughout their lives. The photographs and related oral narratives are in constant interaction: the pictures and their meanings are specified through speech, and the photographs contribute to a spoken narrative.

Here, when I speak of family photographs and cultural ideals, I refer specifically to ideals shaped within specific socio-historical contexts: the two photographs of the sisters belong to a culturally and geographically specific place, southern Finland. They make visible parts of the everyday experiences of one woman who posed in her family portraits in the 1970s and 1990s. At the time of the interview the informant was 25 years old, living in northern Finland, and studying art education at the University of Lapland. During our conversation, the interviewee described how she grew up in a White middle-class family that consisted of three children and two parents. My idea for the interview was to provide a political framework that involved critical understanding of the self, as well as space to talk and find the interviewee's multiple voices. Though I claim to build a trustworthy and safe space for conversation, I have to question whether I hear all voices (see Kishimoto & Mwangi, 2009). All of the voices and actions in interview situations are political, as they

1. The interview and photographs belong to a larger base of autobiographical material that I have collected for my doctoral thesis (Mäkiranta, 2008). In my study, I have asked female art students born 1975–1980 to describe themselves and their lives through photographs selected from their personal collections. I have interpreted both the pictures and the related oral stories from the frame of narrative analysis, visual studies, and gender studies. My methodological inspiration stems from the works of Jo Spence (1986), Annette Kuhn (2002), Seija Ulkuniemi (2008), and Anniina Suominen-Guyas (2007). Kuhn (2002) and Suominen-Guyas have worked with feminist photograph(y) practices and found alternative ways to perform and reinterpret family photos; for example Ulkuniemi (2008) has presented her family album as a photography carpet on which the viewers can walk. Kuhn and Spence have turned private experiences into public ones, and elaborated on alternative ways of visualizing the self: Spence (1986) has, for example, photographed her battle with breast cancer, and Kuhn (2002) deconstructed the meanings associated in her own girl- and nationhood. Also, Miina Savolainen's (2009) study explores new ways to see, photograph, and empower girls, while Mervi Autti (2010) has examined her great aunts' photography collections in the contexts of personal and collective visual histories.

affect the lives of participants, their concepts of themselves, and their portrayal of femininity in culture and society. Thus, I also asked: whose voice is being heard, whose subjectivity am I talking about and what kind of heterosexual, Whiteness, and middle-class norm am I producing through my study?

I had an expectation during the interview process that interrogating the production of family photos would reveal subjective experiences and potentially make the pictures politically and intimately significant. My expectation can be related, among others, to the period during the 1970s into the 1980s in Finnish art photography, a period in which photos depicted meanings related to the experiences and corporeality of women photographers. During this period, minorities, suppressed groups, and those at the lowest level of the traditional family hierarchy had an opportunity to define themselves through Finnish art photography. I believed in the idea of personal is political in 2003, and I still see its importance. As Karen Keifer-Boyd states: "To view personal injustice as political, look at the specific exploitative structures and systems that produce the conditions for that injustice. From this vantage point, relational identity can be formed for a transformative feminist coalition acknowledging interdependence of difference […]" (2010, p. 21). By 2012, feminist analysis and the practice of personal media for political use through social media and various online photo management and sharing applications, such as Flickr and IRC-Gallery, are used to mobilize collective action for social and institutionalized change. Regardless of the power of social media and fine art photography, I find it significant to look at our own private photo albums in a critical and sensitive way in order to understand the differences, gendering processes, and power relations in the pictures–and inside the families–that form our knowledge of the self and effect the ways we behave in society.

## "Five people sit on the couch and – click!"

In the photographs (Figure 1; Figure 2) the girls and women seem to pose for the camera, which means that they consciously arrange themselves to be photographed. According to Kaja Silverman (1996), posing means that a person mimics and predicts the culturally acceptable picture through which one would like to present the self. Therefore, a posed photograph is constructed in the nexus of the photographed person's material body, imagined body, the cultural ideals, and the camera that represents the cultural gaze (Silverman, 1996). When posing for a camera, there is always a supervising gaze in the situation, defining the expectations that will become the pictures.

*Riina: I myself enjoy taking photos a lot, but I don't like it when you have to sort of pose in them, so, we have always taken them, every year, I guess.*

*Mari: A family photo?*

*Riina: Yeah, and then five people sit on the couch and – click! […] Or like, they've just put all of us kids on the same leather couch and clicked a picture.*

*Mari: Do you have many pictures of this type of you and your sisters? You are on the couch here and here as well.*

*Riina: I guess there's one for every Christmas. And then at parties that we've had, they've been taken. In our family, well, Dad has always taken lots of pictures. […] But it has been like, well, now let's take some photos, and I never really liked them, or maybe it's because I think that I never look myself when I see photos or because I have a distorted picture of myself. That one [a picture showing adult sisters on the couch] was like… well okay, it doesn't show all of me, but from pictures you can always tell, well I'm not exactly fat but my older sister has never forgotten to remind me to lose a bit of weight, so that when you look at photos they say like, well, seems you might have a little bit extra on you. So because of that, too, I've never really liked photographs that much, you know.* (Riina, interview by Mari Mäkiranta, August 15, 2003, interview 4, transcript.)[2]

2. Riina is an assumed name for the person I have interviewed. Due to the fact that the photographs I have studied represent the women themselves or other people, the anonymity of the participants cannot be guaranteed. I have informed and advised the participants about the ethical dilemmas these kinds of images might cause, and ensured that they understand that they may be recognised in the photos and narratives represented in the study. I have always requested and informed consent from all the participants. In the data analysis, particularly in verifying the results and writing the research reports, I adhere to transparency in accordance with the principles of the ethics of feminist visual studies.

When I am listening to Riina's story of posing for a camera, I sense how she realizes that movements, gestures, and facial expressions will be recorded on film as a trace or evidence of the photographed event. Sometimes the posing, and an awareness of a legacy that photos leave behind, may feel awkward. The interview demonstrates that the uneasiness about posing is caused by mechanical repetition in picture-taking, especially during festivities. Indeed, the children place themselves in front of the camera, every year, in the same way. The mechanical repetition seems to be used in anticipation of the future—Riina's father records fleeting moments and attempts to preserve transitory daughters and the internal family relations as generations pass.

What makes posing uncomfortable in Riina's story is that she knows that the photo will not look exactly the same as her understanding of her body in real life. In this sense, the interviewee is seeing herself as a stranger or "other" to oneself. This situation has been rationalized by the fact that when posing, one changes into a photographable object (Barthes, 1995). This means that the self is imagined as a picture of something that one pursues and wishes to be. This is familiar for all of us who have placed ourselves to be photographed; the camera represents a cultural, impersonal, and omnipresent gaze, through which the photographed persons are viewed and imagined (Silverman, 1996). The end product, a material photograph, does not always match the vision of self the photographed person has at the time of picture-taking.

In the photographs, the intimate and personal body is displayed for the public, and the photographed person is exposed to other people's comments (Rugg, 1997). In the oral story, the older sister discloses that the interviewee does not comply fully with contemporary cultural ideals of the body. The photo-related narrative exemplifies how photographs displaying the self are observed from a detached perspective: when referring to herself and her body, the interviewee refers to self in a second-person point of view with the words "*you look at photos*" instead of "I look at." Although she is talking about the photos of herself, the definition of her bodily shape comes from others, from them. Also, the narrator herself abides by the definition imposed on her by saying that she never looks like herself in photos. In fact, the photo and the story reveal an objectified body relation; mediated through countless culturally recycled female images, a woman's own body becomes an object and she becomes aware of her body's non-conforming to perceived cultural ideals (de Lauretis, 1987).

Riina's posed photograph and the related narrative demonstrate that young women's body perceptions are largely defined by shame, which seems to be constructed through comparison and competition. A special cause of shame for a young woman can be her own body's inability to match the cultural criteria. Riina's speech related to the shape of her body may be interpreted as a form of comparison between the sisters, and as a way of exercising power between family members. Therefore, a posed photograph can be defined as an arena of communication between individuals where identity, communality, comparisons to others, as well as body-related, personal, and cultural meanings are constructed.

## "Must-pose Photos" and "Livelier Pictures"

In the oral story, the interviewee does not merely succumb to the definition of her body given to her by others; she states an opposite opinion about the shape of her body by saying *well I'm not exactly fat*. Thus, a person posing in photographs may, to a certain extent, affect the image produced of her and the interpretations made of the pictures. One may expose oneself to the gaze in different ways, and a photographed person can form a separate image that opposes cultural images:

*Riina: […] I've managed to take ok pictures of myself by running, you know, by setting the long time on [using the timer] and running into the picture, so, this makes photos a bit livelier. Well, perhaps I always look awfully solemn when people take one of the must-pose photos of me; I don't really know how to smile at that stage*. (Riina, interview by Mari Mäkiranta, August 15, 2003, interview 4, transcript).

Riina's term "must-pose photo" depicts a situation in which she mechanically places herself for a shot; the term implies that she is compelled to pose by her father and place herself in a way that her father expects. The term also depicts a situation in which she becomes particularly aware of the presence of the camera and the expectations placed on her

during the shoot. On the other hand, "livelier" photos, as the interviewee calls them, do not objectify the target to the same extent as posed ones. The interviewee says that she opposes the objectification of posed photos by taking pictures of herself with a timer and by running into the picture. Even in this case, objectification cannot be avoided altogether. A photo of a person always objectifies the target, and in the field of gazes each individual has the shifting statuses between a subject and an object (Rossi, 2005). In Riina's story, the objectification is not harmful as such. Nonetheless, giving people the status of an object and repudiating their subjectivity by photographing them in a stereotypic way is often destructive due to the fact that it leads to a situation where the target of the photograph lacks self-definition and active roles. Riina's terms "livelier picture" and expression "running into the picture" refer to a desire to represent the self in more dynamic role than in posed pictures. By "running into the picture" Riina is developing more comfortable picture-taking practices inside her family and reforming the family's visual history. For me, as well as for Riina, "running into the picture" signifies the artistic practise that enables one to express movement in a still image, and symbolizes the freedom and scope not offered in posed photographs.

Riina's way of photographing herself in "livelier pictures" reminds me of the photographs taken by Vietnamese artist, Phuong Do[3], to whom photographing is a search for meanings in her experience of displacement of memory, identity, and family. It seems to be important for Riina and Phuong Do, to document and create a visual history of themselves, on their own terms. By photographing the self, it is possible for Riina and Phuong Do to broaden visual narratives represented within their families. In this sense photographs also enable opposing and disobedient ways of the constructions of daughterhood, and address the complexities of identity construction.

## "We've Just Fought at the Dinner Table"

In both pictures, the sisters have been placed in a deliberate order. The girls are labelled in the pictures as part of the family's social space: the pictures signify each group member's age, status, and place within the family as well as the group's internal solidarity. These kinds of pictures of children are part of a family portrait narrative, a picture archive that substantiates family unity and children's importance to a family (Sontag, 1990). According to Marianne Hirsch (1997), among the most salient purposes of the family photo is to present a unified family and to be part of the rituals through which the unity is produced.

The pictures of the girls on a couch demonstrate how family photos are used to process personal and family identity, as well as the strong bond between the photographic image and identity construction. The pictures are used to reinforce sister relations, to represent a common family event, and to mark special occasions. The interviewee describes for me the constructed nature of the sister relations and family integrity:

*Riina: […] It may be that we've just fought at the dinner table; it really wasn't sort of unusual in our family at that time.*

*Mari: Then you were told to pose for camera.*

*Riina: Yes. Then we give it a try.* (Riina, interview by Mari Mäkiranta, August 15, 2003, interview 4, transcript.)

This excerpt reveals that the daughters have obeyed their father in the shooting situation: Before being organized for the photograph, the sisters may have quarrelled, and in the moment of picture taking they compose themselves and posed kindly for the camera. As a reader of the excerpt, I sense a strong narrative tension, which is created by the harmonious sister relations that are visible in the photos and the girls' expressions of aggression that are invisible. There is something very revealing in the way the sisters pose. When I take a close look at the photos, I notice that perhaps the tension between the sisters –and their father–is visible in the photograph taken in 1999 (Figure 1); the embodied expressions of the sisters seem contradictory. Riina, in a white blouse, seems to look back at the camera with serious face and frontal pose, while her sisters lean to each other and form a visual unity with their black ensembles.

The interview excerpt demonstrates that the pictures are charged with mandatory joy, congeniality, and happiness. The visible solidarity and harmony between the sisters serve as proof of satisfactory relations within the family. In this way, I agree, one often wishes to photograph

3. http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/profiles/alumni/phuong_do

children in a presentable way because they manifest the future of the family (Stokes, 1992). When taking photos of children, one attaches (parents') future expectations to them (Eedelman, 2004): One projects into the figure of a child the honor of the family, ideas of a prosperous future worth pursuing, and the continuity of the family and kin. It therefore seems understandable for family photos to present only one side of the story, the one that is held "true" and culturally acceptable (Hall, 1999). For example, moments of quarrel and disagreement between sisters, compromising the perfect future of the family, are seldom stored in family catalogues. However, what cannot be shown in a picture, according to Finnish family ideals, may have potential for expanding the cultural image of women and family histories. Family photos are situated in the contradictory space between the mythical image of an ideal family and the lived reality: Photographs show us what family members wish their family to be and what it is not. The unity of a family often seems self-evident in family photos, although it may be difficult for the family to maintain an illusion of unity when the camera is not recording a family event:

*Mari: Are those memories [evoked by photos] always, you know, nice and happy?*

*Riina: Well, actually, I mostly remember just the nice and happy ones. I remember fights and I remember me biting my sister and all, but ... Naturally I don't because there are no photos of situations like that. […] Wonder how long we shared, all three of us [sisters] shared the same room, our apartment was so tiny, I can't recall much of that time. Then we moved to a bit larger one and I shared the room with my younger sister and we were always fighting. And I mean always. […]And then we have always seen each other everywhere, so I guess we've fought elsewhere as well, not just home*. (Riina, interview by Mari Mäkiranta, August 15, 2003, interview 4, transcript.)

A cultural misconception persists that boys argue physically and in public, whereas girls quarrel verbally in non-public spheres (Chesney-Lind & Irwin, 2004). This gendered dichotomy is partly challenged in the interview; the narrator says that arguments between sisters have assumed physical qualities, although the quarrelling has happened with family members only. Eexpressions of physical aggression are not considered to be acceptable among girls (Aapola, Gonick, & Harris, 2004) and a girl or a woman quarrelling in public in Finnish society is still stigmatized as deviant and difficult behavior. One may ask, what if the pictures had been taken of three boys in the family? Would they have been photographed posing nicely next to one another or more individually, even in the middle of a disagreement? Further, what would happen to the mandatory congeniality of the sisters if the photographer was their mother? Would the sisters, who were raised in a middle-class family with a father as a figurehead, be better able to resist the constructive nature of the family unity if the photographer was their mother?

Riina's story and photos make me consider that a girl's behaviour, actions, and emotions are often interpreted against her gender, not her persona. In the photographs of the interviewee, posing for the camera creates order within the family and is a part of the measures to control the girls. The girls and young women, posing obediently on the couch year after year, incorporate the regulation of girls' and women's action and reflect the ideal of a proper and decent girl who is part of a good family. In this study, the family photographs of one woman's family reveal the way in which a girl or a woman must demonstrate her respectability through her behaviour time and again in varied social situations. Pictures displaying girls' innocence also represent the respectability of a bourgeois family with a father traditionally placed as the figurehead. This respectability is weighed—and tested—in repeated shooting situations. The oral account related to the pictures, however, reveals the multifaceted reality and lived situations behind the photographs. In my interpretation, obedient girlhood is sometimes accompanied by expressions of aggression and disagreement, and this questions the illusion of faultless family life. It also proves how strongly family- and kin-related hopes for a perfect future are incorporated in girls and daughters, and in the images of them.

## Posing for Father's Camera – Objectifying or Building Trust?

Riina's description of her family's photography practises and her father's authority to define how the daughters should be represented

within the family signify the patriarchal family and principle of power. As Abigail Solomon-Godeau (1991) conceptualizes, photographing can be understood as a form of knowledge and power with which certain characteristics are attached to the photographed object. The patriarchal family, for one, is built on the power of the father, and is closely connected to the institutions, constructions, ideas, and religious worldview of the pre-industrial time.

In patriarchal family ideology, fathers have been considered to have the highest authority and daughters the lowest; therefore, the father-daughter relationship within families has often been, as in Riina's case, quite asymmetric (Boose, 1989; Gordon, 1994). Gender, age, father's position of authority, and the presence of the camera lead to charged picture-taking situations between the father and daughters: Girls learn to pose correctly both for their father's camera and for the cultural gaze.

In addition to the social-historical discourses on the power relations inside the families, the data examined here gives me reason to reveal the meanings that the girls, who are at the bottom of the traditional family hierarchy, assign to their family and family relationships. In the pictures, the father's gaze, his presence, and other cultural expectations related to posing in pictures characterize the shooting situation, but they also enable one to interpret the photos from another perspective. In the picture taken in 1999 (Figure 2), the interviewee is clearly defined as the central figure: she looks straight into the camera and is positioned in a frontal pose. The other sisters are positioned somewhat sideways with respect to the camera, their eyes are shut, and they are at the right edge of the picture. The interviewee's individuality in relation to the other sisters is emphasized by the fact that she is positioned almost in the center, whereas her sisters are leaning against each other on the right side of the picture. The interviewee looks rather serious, but her sisters have faint, pleasing smiles on their faces. The open and direct angle that the father has used can be interpreted as confidence reached with his daughter(s). Posing for the camera means revealing one's self and attempting to present one's best qualities and posing always requires an agreement between photographer and photographed person. Photography can be interpreted–not only as observing the targets, freezing them in the object position–but also taking part in a family ritual (Sontag, 1990). Therefore the father doesn't only control and regulate the girls' actions through photographing; rather, his action could be regarded from the viewpoint of participation, approval, and trust.

Riina convinces her strong and confidential relationship with her father by looking at her photos and saying: "*And I have always been a Daddy's girl*" (Riina, interview by Mari Mäkiranta, August 15, 2003, interview 4, transcript). She feels that she is special in her father's eyes and photography practices that involve Riina receiving a gaze of approval and trust within the family can be interpreted as salient in order for a daughter to feel like a valuable individual. To be valued, she does not have to place herself in obedient poses, or in the role of a constant pleaser, which is characterized by a search for other people's continuous support. Our readings and experience of the images are shaped, as bell hooks states, by our relationship with the photographer, persons represented in the pictures, and "with the world of childhood and the images that make our lives what they are now" (1995, p. 56).

## Possibilities for Social Agency

The two pictures of the sisters featured in this study visibly render their production methods, and question the characteristics that are considered inherent in girls, women, and daughterhood. The pictures I have examined allow for the examination of how, and in what context, photographs produce meanings. Feminist interpretations of family, girlhood, and family photos can be discovered when analysis does not take for granted the idealized moments represented in family photos, the exercise of power in picture-taking, the meanings attached to girls, and the representation of family integrity.

The analyzed family photos and the related narrative demonstrate that family photos affect the lives of individuals both as concrete representations and as values, ideologies, and ideas. The photographs exhibit the cultural norms and structures with which people justify meanings that are related to family, girls, and women. However, the space outside the picture, the things that cannot be shown, reveals the performative nature of the photos and enables a more versatile representation of family relations, specifically in the context of daughters. Therefore, posing in family

photos goes beyond objectifying and passivizing girls and young women, it also enables them to pay attention to meanings they have attached to themselves and their social relationships.

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