

Taking the Group Seriously 2

Is a family real?

Of course it is.

Is it more than a collection of individuals?

Of course it is – and might be offended if you ignored its dynamic relationships.

Does a family create an atmosphere?

Of course it does – and that atmosphere would give you crucial information about what mattered in this family, how it worked, what it prioritised, how it made choices.

Does a family have hidden but important links between its members?

Potentially each member has special connections with all the others. There are groups, sub-groups, pairings and individuals, rotating around each other.

Which of these aspects of family does a market research group share?

All of them. The main differences are that this market research family is short-lived, and having little or no previous knowledge of each other, its properties and characteristics must emerge during the time it spends together. If we make how this ‘family’ makes choices a priority activity during its emerging phase, we will learn a huge amount about its decisions, what factors are instrumental and which are irrelevant.

As this new family emerges it will become capable of generating an atmosphere, like a real family. This atmosphere will tell us a lot about its character. In turn, this character will tell us a lot about how it goes about things.

Like buying, using, doing, avoiding, choosing, rejecting.

If we are willing to give it a chance to come together that is.

If we pursue each member as an individual by taking turns, not only will they be bored and feel controlled, they will never get the chance to emerge at all. We will be left with norm-dominated compliant answers to unimportant questions. And we will expect our client to pay us thousands of £'s or \$'s for these. I wouldn't, would you?