

Care and capitalist crisis in anglophone digital landscapes: the case of the mompreneur

Meredith Johnson Krueger

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

University of Washington
2015

Committee:

Victoria Lawson

Sarah Elwood-Faustino

Luke R. Bergmann

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Geography

© Copyright 2015
Meredith Johnson Krueger

University of Washington

Abstract

Care and capitalist crisis in anglophone digital landscapes: the case of the mompreneur

Meredith J. Krueger

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Professor Victoria Lawson

Department of Geography

The term “mompreneur” has fallen into heavy usage in anglophone media since 2008. A mesh of two ideologically-loaded words, “mom” and “entrepreneur,” the mompreneur is frequently defined by the functional meaning of these two words, but in this thesis I develop a more specific definition and study her as a discursive figure located at a particular intersection of identities. I argue that the mompreneur is a normative ideal in anglophone techno-utopian discourses who structures emergent political-economic relations. I find that she is overwhelmingly constructed as a high-achieving, flexible, creative, multi-tasking “supermom” who makes use of digital information and communication technologies to run a business from home while maximizing quality time with her (biological) children. I ask, what does the mompreneur’s idealized lifestyle and its complementary narratives tell us about the reproduction of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy and capitalism in a colorblind, postfeminist techno-optimist context? What can she tell us about the governance of care amidst economic relations increasingly mediated through digital technology? I take the discourse of mompreneurship as a case study by which to analyze the production of gendered and entrepreneurial subjectivities in relation to capitalist crisis. I find that the figure of the “mompreneur” emerges in her particular, anglophone political-economic context to reinforce the privatization and feminization of care work, to help construct a social consensus around technological advance and to absorb and appease surplus population.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Motherhood, gender and care	31
3. Entrepreneurship and capitalist crisis	64
4. Conclusions	99

Chapter 1: Introduction

Would you be able to point out a mompreneur if you saw one? Maybe she would zoom past you without you realizing it. She might stroll by on a busy city street, head held high beneath the gleaming skyscrapers. She might carry a briefcase or wear a suit; or be pushing a stroller, with business cards stowed in the pocket of a diaper bag.



Image 1a, from the International Christian Mompreneur Network

But you are more likely to see her in animated form like in the image above, as a symbol of a contemporary woman forging a path toward the unknown. Her path clings to the edge of a cliff that separates “personal” from “professional,” meandering in and out of both sides as the tides of business and parenting ebb and flow. The path is paved with silicon and optical fiber, founded on the proliferation of digital technologies. She claims to inhabit the “best of both worlds”- or should we say ‘spheres’?

This mompreneur strolls within a broader context of rising flexible employment patterns and digital technologies, highlighting contradictions within feminist political economy analysis. In some ways, her defiance toward traditional labor structures might be read as challenging both capitalist and liberal feminist ideologies. But, by situating her as a discursive figure within her

social and structural contexts of postfeminist intensive mothering and neoliberalism more broadly, we see ways that this discourse- and even perhaps its easily-governed air of defiance- does work for the interlocking hegemony of capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and white supremacy.

The term “momprenneur” was coined in 1996 by Patricia Cobe and Ellen Parlapiano in their book, *Momprenneurs: A Mother's Practical Step-by-Step Guide to Work-at-Home Success*. It has fallen into heavy usage over the past decade or so in anglophone media. On January 28, 2010 a Google search using the terms ‘mumprenneur’ and ‘momprenneur’ gave 120,000 hits (Ekinsmyth 2011). A year later it gave 701,700, and in early 2015, 743,000, with the most significant growth between 2008 and 2011. The “momprenneur,” a mesh of two ideologically-loaded words, “mom” and “entrepreneur,” is often described as a “neologism,” but is nevertheless frequently defined by the functional meaning of these two words, as in Wikipedia’s definition, “a female business owner who is actively balancing the role of mom and the role of entrepreneur,” or geographer Carol Ekinsmyth’s more specific “an individual who discovers and exploits new business opportunities within a social and geographical context that seeks to integrate the demands of motherhood and business-ownership” (2011, 105). In this thesis I develop a more specific definition and study her as a discursive figure located at a particular intersection of identities.

In this, I follow Angela Davis’s analysis of the housewife as a gendered ideology (1981). Through her deployment as a normative ideal, the figure of the housewife structured material conditions for all women in the nineteenth-century U.S. regardless of the fact that the majority of them were not “housewives.” Rather, millions of mostly immigrant working-class women worked for wages in the Northeastern industrial economy, and the Southern slave economy depended on the coerced productive and reproductive work of millions of Black women (Davis 1981; Nakano Glenn 2010). My project aims to draw parallel insights about the context of the momprenneur,

taking her as a normative ideal in anglophone techno-utopian discourses who is performative of racialized, classed and gendered subjectivities. I ask, what does the mompreneur's idealized lifestyle and its complementary narratives tell us about the reproduction of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy and capitalism in a colorblind, postfeminist techno-optimist context? What can she tell us about the governance of care amidst economic relations increasingly mediated through digital technology? Toward this end, I take the discourse of mompreneurship as an opportunity to examine the production of gendered and entrepreneurial subjectivities in relation to capitalist crisis. I find that the figure of the "mompreneur" emerges in her particular, anglophone political-economic context to reinforce the privatization and feminization of care work, to help construct a social consensus around technological advance and to absorb and appease surplus population.

Methodology

My methodology for this project involved critical discourse analysis and content analysis of mompreneur-oriented webspace. I followed Grounded Theory Method to develop theory iteratively alongside empirical engagement (Dittmer 2010; Glaser & Strauss 2009). I set out to describe the characteristics of the discourse of mompreneurship and its geohistorical boundaries, as well as to identify the practices through which the discourse comes to be and within what political-economic contexts it operates. In response to these analytical goals, I reviewed approximately 413 articles, videos, audio artifacts, blog entries, and websites. These artifacts are summarized in Tables 1 and 2 on pages 5 and 7.

Sample selection process

Describing the "discourse of mompreneurship" involved reviewing two key domains through which it circulates: mainstream news media, and what I call "mompreneurial webspace."

To sample news media, I looked at a list of top news sources in the U.S. and U.K. and used the search functions on each of their websites to conduct searches using the terms “mompreneur” and “mumpreneur.” I followed the same steps with top business, finance and technology news companies, conducting the process with 20 different sources in total and with 17 of them yielding results. 189 of the materials that I reviewed came from this sampling method, all articles on the topic of mompreneurs from media sources published in English between the years of 2005 and 2015. The majority were published after 2009. See Table 1 for more details:

Table 1: Summary of news stories reviewed in response to search “mompreneur”

Name of source	Number of articles reviewed	Date range of articles
General News		
New York Times	4	2009-2012
Huffington Post	75	2008-2015
NBC News	5	2010-2015
US News	3	2010-2014
BBC	10	2009-2014
LA Times	1	2010
The Chronicle Herald (CA)	4	2012-2013
Total General News	102	
Business News		
Entrepreneur	16	2006-2015
Forbes	13	2010-2014
SmallBizTrends	11	2011-2014
Business News Daily	11	2012-2015
Wall Street Journal	5	2006-2014
Financial Times	2	2011- 2014
Working Mother	18	2008- 2015
Total Business News	76	
Technology/ Fintech News		
Crowdfunding Guide	3	2013-2014
Crowdfund Insider	7	2013-2015
Crowdfund Beat	1	2013
Total Tech/ Fintech News	11	
TOTAL	189	

The other 224 of total artifacts are from websites, crowdfunding platforms, networking sites, social media spaces, or blogs specifically built around the concept of mompreneurship, what I call “mompreneurial webspace.” Sampling this webspace entailed more complex and overlapping search processes. For example, it involved noting references to other content while reviewing one piece, and then searching the new content. The discourse of mompreneurship is prominent in the justificatory narratives of a variety of new business and media formations. This media content is typically authored by self-professed mompreneurs and/or work-at-home-moms, and since many of these individuals relate to the “mompreneur movement” in multiple capacities, can be mapped into a complex and dynamic virtual geography. I do not attempt to represent the intersecting and multidimensional nature of this geography in Table 2, but rather group artifacts roughly into the “category” that they best fit into, realizing that some artifacts fit into multiple categories and the categories are not parallel. For example, I refer to one source as “Patty Lennon,” a mompreneur coach. Patty Lennon also has a blog, Twitter and Facebook page, is the co-founder of the crowdfunding platform “Moola Hoop,” and is featured in several news articles and YouTube videos. In this case I also list “Moola Hoop” as a separate source because my review of its website was significant, but many of the other businesses, websites or people tied to the artifacts I reviewed are associated with overlapping entities that I do not separately categorize in the Table. I also used broader search techniques to sweep social media sources, simply choosing a sample of content tagged with “mompreneur” or “mumpreneur.” So, this table does not represent all of the searches or reviews that were conducted toward the project, but rather only the artifacts that were used to conduct discourse analysis.

Table 2: Summary of artifacts reviewed in analysis of mompreneurial webspace

Name of source	Number of artifacts reviewed
Crowdfunding Platforms	
Mums Mean Business	7
Nap Time Startups	2
Moola Hoop	10
Plum Alley	2
Ms. Genuity	6
Total CFPs	27
Support and networking site for mompreneurs/ WAHMs	
Best Mom Products	8
MOMentity	13
The Founding Moms	3
Café Mom	2
Work It Mom	2
M.O.M.- Motivating Other Moms	3
Total support sites	31
Mompreneur Blogs	
Mompreneur Mogul (Lisa Cash Hanson)	8
Mompreneur Media (Nicole Orozco)	15
The Modern Mompreneur (Anjali Varma)	4
Aspiring Mompreneur	3
Business Among Moms (Julie Fry)	5
Escaping Mediocrity (Sarah Robinson)	3
The MOMpreneur	10
WomenOnTheFence.com (Erica Diamond)	6
Work Smart Lifestyle (Britt Michaelian)	5
MommyBreadwinner.com (Monaica Ledell)	2
Total mompreneur blogs	61
Coach Websites	
Megan Dalla-Camina	5
Mom Biz Coach (Lara Galloway)	4
Patty Lennon	5
Audrey Hlembizky	2
Felicity N. Quiroz	2
Saskia Gregory	3
Tiana Patrice	6
Sheila Lirio Marcelo	2
Total coach websites	29
Mompreneur business websites	
Stella & Dot	4
BlogHer	1
Mamalode	2
Little Mizz Kit	3
Total business websites	10
Social Media: general searches "Mompreneur" and "Mumpreneur"	
Pinterest	20
Twitter	16
Youtube	5
Facebook	25
Total Social Media Searches	66
TOTAL	224

Positionality and limits of research design

A discussion of ethical considerations in online research is especially relevant to this project, and my approach is guided by feminist theory on reflexivity and positionality (Morrow et al 2014). I write this thesis at a time in my life that makes me uniquely sensitive to the predicaments constructed and resolved through the discourse of the “mompreneur.” White and from a middle class background, I was raised in the Midwestern U.S. and currently live in the Pacific Northwest. I am also expecting my first child at the time of writing and am therefore not yet a mother- although ideologies of motherhood may have had a different impact compared to any point in my life thus far. And I am paid within the academic sphere, so though my experiences with “work to fulfill a passion” and flexible employment structures may find resonance with the themes I draw out about entrepreneurship, I have never attempted nor depended upon starting an entrepreneurial enterprise for income. And although my research was enriched by informal correspondence with friends, acquaintances, and random people on the street who variously fulfilled categories of work-at-home professional women, or espoused the discourses that I reference in this thesis, I did not conduct any formal interviews with self-identified mompreneurs for this project.

This seriously limited my ability to contextualize the online representation of mompreneurship within its offline practices, which curtailed any insights that may emerge from this sort of observation regarding the context of the discourse’s practice. As Morrow et al conclude in their examination of feminist approaches to online research, “Blogs and other forms of user-generated content are not necessarily less accurate than place-based observations, but our understanding of them is partial if we neglect to consider our own virtual and material positionality as a point of investigation” (2014, 532). I attempted to ameliorate these limitations

by casting the net widely when searching for artifacts online, including everything from polished PR material on crowdfunding platforms and networking sites, to blogs that varied in their degree of editing, to recorded live talks, to more informal interviews published on YouTube. But despite these efforts, I receive and interpret the discourse of mompreneurship at a particular positionality, within a certain set of methodological limitations.

Other studies have approached the study of mompreneurship with different analytical goals, to describe and situate mompreneurs' practices based on grounded research of their lives and experiences (Costin 2011; Ekinsmyth 2011; Ekinsmyth 2014; Nel et al 2010; Richomme-Huet & Vial 2014). Such research employs significantly different theoretical frameworks and draws accordingly different conclusions from my own, theorizing the powerful agency of individual mompreneurs and their reconfiguration of social and economic practices (Gibson-Graham 2008; Hanson 2009). My goals to provide a structural analysis of the mompreneur-as-discursive figure necessarily delimit my frameworks and findings. This does not mean that my conclusions oppose or discount the findings from grounded research on mompreneurs.

Discourse analysis and content analysis

My discourse analysis involved an iterative process of coding written, visual and auditory materials. I read through texts using Atlas TI, coding responses relevant to primary themes and concepts. Theoretic or “-etic” codes were developed from hypothesized results and included themes relating to empowerment, mothers as primary caregivers, and gender naturalization. Endemic or “-emic” codes such as “family as top priority,” flexibility, balance, were determined during and after the first rounds of analysis, and pointed to the most coherent concepts and themes that emerged through critical readings of the texts (Glaser & Strauss 2009).

Content analysis involved counting and categorizing economic relations produced in the process of advancing womens' entrepreneurship, and mompreneurship in particular. This includes the examples of mompreneurial enterprises referenced in media articles about mompreneurship, as well as the crowdfunding platforms, networking websites, coaching businesses, and other practices related to mompreneurship that may have been themselves embodied on the website that I was reviewing, as in for example, a blog that serves as a mompreneur's business. Several of these formations claim to utilize the Internet, in particular the Web 2.0 and its peer-to-peer capacity, in order to cultivate not only individual businesses or even individual marketplaces, but entire "ecosystems" or "supportive communities:"



Image 1b, from the "Mums Mean Business" website

The logic behind the language of ecosystem is that businesses need a variety of supportive systems to grow and thrive, and that they may only be able to survive in particularly well-suited environments. Other enterprises use the language of building a "supportive community" for women- and mother-led businesses, but rely on a similar logic of using the Internet, and Web 2.0 in particular, to craft economic and social conditions that escape traditional discriminatory dynamics (Clark 2014; Mums Mean Business 2015).

The coding of key themes and theoretical components allowed me to iteratively theorize the discourse being observed throughout the research process. Following standard Grounded Theory Method the incorporation of these themes into the descriptive results, the observed patterns found in the content analysis, and the broader theoretical sketch was an ongoing, back-and-forth process (Glaser & Strauss 2009). This process also contributed to a re-working of the research questions throughout the data collection and analysis phases. Ultimately, when findings and emerging theory mutually reinforced each other after multiple iterations, the research questions had been clarified and responded to. An explanation of my findings follows, in the remaining text of the thesis.

Theoretical framing of analysis

This project is primarily informed by a feminist political economy of care approach (Lawson 2007; Nakano Glenn 2010). In this, I build on historical materialist approaches developed within Marxian political economy, feminist analysis of the mutual constitutions of patriarchy and capitalism, and more specifically, scholarship that examines historical structures of care in relation to the (re)production of race, gender and class (Davis 1981; Gonzalez 2012; Fraser 2013; Lawson 2007; McDowell 2008; Mies 1986; Nakano Glenn 2010; Wright 2006). My discussion of the mompreneur as discursive figure is founded on theory of the relations between power and representation, in particular feminist theory of subjectivity formation (Hall et al 2013; Foucault 1977; Joseph 2014; Massey 2013; Said 1979; Wright 2006).

Discourse analysis

In order to frame my analysis of the mompreneur, I borrow theorizations of discourse developed by Melissa Wright and Geraldine Pratt. Pratt conceives of discourses as “socio-spatial

circuits through which cultural and personal stories are circulated, legitimated, and given meaning” (Pratt, cited in Wright 2006, 3). This framework also emphasizes the profound interrelationships between power and knowledge, or the representation of knowledge (Foucault 1977; Hall et al 2013; Said 1979). Wright uses this formulation of discourse in conjunction with the idea of “myth” as depoliticized claims to unquestionable authority. While I don’t suggest that the mompreneur takes on the status of “mythic protagonist,” I examine her as a normative ideal who like Wright’s myth, “produces specific subjects, their spatiality, and their significance for the relentlessly changing landscapes of global capitalism” (Wright 2006, 5).

In this I follow Angela Davis’s analysis of the housewife as a gendered ideology which, through her deployment as a normative ideal, structured material conditions for all women in the nineteenth-century U.S. economy regardless of the fact that most women of color during the period of her deployment were subject to relations of forced servitude or low-wage labor, and working class white women as well participated in waged-labor relations (Nakano Glenn 2010). As she says, “Although the ‘housewife’ was rooted in the social conditions of the bourgeoisie and the middle classes, nineteenth-century ideology established the housewife and the mother as universal models of womanhood. Since popular propaganda represented the vocation of *all* women as a function of their roles in the home, women compelled to work for wages came to be treated as alien visitors within the masculine world of the public economy. Having stepped outside their ‘natural’ sphere, women were not to be treated as full-fledged wage workers” (1981, 229). Almost two centuries later, I apply a feminist historical materialist approach in situating anglophone techno-utopian discourses in their political-economic context, similar to Davis’ analysis of the early nineteenth-century U.S. Focusing in on the privatization of care and flexible employment patterns, I situate the “mompreneur,” a heteronormatively-constructed, elite

figure of ideal femininity, within broader geohistorical processes. In this I maintain a non-exclusive focus on the United States.

Feminist political economy of care analysis

My reading of the mompreneur's function as discursive figure is grounded in a feminist historical materialist approach. A Marxian historical materialist approach to understanding the current moment theorizes contemporary economic relations as emergent from the history of capital accumulation on a global scale (Harvey 1985; Lapavistas 2011; Mandel 1975; Roberts 2012). Feminist political economists have theorized the history of capitalism with particular attention to the structural role of gender with respect to regimes of accumulation. Maria Mies, Silvia Federici, Mariarosa Dalla Costa and other feminist historical materialist scholars of the 1970s and 1980s examined the significance of the separation of "public" and "private" spheres under capitalism (Gonzalez 2012; Sokoloff 1980). With the development of the capitalist mode of production, the differentiation between productive and reproductive labor became structurally defined by whether or not it created surplus value to be extracted by capital (Mies 1986; Sokoloff 1980).

A woman-of-color feminist political economy approach takes a broader analysis of the co-constitution of power relations with regimes of accumulation, also theorizing the function of race in reinforcing systems of value. Reproductive labor is devalued through intersecting processes of gendering and racialization that hinge on a fundamental categorization of some bodies into "normal" and others into "other," then taking on the meaning of "fully human/valuable" and "less than human/ less valuable" in social practice (Curthoys 1997; Davis 1981; Nakano Glenn 2010; Wright 2006).

A central concept in a political economy of care framework is “care.” Care is defined by Joan Tronto and Berenice Fisher as “a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible” (Tronto 1993). Care is seen as both particular and universal. It is universal in that all beings need care, and particular in three main ways: first, in that the systems by which groups/ societies meet the need for care vary greatly (Lawson 2007; Nakano Glenn 2010). Second in the fact that needs for care vary according to age, physical, emotional psychological needs etc, situating individual beings within variegated sets of needs to be sustained. And third, care is particularized through the cultural and ideological construction of what constitutes adequate care (Lawson 2007; Tronto 1993).

“Care” as a practice is conceptualized as being comprised of four aspects: first, “caring about,” the recognition of the need for care. Second, “taking care of,” taking responsibility for providing care. Third, “care-giving,” directly meeting the need for care. And fourth, “care receiving,” response by the one receiving the care (Tronto 1993). I take the universal need for care, and the geohistorically particular means by which care is constructed, given and received, as an ontological framework for examining the evolution of economic relations.

The discourse of “mompreneur”

A trend of an increasing number of women beginning new firms has been widely documented in recent years, and is discussed as a global phenomenon (Duberley and Carrigan 2012; Scotti 2014; Vanderbrug 2013; World Bank 2013). In the U.S. the growth rate of new women-owned businesses doubled between 2011 and 2014, and is double that of businesses overall (ISBE 2015; Scotti 2014). The growth of motherhood and entrepreneurship in conjunction is suggested by these trends as well (Mums Mean Business 2015). According to an

article in *The Telegraph*, almost two thirds of mothers with children under 10 said when surveyed that they were considering starting a business that they would run from home (Christie 2014). However, patterns of marginalization for women and mother entrepreneurs persist (Vanderbrug 2013). For example only 30% of those who start businesses in the U.S. are women (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2012). In every region of the world, women-led businesses are more likely to operate without employees compared to those started by men; in the United States, 40% of women-owned businesses had no employees, compared to 25% led by male entrepreneurs (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2012).

My content analysis of mompreneurial webspace gave some indicators toward the scale and scope of mompreneurship in practice. Many of the networking websites have large populations of subscribers. For example, online network “Business Among Moms” claims a community of almost 5,000 mompreneurs, online business coaching community Mommy Millionaire has over 1,600 members, and mompreneur-oriented social network “My Work Butterfly” apparently has more than 4,475 members. The Twitter account “@TheMompreneurTM” has 8,388 followers, “@MompreneurTips” has 3,625, and “@mompreneur_mag” has 30,900. Pinterest boards tagged with “mompreneur” number over 500 and more are being created every day. However, it is extremely difficult or even impossible to know how widespread the functional phenomenon of “mompreneurship” is, let alone to conduct a systematic investigation of the nature of those who identify with the term (Costin 2011; Ekinsmyth 2011; Ekinsmyth 2014).

Despite the glorification of digital technology in discourse on the mompreneur, research suggests that mompreneurs do not represent a technology-savvy population. In Costin’s 2011 study, “It was found that respondents did not capture the full benefits of ICT [internet and

communication technology]. Despite good access to computers and high levels of connectivity, there is relatively little implementation of ICT-enabled integrated business processes or the adoption of sophisticated online activities in mompreneur businesses” (Costin 2011, 19). According to one survey of self-identified “mompreneurs” by MumsClub, a Birmingham-based association of entrepreneurial mothers, 34 per cent of respondents are creating businesses to make money” (Pavoni 2011). As this and other research on the lived experiences of “mompreneurs” has shown, there seem to be gaps between the figure of “the mompreneur” constructed in digital landscapes, and the characteristics of the people who consider themselves to be mompreneurs. Clearly the living embodiment of a “mompreneur” is more complicated to pin down than simply any mother who has started a business.

For these reasons, the practices in which the various forms of media messaging about mompreneurship are situated are not the main focus of this project. Instead, I study the mompreneur as a discursive figure circulating in anglophone online discursive practices. A discussion of her situation in anglophone online spaces, connected primarily to the political-economic contexts of the U.S. and U.K., follows in the next section.

Geographical context of the mompreneur discourse

I focus mainly on the discourse of the mompreneur found in anglophone media and discursive material, and as described in the methodology section, my search methods were largely constrained by these boundaries. However, in this section I aim to loosely contextualize the predominately anglophone, U.S. and U.K.-based “mompreneur” discourse within its broader geographical context.

As stated in introductory paragraphs, the term mompreneur originated in the U.S. with the publication of Cobe and Parlapiano's book, and from there swelled into a discourse according to NBC News by 2011 was "all over the TV, newspapers and online media" (Knerl 2011). In some regions, including Australia and the U.K., the term "mumpreneur" is used, and has fallen into common usage according to a timeline similar to that of "mompreneur" in the U.S. (Ekinsmyth 2011). As this Irish blogger says, "The word Mumpreneur was added to the Collins English Dictionary in October 2011. It got me thinking about it. I've set up and closed businesses over the last fifteen years yet it is only in the last four of those years that I would have called myself a Mumpreneur" (Kelly 2012). The "mom/ mumpreneurship" discourse is also prominent in European countries outside the U.K. Prominent mompreneur-targeted crowdfunding platform "Mums Mean Business" is based in Oslo, Norway, although all of the external communications material, website, and crowdfunding services that I was able to access are in English.

And, the discourse of mompreneurship is found beyond its origin geographies of anglophone media based in the U.S., U.K., and other rich countries. In its spread, it traces and reshapes geographies of power and privilege (Graham 2014).

Non-anglophone spheres were more difficult to review, as my positionality places me in primarily English-speaking webspace. However, I found that in February 2015, the Hispanic Chamber of E-Commerce based in San Diego published a book about mompreneurship in Spanish. *La Mompreneur digital: Manual para Madres hispanas y latinoamericanas emprendedoras en Internet*, (*The digital Mompreneur: Manual for Spanish-speaking and Latin American entrepreneurs on the Internet*) is written by Alfredo Sánchez and Pina Russo, "successful and expert digital entrepreneurs, with extensive experience in developing Internet-

based business models in the United States, Latin America and Canada” (PRWeb 2015). Their accompanying Twitter handle called “@MompreneurLatam,” introduces their initiative saying, “somos una iniciativa que apoya a las Mamás Emprendedoras hispanas y latinoamericanas en el desarrollo de sus Negocios en Internet,” “we are an initiative that supports Hispanic and Latin American entrepreneurial moms in the development of their businesses on the Internet.” The account has 2,989 tweets and 639 followers. A tweet from mid-April 2015 says “#10- Desconéctate del trabajo cuando estés con tu familia. #TipsMompreneur Que nada perturbe el tiempo con tu familia,” “#10- Disconnect from work while you are with your family. #TipsMompreneur, may nothing disturb your time with your family.” I select these quotes to demonstrate their resonance with dominant themes in the anglophone mompreneur discourse that I reviewed for the project- and to note how English terms are incorporated into Spanish-language media content, as in “#TipsMompreneur.”

A Pinterest board called “MOMpreneurs México,” which is based in Cancun and also inhabits a Twitter handle and website, claims to be “un sitio profesional femenino y una red social que reúne a mamás emprendedoras y mamás que tienen un plan para comenzar un negocio. MOMpreneurs México apoya a estas mujeres en sus proyectos profesionales, su vida cotidiana y las dificultades para conciliar la vida privada con la vida profesional. MOMpreneurs es un soporte que pretende inspirar y motivar a las mamás Mexicanas para hacer el gran salto a su faceta como de emprendedoras,” “a female professional site and a social network that brings together mom entrepreneurs and moms who have a plan to start a business. MOMpreneurs Mexico supports these women in their professional projects, their daily lives, and difficulties reconciling private life with professional life. MOMpreneurs provides support that aims to inspire and motivate Mexican moms to make the grand leap toward their role as entrepreneurs.”

In a country where household-centered economies have been destroyed by neoliberal land reforms, privatization schemes and imperialist trade policies, this discourse of “inspiring and motivating Mexican women to become entrepreneurs” is clearly talking about a specific definition of entrepreneurship and even, as the featured images on Pinterest and the website reveal, a particular definition of Mexican woman. Both these spaces are full of quotes, some in Spanish and some in English, and images of white (of European descent), wealthy or upper-middle class women, usually depicted using digital technologies. The following blog post on the site, shown in Image 1c, echoes themes of intensive mothering highlighted in my review of anglophone webspace. It is titled, “I want for you what you want for yourself,” and is a reflection on finding moments of peace and bonding between mother and infant amidst an otherwise busy, connected, “superwoman” lifestyle:



Image 1c, from www.mompreneurs.mx

The mompreneur can also be found in anglophone South and Southeast Asian digital landscapes, although her appearance seems to be limited and relatively recent. For example, the

Indian newspaper *India Times* (in English) published out of Gurgaon, India, featured two articles about “mompreneurs.” One began, “While in India the concept is not as evolved as the West, it is gaining ground, along with the phenomenon of entrepreneurship itself. Last year, for instance, a community called Mompreneurs India was launched to provide support to mothers running businesses of their own” (Duttgupta 2015). A magazine and accompanying website called “Mompreneur Asia,” also all in English, is founded and run by Moon Loh, a mother who is based in Singapore. Loh’s story of mompreneurship highlights several themes common to the discourse that I reviewed. It begins, “being a mom who naturally wanted to have more time with my daughter, and yet have my own income, I also asked myself if my current lifestyle enabled me to participate fully in her life.” Despite the fact that Loh lives in Singapore, her magazine and website are titled just “Mompreneur Asia,” and the content on the website is remarkably devoid of more specific geographical markers. She does not emphasize her specific location at all (it was somewhat difficult to find), nor does she name other places- cities, countries, regions- in “Asia” (Loh 2015).

Therefore, my research is not only demarcated as anglophone webspace in that content is written or spoken in English, it is also geographically situated in websites based in the U.S. or U.K. Despite this boundary, I attempt to keep relative flexibility in my analysis of how discourses operate in relation to the restructuring of capital, cognizant of the sprawling yet variegated geographies of global capitalism, heteropatriarchy and white supremacy (Graham 2014; Peck & Tickell 2002).

The figure of the mompreneur

I find that the discursive figure of the mompreneur is overwhelmingly constructed as a high-achieving, flexible, creative, multi-tasking “supermom” who makes use of digital

information and communication technologies to run a business from home while maximizing quality time with her (biological) children. In this representation, she is seen to respond to a “problematic” that positions her as the ideal solution to the thoroughly-privatized “dilemma” facing individual mothers over how to secure care for their children. She is a loving and devoted mother as defined within the dominant ideology of intensive mothering, and she is indisputably positioned as the “natural” best primary caregiver of her children (Hays 1996; Douglas & Michaels 2004; O’Reilly 2010). In fact, nurturing her family (consisting of her husband and biological children) is her “number one priority.” But she plays her role in this problematic as a creative, well-educated and highly-capable “modern” woman, who is dissatisfied with a fate of full-time caregiving. So, digital technologies, along with her own superb ability to manage time and resources efficiently, step in to save the day! The ultimate solution to the predicament of the normative contemporary woman is mompreneurship. This figure manifests as a character in a particular set of narratives and “common sense” ideologies.

The term has fallen into heaviest use in the years following the 2007-2008 financial crisis and subsequent “Great Recession,” although as described in Chapter 3, often lacks explicit reference to that crisis or to financial hardship in general. And although I take the discourse surrounding the term “mompreneur” as a case study here, the thematic patterns that it exemplifies are found in broader discourses. Most immediately, I link mompreneur discourse to those which describe similar problematics: childcare “dilemmas” facing universalized representations of women, and those that narrate flexible employment arrangements enabled by digital technologies as the solution (Benkler 2006; Douglas & Michaels 2004; Fraser 2013; McDowell 2008; Meyer 2013; Singer 2014; Slee 2015).

The mompreneur as ideal

This claim that the “mompreneur” is a normative ideal is based on my review of the function of mompreneur narratives in relation to their material context. As the analysis of accounts of mompreneurship will reveal in the chapters that follow, mompreneurs were praised, celebrated and even glorified. They are typically introduced in news media with descriptions like: “These ambitious female entrepreneurs tirelessly strive to achieve both personal and professional success, and often prove themselves true masters of work-life balance” (Fallon 2013). And more over-the-top praise is ubiquitous as well: about mompreneur blogger Erica Diamond, the Duchess of York extolled: “Erica embodies one of the greatest things about women: multi-tasking. Women should draw inspiration from her: Be bold!”

This idealization was embodied in the fact that almost every one of the mompreneurs represented as such was of elite social status, constructed as middle-class or, less commonly, wealthy. Interestingly, even those mompreneurs who were clearly wealthy based on their occupations or family contexts were coded as middle class, reflecting the aspirational role of middle-classness in the U.S. “common sense” (Lawson 2012).

Celebrities are sometimes used as examples of mompreneurs, as in this *Forbes* article: “[Jessica] Alba is also joining a small circle of celebrity mompreneurs who’ve started kid-friendly businesses... ‘I like fashion like the next person, but my biggest focus was about creating a healthy and safe environment for babies,’ says Alba. ‘This is my heart and soul’” (Goudreau 2012). Another article chooses Randi Zuckerberg, sister of Mark (founder and CEO of Facebook) as an example of a relatable mompreneur. “An accomplished actor and musician, Zuckerberg, 32, is also an Emmy-nominated TV producer and contributor” (Shandrow 2014).

Furthermore, I found that representations of “mompreneurs” adhered to a very particular intersection of identities, and seem to target women who inhabit these identities as well. As I will elaborate on in Chapter 2, the mompreneur is predominately constructed as a white, middle-class, heteronormative woman. She emerges into a social context of “colorblind” racism and neoliberal multiculturalism, and therefore mompreneurial spaces are sometimes landscaped with what seems to be attempts at representative diversity (Haney-Lopez 2010; Mitchell 2003). However, these representations often fail to simulate diversity as much as would be expected in this context, with images on one crowdfunding platform geared toward mompreneurs, “Ms. Genuity,” showing models who are disproportionately white, even in group photos of supposed mompreneurs (who are models, not real-life examples). The following image from themompreneur.com, also the profile picture of the associated Twitter account, is similar:



Image 1d, from themompreneur.com

Carol Ekinsmyth’s 2012 study of mompreneurs in the U.K. was based on in-depth engagement with a sample of 67 mompreneurs who were exclusively white and middle-class. Based on triangulation with other sources, Ekinsmyth concluded that this sample was representative of mompreneurs in the U.K. in general (Ekinsmyth 2014).

My review of discursive artifacts finds examples of model mompreneurs in news media that are predominately white, overwhelmingly middle-class, upper-middle class or elite, and heteronormative. This representation poses a discrepancy with representations in mompreneurial webspaces, particularly some types of blogs and social media. My research positions the mompreneur within a feminist historical materialist analytic framework to ask how this white, anglophone, bourgeois, heteronormative feminine subjectivity within its context reveals broader systems of power and value.

The solution to a problem

The mompreneur is almost always framed within a problematic in which she is positioned as the ideal solution to a particular ‘problem’. This problem is constructed as a dilemma for individual mothers regarding how to negotiate the aspirational desire for a high-status career with that of a lifestyle centered on caring for their biological children. Some media accounts of mompreneurs begin by explicitly narrating this problem, as does this mompreneur in a *Huffington Post* article: “I wanted to continue with a high-powered career but I also wanted to be involved in my kids' daily lives” (DeFelice 2015). But even those articles or texts that neglect to frame the turn to mompreneurship so overtly, in almost all of them this same context is implied, as a problem to be solved by the choice of each mother. The predicament is resolved by the miraculous appearance of mompreneurship as the perfect solution- assuming of course that the mompreneur is a self-motivated and enterprising tech-savvy master multi-tasker.



Image 1e, from the blog “Mompreneur Problems”

Mompreneurship therefore represents a very specific convergence of motherhood and business-starting that features technology as a central actor in making it possible. Motherhood for the mompreneur is framed within “common sense” narratives that conceal power-laden social relations. The mompreneur endorses postfeminist notions of intensive mothering that reconfigure and naturalize heteropatriarchal feminine subjectivities (Davis 1981; Douglas & Michaels 2004; Nakano Glenn 2010). This feminine subjectivity, along with the problematic of the mompreneur reinforces the common sense notion of care-as-private, posing the question of childcare as an individual choice facing mothers and thereby delimiting the realm of responsibility for care to the private, the individual and the feminine (Clarke 2004; Lawson 2007; Nakano Glenn 2010).

These notions are based in the divide between the realm of value production and the realm of reproduction (England & Lawson 2005; Fraser 2013; Gonzalez 2012; Mies 1986; Sokoloff 1980). The discourse ostensibly contradicts the hierarchy constructed through this divide by valorizing the care work that mompreneurs do, and imagining systems of production, exchange and accumulation that re-situate care in a place of prominence relative to paid work (work that is productive of value). In this, it might appear to challenge capitalist ideologies and

move beyond a liberal feminism that strives for equality within the dominant economic system (Davis 2005; McRobbie 2004; Sokoloff 1980). However, I argue that this imagination depends upon heteronormative, classist and white supremacist hierarchies that exclusively valorize only certain types of care, and only certain structures of highly-privileged, technologically-enabled care-giving (Endnotes 2013b; Nakano Glenn 2010). In this, central tendencies of capitalism are endorsed and even celebrated (McDowell 2008). And though the “private sphere” is valorized and the geography of its division reconstituted, gender is nevertheless reproduced as a hierarchical relation that governs the separation of spheres (Endnotes 2013b; Fraser 2013; McDowell 2008).

Entrepreneurship for the mompreneur is constructed in a neoliberal techno-optimist discursive context whereby self-employment is framed as an emancipatory occupation that allows entrepreneurs a professional path to fulfillment and self-realization. The emergence of digital technology is narrated within longer-standing liberal discourses about business-starting under capitalism, constructing narratives about “disruption,” “the sharing economy,” and radically egalitarian, techno-utopian versions of capitalism (Cowen 2013; Kolođlugil 2015; Schor 2014). In this thesis, I explore how the representation of these two functions might be analyzed to understand contemporary modes of governing care and capitalist crisis.

Overview of chapters

In the following two empirical chapters, I deconstruct the mompreneur discourse and analyze its context within a feminist historical materialist framework (Davis 1981; Lawson 2007; Nakano Glenn 2010; Wright 2006). In Chapter 2, I hone in on the construction of “the problematic,” and locate its ideological roots in the conceptual division of spheres, the “public-private divide” (England & Lawson 2005; Mies 1986; Nakano Glenn 2010). This involves

theorizing the reconfiguration of the “private” demonstrated through the mompreneur. I argue that the mompreneur discourse adopts the ideology of intensive mothering and reinforces gendered status obligations to care (Douglas & Michaels 2004; Nakano Glenn 2010). The narration of the mompreneur problematic justifies and even naturalizes the privatization of care, a form of governance rooted in the public-private divide and intensified in the neoliberal era (Lawson 2007). In this chapter, I also associate the mompreneur discourse with a broader discourse relating gendered status obligation, flexible employment, and digital technologies, which I read as “techno-utopian postfeminism.” In this analysis, I explore how the discourse obscures the reproduction of gender as a relation of power, while also reconfiguring its function in relation to the restructuring of capital (Fraser 2013; McRobbie 2004; McDowell 2008).

In Chapter 3, I focus on the representation of “entrepreneurship” in the mompreneur discourse, and situate it within its political-economic context. This means drawing on Marxian theory of capitalist over-accumulation crisis to theorize post-“Great Recession” economic restructuring (Endnotes 2013a; Harvey 1985; Mandel 1975). This approach exposes the contradictions within the broader discourse of technological “disruption,” as the “business-as-usual” operation of “the [capitalist] economy” supposedly being “disrupted” by the proliferation of digital technologies actually depends upon them as conditions that produce increasingly complex financialized economic relations, and the flexibilization and devaluation of labor (French et al 2011; Harvey 1985). I connect this to feminist political economy analysis of the “housewifization” or “feminization” of labor and its function in ameliorating capitalist over-accumulation crisis, pointing to the intensification of gender and reproduction of capital as mutually constitutive relations (Endnotes 2013b; Gonzalez 2012; McDowell 2008; Mies 1986; Sokoloff 1980). The thesis ends with concluding reflections on the limits and contributions of

my research on the mompreneur ideal within studies of digital technologies, heteropatriarchal motherhood and neoliberal entrepreneurship. Ultimately, I argue that the figure of the mompreneur advances consensus around neoliberal capitalism as a mode of governance in spite of all its uncertainties.

Chapter 2: Motherhood, gender and care

“I am mom.I am woman.” The largest lines of the “Work-at-home-mom Manifesto” posted on Pinterest by Allie Irish, creator, owner and writer of the blog “Ramblings of a Work at Home Mom,” point to the highly gendered nature of mompreneur discourse reflected in this graphic. Her subsequent statements reflect different dimensions of a neoliberal postfeminist discourse praising technologically-enabled flexible employment structures that more easily integrate individual mothers’ unpaid care and paid work. She declares, “I can work anywhere...” “I work while the kids nap,” “I can work in my pajamas,” and “I am a multi-tasking pro,” highlighting the flexibility of her paid labor. Statements like “I am self-motivated” and “I don’t answer personal calls during work time” emphasize her dedication, self-discipline and work ethic. But throughout the manifesto is the recurring insistence that “Family comes before work”- and that fulfilling duties to family (specifically to raising children) is full of fun and gratification as well: “the laundry can wait until I play hide-and-seek with my kids,” “I am a Lucky Woman.”

WAHM Manifesto
I am Mom.
I can work anywhere, even Starbucks and McDonalds.
I have space for me to work at home.
I am Woman.
Family comes before work.
Balance is key.
I don't need to have it all, just enough to be happy.
I work while the kids nap.
I am a Mompreneur.
There is no room for can't in my life.
I am a savvy time manager.
I don't answer personal calls during work hours.
I am Self-Motivated.
I can work in my pajamas.
The laundry can wait until I play hide and seek with my kids.
I am a multi-tasking pro.
I am a **Lucky Woman.**
Ramblings of a WAHM

Image 2a, from Allie Irish “Ramblings of a WAHM”

In this chapter, I investigate how the mompreneur discourse relates to gender and the governance of care. I do this by situating it within a complementary techno-utopian discourse, which I call techno-utopian postfeminism. This discourse, which could be seen as a strain of feminist ideology, challenges older versions of liberal feminism as well as the neoliberal feminism expressed in messages like Cheryl Sandberg’s “Lean In” (Rottenberg 2014). It refuses the idea that women can achieve equality in work structures founded on the separation of public and private spheres and insists instead that the “corporate world” is inherently gendered and structured against the provision of care (Endnotes 2013b; Fraser 2013; Sokoloff 1980). But this postfeminism reinforces heteropatriarchal gender norms and fails to interrogate their socio-political construction. And, it glorifies digital technologies and economic restructuring as pathways to gender equality, holding that women and mothers “benefit” disproportionately from flexible employment structures. It thus (re)constructs gendered “status obligations” to provide unpaid care work in new configurations, narrating childcare needs through ideologies of intensive mothering and normative femininity in general (Douglas & Michaels 2004; Fraser 2013; Lawson 2007; Nakano Glenn 2010; O’Reilly 2010).

This chapter begins with a discussion of feminisms in the twenty and twenty-first century U.S., highlighting the history of women’s movements alongside shifts in ideological consensus and dominant modes of production (Douglas & Michaels 2004; Fraser 2013). I then describe the mompreneur discourse relating to the governance of care: the mother within “the new momism” and intensive mothering; the family as top priority; the mother as primary caregiver; the need for childcare and the range of possible means of providing it; and the mompreneur and femininity. I show that the mompreneur figure, operating within broader neoliberal postfeminist techno-

utopian discourses, serves to justify the dominance of neoliberal financialized capitalism, reinforce the common sense of care-as-private, and deepen the gendering of care (Lawson 2007; Nakano Glenn 2010). These intersecting processes reproduce the overall devaluation of care.

Feminisms and postfeminism

I define feminism as an ideology that depends on analysis of gender as a power relation (Curthoys 1997). I begin with the contested feminisms that form the relevant ideological context of the mompreneur discourse, and broadly trace their historical developments in relation to the restructuring of capital.

A postfeminist context

The term “postfeminism” has a range of meanings, but generally describes the context of the time period following the women’s liberation movement in the U.S. In this, it is most often used to refer to a state in which feminism is no longer necessary, since gender has ceased to operate as a (hierarchical) power relation (Curthoys 1997; Douglas & Michaels 2004; McRobbie 2004). The meaning that I employ here is that most commonly employed in feminist and critical social theory, which situates the supposed “gender-blindness” of the contemporary context as an ideological “backlash” against the strength of the feminist movement at its height (Douglas & Michaels 2004; Fraser 2013; McRobbie 2004). In this understanding, a postfeminist context is characterized by the prevailing “common sense” that structural, institutional, and normalized interpersonal sexism has been abolished; that women have achieved full equality with men, founded in the fact that discrimination based on gender is illegal and socially condemned; and that these realms of oppression delimit the range of possibility for how gender might operate as a relation of power (Doughney & Leahy 2004; Mies 1986; Rottenberg 2014). Postfeminism is

theorized as being expressed through norms and attitudes that embrace strong heteronormative femininity and the objectification of the female body, for example (McRobbie 2004).

Liberal and neoliberal feminism

Liberal feminism, different from postfeminism in its insistence on the continued relevance of gender inequality, tends to structure its analysis around “gaps”: achievement gaps, pay gaps, wealth gaps, entrepreneurship gaps, etc. This framing suggests a progression toward complete equality along a linear path, without interrogating the structural production of gender difference. In this, liberal feminism positions achievement by women within hegemonic systems as its ideal, instead of seeing male supremacy as mutually constituted with those systems as in socialist feminist or feminist historical materialist analysis (Davis 2005; Mies 1986; Sokoloff 1980). Metrics like the “wage gap” between (white) men and women preclude analysis of the way that the labor market, when “gender blind,” is inherently structured to pay women less (Endnotes 2013b; Gonzalez 2012; Hanson & Pratt 1995; McDowell 2013; Sokoloff 1980).

In her analysis of Cheryl Sandberg’s *Lean In*, Catherine Rottenberg argues that classical versions of liberal feminism are being replaced by a *neoliberal* feminism that likewise idealizes equal achievement within dominant and elite systems, but shifts emphasis “from an attempt to alter social pressures towards interiorized affective spaces that require constant self-monitoring,” thus reforming liberal feminism into “a mode of neoliberal governmentality” (Rottenberg 2014, 424). The message of *Lean In* helps to articulate a new feminist subject who calls attention to gender inequality but sees the achievement of equality on highly individualized terms, thereby unable to analyze the structural production of power, privilege and male supremacy. It maintains its focus on closing “gaps” in the system assumed to be the result of discrimination rather than structural problems in the system itself. But in its acknowledgment and analysis of gender as a

relevant axis of inequality, (neo)liberal feminism is nevertheless distinct from the outright denials of gendered hierarchies seen in postfeminism.

Motherhood and femininity in the mompreneur discourse

My analysis finds that the discourse of mompreneurship is productive of gendered subjectivities. Heteronormative femininity is a conspicuous feature of the discourses' content and imagery, and narratives about who is responsible for childcare and who "make the best entrepreneurs" strengthen the naturalization of binary gender differentiation. The subjectivity produced through the discourse surrounding mompreneurship upholds an intensive, postfeminist version of motherhood that reinforces gendered status obligations (Douglas & Michaels 2004; Nakano Glenn 2010).

The mompreneur as mother

The "mom" aspect of the mompreneur is crucial to constructing the seeming impossibility of the dilemma that she solves. The most important role of the mompreneur, it is repeatedly and consistently stated, is being a "mom." One of the most common –emic codes that was uncovered during discourse analysis of mompreneur-related materials was that of "mother as primary caregiver," because the romanticization of the biological mother-child care relationship is so prominent in artifacts relating to the mompreneur. Likewise, "family as top priority" is another of the most common codes. The repetition of this theme, to the point of it almost appearing as a mantra in those exact words, overflows mompreneurial webspace. Lists of "tips" and other advice-oriented media, which are common in mompreneur materials, feature ceaseless recommendations for how to carve out quality time with family, and to make sure that a school play or softball game is never missed for the sake of a business duty (Hanson 2014; Lennon

2014). Even the most surface-level references to mompreneurs tend to reaffirm this mantra, as when the CEO of small business community Manta, John Swanciger, described results of their survey of mompreneurs unrelated to the question of prioritizing “family”: “While being a mother is their number-one priority, they get a tremendous sense of satisfaction from building something special and fulfilling in both in their personal and professional lives” (Fallon 2014).

I interpret these ubiquitous affirmations of “family as top priority” to serve as subtle disciplinary mechanisms that reinscribe the duties of the ideal mother- duties that coalesce into a structural function identified by Alvin Gouldner and elaborated by Evelyn Nakano Glenn as *status obligation* (Gouldner, cited in Nakano Glenn 2010). Nakano Glenn explains that status obligations are internalized and reinforced by their identification with community morals, whereby a person’s social and self-identity depend on their fulfillment of status obligations. These moral and social imperatives are so strong that they are taken to underpin the social order, “thus women’s caring is viewed as an expression of the society’s values and as necessary to ensure civilized life” (88).

Analyzing their roles as fulfilling status obligations does not expose the expressions of love for their children and desire to provide good care for them conveyed in discourse relating to the mompreneur as insincere. Rather, what may be genuine concern and enjoyment toward care-giving nevertheless fulfills a structural function as status obligation. Regarding a different but parallel care-giving context, Nakano Glenn explains, “Although it is undoubtedly true that grandmothers enjoy spending time with their grandchildren, in this case their childcare labor is ‘obligatory’ - a status duty... By performing unpaid child care, they are subsidizing the low-wage system and relieving the state and the employer from having to pay for the cost of social reproduction” (2010, 171).

These status obligations are constructed on the basis of familial roles, and an understanding of “family” in general that likewise have a social and political origin. The heteronuclear family was established as a state-sanctioned social unit in France, England, Germany and other parts of western Europe around the time of industrialization in the mid-1800s, and the very concept of “family” did not even become popular there until the late 1800s (Mies 1986). Prior to this, marriage was legally constrained for couples who did not own property, “only classes with property could afford to have a ‘family,’” and even for the aristocracy, “family” was not defined as “a combination of co-residence and blood-relationships based on the patriarchal principle” (Mies 1986, 104). The very categories that make “family is top priority” a meaningful statement are thus at least partially constituted in relation to the historical mode of production.

Family-based status obligations are reinforced in discourse on mompreneurship that repeatedly emphasizes mothers’ prioritization of childcare. Mompreneurs are also overwhelmingly represented as being in heteronormative partnerships, and as having responsibilities to their husbands as wives, reinforcing status obligations as wives as well. These themes are all present in mainstream cultural discourse about mothering, femininity, and marriage. In the discourse of mompreneurship, they are explicitly privileged, (for female subjects) above paid or entrepreneurial work, and used to bolster the moral valorization of entrepreneurship. They are placed in conjunction with entrepreneurship in a way that glorifies entrepreneurship and sees it as world-creating, as will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

As Image 2b, a graphic posted to a Pinterest board for mompreneurs illustrates, the mompreneur figure negotiates the reproduction of womens’ status obligations alongside the production of a neoliberal entrepreneurial subjectivity.

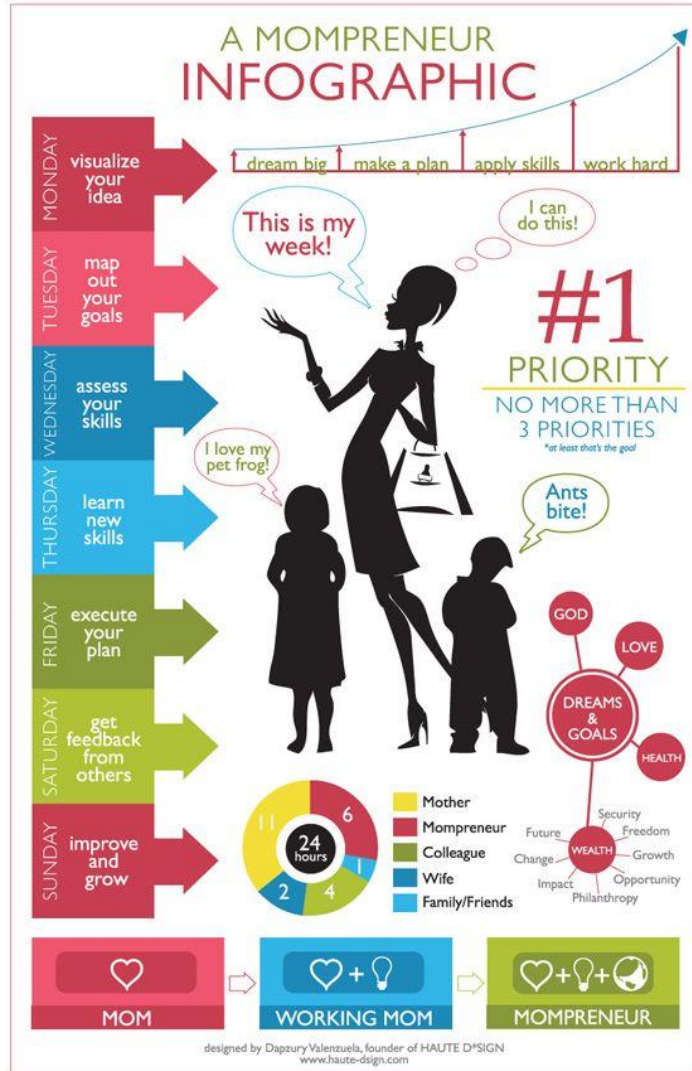


Image 2b, from Pinterest board “S.H.E. is a Momprenneur”

The momprenneur in the Image exudes normative beauty standards in her embodied representation: she is roughly two times as thin as her small children but with an hourglass figure, wearing tall high heels and a fashionable outfit, purse and hairstyle, and with lips and eyelashes so prominent that they extend dramatically from her silhouetted face. Various elements of the graphic reinforce her status obligation as mother, such the fact that she is surrounded by her two children, that the words “#1 Priority” alongside the depiction of her role as mother is the largest text on the page, and that her roles as “wife” and “mother” are shown to take up 13 hours

of a 24 hour day. Even her role as entrepreneur, the next-largest priority after Mother, is still called “mompreneur,” thus re-prioritizing her motherhood even in the spaces that might otherwise be distinct from it. The other images in the graphic serve to represent her entrepreneurship in a way that emphasizes the self-driven, self-organized nature of her work. The mompreneur thus reconfigures feminine subjectivities in a postfeminist, gender-blind context that reifies a woman’s status obligations to care, and accentuates her femininity while also upholding a superficial understanding of gender equality that sees women as fulfilling prestigious roles in the public sphere (McDowell 2013; Sokoloff 1980).

Intensive mothering and “the new momism”

This highly prioritized “mom”-ness of the mompreneur is constructed amidst the dominance of what Susan Douglas and Meredith Michaels have called “the new momism,” an intense formulation of intensive mothering that governs femininity in the twenty-first century. The more general term “intensive mothering” was coined by Sharon Hays in her 1996 book, *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*, in which she describes the construction of mothering in the current era as “child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive, and financially expensive” (Hays 1996, 8). Douglas and Michaels argue that the idealization of motherhood around the turn of the twenty-first century manifests in particular representations and pressures upon “moms.” They define “the new momism” as “the insistence that no woman is truly complete or fulfilled unless she has kids, that women remain the best primary caretakers of children, and that to be a remotely decent mother, a woman has to devote her entire physical, psychological, emotional, and intellectual being, 24/7, to her children” (2004, 4).

This discourse, evidenced in their extensive review of magazine, TV, radio and newspaper material in the period spanning 1960 and 2005, is disseminated by means of advice

columns, celebrity “mom” profiles, and advertising material, as well as being found in the bodies of feature length magazine articles, books, TV programs, etc. This attitude toward mothering romanticizes the role of mother, and to a certain extent parents in general, but without disrupting the gendered production of “mother” versus “father.” The set of ideas and ethics that surround the “new momism” suggest that mothers always put their children first in all situations, and in fact that being a “good mom” includes continually placing themselves in their children’s subject positions (Hays 1996; O’Reilly 2010). This discourse is propped up by representations of ideals on the one hand, and the proliferation of fear-inducing information on the other, warning about the destructive or even catastrophic results of falling short of performing as a “good mom” (Douglas and Michaels 2004; O’Reilly 2010).

Douglas and Michaels suggest that putting oneself in the subject position of their child extends to the increasingly pervasive use of the term “mom” and now “mommy” to refer to mothers in media sources or in the third person in general, as it used to be reserved as a name that children called their own mothers directly. The terms “mom” or “mommy” are used almost exclusively in discourse surrounding the mompreneur, and the practice is complemented by the common reference to “MOMpreneurs” with the “mom” duly emphasized (MOMpreneurs 2015).

Further evidence of intensive mothering as a childcare ideology is rampant throughout accounts of mompreneurship, which describe practices of motherhood as the **daily** activities of building forts, preparing creative and widely-varied, meticulously nutritious meals, and generally engaging in forms of elaborate imaginative play. The discourse of intensive mothering prescribes an ideal that pathologizes all forms of parenting that don’t conform to it, understanding them as moral and spiritual failure and deeply embedding classist, white supremacist social hierarchies (Douglas & Michaels 2004; Fraser & Gordon 1994).

Douglas and Michaels situate the rise of this discourse within its historical context, in relation to feminist ideologies. They identify it as a firmly postfeminist discourse that rose to dominance in an era following the women's liberation movement and its social backlash:

This romanticizing of homemaking and motherhood, in *thirtysomething*, in Folgers ads, in [*Martha Stewart*] *Living*, encouraged women to become so invested in upholding particular, unattainable standards of motherhood, that they stopped- or didn't even begin- to question a set of practices, backed up by the government and much of corporate America, that, as we used to say in the old days, oppressed mothers. Yet because we saw a new TV breed of cuddly, fun dads who bathed their kids and read to them, we were supposed to believe that the old, bad, stinky patriarchy that had kept Betty Friedan's generation down was a thing of the past (235).

In the discourse of mompreneurship that I trace in online media, this construction of motherhood is taken for-granted, and then expanded on. Its postfeminist character as a mode of governing gendered subjectivity is deepened through the mompreneur, who is not only an intense, doting, devoted mother, but also a self-made, highly flexible, accomplished and creative businesswoman. This analysis is parallel to what feminist theorists have pointed out about the intensification of oppressive gender norms in the "superwoman" figure and the working woman's "double day" (Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2003; Sokoloff 1980).

Motherhood and feminine subjectivities in history

The role of discourse on motherhood in governing notions of proper femininity has a long historical precedent. For example, in the years following the Revolutionary War in the United

States, two complementary discourses emerged to carve out the ideal woman, linked to the construction of the “new republic” (Nakano Glenn 2010). Called “Evangelical Motherhood” and “Republican Motherhood,” the two held contradictory perspectives on the public sphere. Republican Motherhood glorified the mother’s role in shaping strong public citizens, and Evangelical Motherhood constructed an image of the mother who maintained the private sphere as an “island of purity,” a safe haven from the harsh and secular public sphere. But these discourses converged to construct an image of white, bourgeois femininity that romanticized domesticity and motherhood, accompanying political-economic shifts that saw the increasing organization of households on the basis of waged industrial labor, and the separation of paid, productive labor and unpaid reproductive labor (Mies 1986; Nakano Glenn 2010). As discussed in the introduction, the mompreneur is likewise constructed as a predominately white, bourgeois, heteronormative woman.

Mothers as the best entrepreneurs

The mompreneur is portrayed as a “supermom,” a master of multi-tasking, juggling and industriousness. Her possession of these qualities, presented as an inevitable result of motherhood, are connected to a complementary narrative about entrepreneurship, whereby mothers are held to be particularly well-suited for dreaming up, starting and managing for-profit enterprises. This narrative is promoted most heavily in fora directly oriented around mompreneurship, such as crowdfunding platforms directed at mompreneurs, mompreneur support networks on social media, and in promotional talks like Jill Salzman’s 2011 Tedx Talk, “Why Moms Make the Best Entrepreneurs,” but also appears in less vehement formulations in mainstream media content covering mompreneurship. One article in *Forbes* gushed, “Moms are nothing if not efficient—they are great at creating processes and streamlining life to get more

done during the day” (Westwood 2014). The claim that “mothers make the best entrepreneurs” are full of generalizations like these, bolstered by simple narratives that rest on naturalizing assumptions about gender.

The governance of care in the mompreneur discourse

I argue that the mompreneur figure is part of broader discursive mechanisms that collude to structurally devalue care in the contemporary context (Lawson 2007; Nakano Glenn 2010). The discourse of the mompreneur narrates the need for and provision of care in a particular way, romanticizing a specific kind of childcare at the exclusion of all other forms of care, and imagining only a narrow range of options for providing that care, all of which assume its privatization. In this section, I describe these features of the discourse, and show how it is operating in a broader context of the privatization of care.

The problematic

The mompreneur is almost always framed within a problematic, as briefly introduced in the Introduction. I take Vinay Gidwani’s reading of Louis Althusser’s “problematic” to theorize the framing of mompreneurship within broader ideological assumptions about gender and care. According to Althusser, a “problematic” exposes within an ideological or discursive structure “the objective internal reference system of its particular themes, the system of questions commanding the answers given by the ideology” (Althusser, cited in Gidwani 2008, 4), which as Gidwani points out, is roughly analogous to “discourse” following the work of Edward Said and Michel Foucault.

In this problematic, the mompreneur is positioned, implicitly or explicitly, as the ideal solution to a particular ‘problem’. This problem is constructed as a dilemma facing individual

mothers, who are represented as attempting to negotiate the aspirational desire for a high-status career with that of a lifestyle centered on caring for their children. Some media accounts of mompreneurs begin by explicitly narrating this problem, often featuring the mother's choice to "leave corporate" and start her own business as a turning point in this story. The role of technology is usually prominent, as in this mompreneur blog post, "So many times in the Facebook groups I am a part of, I see moms grieving over the fact that their maternity leave is over. They are heartbroken that their new precious baby will have to go to daycare. But this does not have to be the case. Thanks to the Internet, there are so many options for working at home" (Krasnoff 2015).

And the narration of this dilemma is another opportunity to fortify status obligation. "Guilt" is seen as an inevitable corollary of working even for the highly flexible mompreneur, and appears as a ubiquitous theme in the discourse of the mompreneur and the "new momism" more generally. This guilt is usually considered to be such common knowledge that it does not even need to be explained. Content like this tweeted response to a Twitter discussion about "what it means to be a Mumpreneur" takes for-granted the fact that women who work for pay will wrestle with guilt: "it is a tough one but I think to be a 'mumpreneur' you need to accept that you are an ambitious person & not feel guilty about it" (@CarterMarissa). And it is frequently the topic of advice columns, as in this 2015 blog post by Nicole Orozco, self-proclaimed "serial mompreneur," marketing and web design consultant, and founder of the advice and networking website "Mompreneur Media:"

Have you ever wondered if it really is possible to have it all? To have the beautiful family and the flourishing business?

Most importantly, can you really have it all and achieve it without feeling overwhelmed with guilt about the time you spend working hard on your career and not with the people you love most? **Your children.**

I definitely believe that you can create a life for yourself that encompasses all your passions, from parenting and beyond. But, doing so guilt-free is trickier.

After all, we know our children are our world – so shouldn't they be enough?

If you're dealing with pangs of guilt at the thought of trying to be the best you can be in all areas of your life, here's how you can overcome them:

The blog post goes on to provide a 5-point list of advice for how to succeed at being a “multi-tasking entrepreneurial mother without guilt”- the key to “having it all.”

And even those articles or texts that neglect to frame the turn to mompreneurship so overtly, in almost all of them this same context is implied, as a problem to be solved by the choice of each mother. This predicament is resolved by the miraculous appearance of mompreneurship as the perfect solution. This discursive function as “solution” is demonstrated more subtly in articles like this one from *Forbes*, “Regardless of how lucrative these businesses are, they provide tremendous value for their families and allow these moms the flexibility they need to balance the demands of working and raising children concurrently” (Westwood 2014).

This problematic reveals the internal reference system of its ideology: the supposedly universal desire for a lifestyle centered on caring for one's biological children as a mechanism produced by and reproductive of gendered status obligations. Feminine subjectivities are thus reproduced in the ideological context of intensive mothering (O'Reilly 2010). It also takes career aspirations in a very particular form to be a dual desire on par with that of a parenting “career.”

Most mompreneurs held up in celebratory accounts are those who reject well-paying, high-status corporate careers in order to custom-design something more flexible for themselves.

But most powerfully, this problematic sets the terms of possibility for its resolution: it is an individual problem facing *individual mothers*, to be resolved by the private decision-making capacity of each one in their capacity as mothers in a private household. The reference system revealed in the problematic operates on the assumption that the fulfillment of the need for care is privatized, individualized, and feminized.

The public-private divide in the mompreneur discourse

The motherhood of this femininity is made distinct from productive work in the public sphere- parenting and entrepreneurship are presented as two types of work, even referred to as two “careers”- but they are valued differently. A repeated theme in discourse on mompreneurship is the perceived insufficiency of being a stay-at-home-mother, while at the same time still glorifying the family as “top priority.” The conceptual line separating the public from the private is traced and re-traced, in lines like, “I needed to start my business to feel balanced as a mom. Work doesn’t take away from who I am as a mom, it adds to it” (Fallon 2013).” Or “while being a mother is their number-one priority, they get a tremendous sense of satisfaction from building something special and fulfilling in both in their personal and professional lives” (Fallon 2014).

Contradictory to this valorization of paid work, the reconfiguration of status obligation iterated through the mompreneur bolsters mother-work’s status as a “moral and spiritual vocation,” and as Evelyn Nakano Glenn has written, positioned it as “simultaneously priceless and worthless - that is, not monetized” (2010, 35).

The public-private divide and value

This contemporary division between monetized and non-monetized labor is rooted in what feminist historical materialist theorists call the “public-private divide.” The divide evolved as a constituent characteristic of industrial capitalism, as waged labor was structurally separated from reproductive labor located in the home (England & Lawson 2005; Mies 1986; Nakano Glenn 2010). Thus the divide differentiates two realms or “spheres,” described as the public sphere and the private sphere. Each sphere came to be ideologically associated with a gender: the public, masculine and the private, feminine (England & Lawson 2005; Fraser & Gordon 1994; Hanson & Pratt 1995; McDowell 2013; Nakano Glenn 2010).

Feminist historical materialists theorize the way that these spheres are defined on the basis of whether or not labor is directly productive of surplus value, though there are substantive differences within this general school of thought (Endnotes 2013b; Gonzalez 2012; Mies 1986; Sokoloff 1980). Their conceptualization of surplus value is based on Marxian labor theory of value, whereby the capitalist mode of production depends upon the extraction of surplus value through the exploitation of labor (Endnotes 2013b; Gonzalez 2012; Harvey 1985). This exploitation takes place through the extraction of the difference between the exchange value of what is produced by workers, and the wage that they earn by selling their labor. The difference is extracted by capitalists, the owners of the means of production. This process of production and capital accumulation is modeled by the diagrammed relationship in Figure 2c below, between M (money), C (commodity), LP (labor power), MP (means of production), C' (modified, produced commodity), and ΔM (surplus value) all of which is transformed by the process of production (..P.):

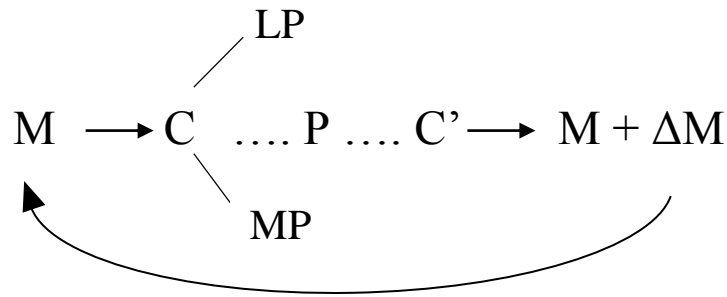


Figure 2c, Marxian Labor Theory of Value

This conceptualization of production seems to form a complete cycle- but, feminist historical materialist scholars highlight the co-constitutive role of the “private sphere” in enabling this form of exploitation in the public (Gonzalez 2012; Mies 1986; Sokoloff 1980). This is because waged labor depends upon unpaid, *super-exploited* labor, whose value is not accounted for in the circulation of capital, for its own social reproduction (Gonzalez 2012; Mies 1986; Mitchell et al 2003; Sokoloff 1980).

Drawing the distinction between “capitalist productive labor,” which is defined solely as that labor which produces surplus value, and that work that allows for the continuation of life, Maria Mies explained the tendency to exploit labor and to devalue reproductive labor as an intrinsic characteristic of the capitalist mode of production: “It is my thesis that this general production of life, or subsistence production- mainly performed through the non-wage labor of women and other non-wage laborers as slaves, contract workers and peasants in the colonies- constitutes the perennial basis upon which 'capitalist productive labor' can be built up and exploited. Without the ongoing subsistence production of non-wage laborers (mainly women) wage labor would not be 'productive'” (Mies 1986, 48).

At the end of the nineteenth century, the two spheres were further demarcated in industrializing Europe and the U.S. through socio-cultural practices and institutions (Davis 1981;

Mies 1986; Nakano Glenn 2010). Discourse about the “home” and the “workplace” assigned gender to the two spheres and intensified the ideological associations with each. The “private,” non-waged sphere was associated with femininity and with the work of women; the “public” sphere of waged work was associated with masculinity and men. This historical shift meant that womens’ work became categorically different from mens’, whereas before household subsistence was structured around a combination of productive and reproductive labor that was almost all geographically located in the household (Davis 1981; Nakano Glenn 2010). “The home and the market (private and public) came to be understood as distinct and bounded spheres that operated according to completely different principles. According to the emerging ideology, the market exalted impersonality, competition, independence, and self-interest, whereas the home/family valued personalism, harmony, dependence, and selflessness. The private household came to be viewed as a refuge from the public realm, a necessary sanctuary from the stresses and strain of the workplace” (Nakano Glenn 2010, 19).

The work that was associated with the “private sphere” was thus gendered and simultaneously devalued. The tasks contained in this category of work mapped loosely onto the range of activities defined as “care” by feminist care ethics, repeating from the introduction: “a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible” (Tronto 1993). These tasks include cleaning, preparing food, maintaining living spaces, care for the sick, the disabled, the elderly, emotional comfort, and perhaps most notoriously: looking after infants and children. Childcare is a crucial part of social reproduction, and has been historically privatized and feminized, partially through the ideological romanticization of the mother-child relationship (England & Lawson 2005; Tronto 1993; Nakano Glenn 2010).

This feminist historical materialist analysis highlights the way that the construction of gender takes place through the historical structural separation between wage labor and the work of women in the home (Gonzalez 2012; Mies 1986; Sokoloff 1980). Capitalism interacts with patriarchy and white supremacy as autonomous but interconnected systems that mutually constitute systems of power and value (Davis 1981). These systems operate through contexts of increasing commodification as well. The systematic transition of white, middle class women into the paid workforce as well as the increasing commodification of reproductive work mean that the undervaluation of care work coincides with gender in a way that continues to rest on the historical separation of reproductive and productive, unpaid and paid, spheres even as the realm of surplus value-production expands (Endnotes 2013b; Gonzalez 2012; McDowell 2008; McDowell 2013; Nakano Glenn 2010; Sokoloff 1980).

The significance of the spatial public-private divide in relation to economic configurations in various historical and geographical contexts has been analyzed by feminist geographers (England 1996; England & Lawson 2005; Hanson & Pratt 1995; McDowell 2008; McDowell 2013). One significant area of study within this has been the focus on the interaction between commute distances to paid work and childcare arrangements (England 1996). Gender functions to shape work-home geographies, with women being responsible for journeys to childcare at highly disproportionate rates, and many studies finding that they thereby have shorter commutes to work than men (England 1996). Feminist geographers have engaged with these and other findings relating to different geohistorical contexts to highlight the spatialization of the production-reproduction binary, and the gender division of labor (England 1996; England & Lawson 2005; Hanson & Pratt 1995; James 2008; McDowell 2008; McDowell 2013). This body of analysis draws out the geographical variation in the division, as well as the ways that the

spatiality of the divide interacts with prevailing modes of production and reproduction; suburban living arrangements produce different gendered geographies of production-reproduction from urban ones, and these arrangements are also differentiated by race, class, geography, historical moment and socio-cultural positionalities (McDowell 2008; McDowell 2013).

This extensive research from feminist geography and other social sciences has also documented the permeability of the “divide” in *practice*. For example, investigation of women’s journals and letters shows that during the height of ideological conditioning of the divide in the nineteenth century United States, a typical white northeastern woman’s household-based productive work did not change much. However, her perspective on that work shifted dramatically, undervaluing her own in comparison to her husbands’ (Nakano Glenn 2010).

And the disjuncture between practice and ideology extends far beyond the moment when white, middle-class households in the U.S. underwent the transformative shift from household-based production to industrial production and marketized consumption managed by “housewives.” It has been a characteristic of survival even in social landscapes dominated by capitalism since the advent of industrialization across the globe. In 1910, 32% of all employed men in the U.S. were categorized as “common laborers” who earned wages through temporary jobs in mining, construction and infrastructure building and lived in suburban or rural households where women engaged in subsistence production (Nakano Glenn 2010). And those families who depended on wages from manufacturing work too engaged in extensive non-market production: a study of 2,500 families living in urban manufacturing regions in 1890 found that almost half kept vegetable gardens and/or livestock. In New York City, family apartments served as the assembly location for manufacturing work, spatially and temporally mixing care and industrial labor that was carried out by all members of the family, including young children (Nakano Glenn 2010).

Examples extend easily into more contemporary times, where research shows that social reproduction depends on the performance of diverse practices of production, exchange, and consumption that are not completely subsumed by the capitalist mode of production (Gibson-Graham 2008). The spatiality of these practices are and have been mixed, with some research suggesting a systematic shift of industrial work back into the home (England & Lawson 2005).

This divide is also blurred by the increasing commodification of reproductive work, whereby surplus value is produced through the performance of home-based reproductive tasks (McDowell 2013). As referenced above, this separation simultaneously constitutes the conditions of relations within both spheres: the productive-reproductive binary continues to devalue feminized, reproductive labor even when it is marketized (Sokoloff 1980) and feminist geographers have extended this spatial analysis of the public-private divide to commodified labor particularly in the service sector (Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2003; McDowell 2008; McDowell 2013). The historical transition from Fordist to post-Fordist production-consumption structures in the Global North has led to increasing proportions of paid employment in the service sector, and a so-called “service-dominated economy.” In this context, spatiality is analyzed at larger scales to understand how racialized, gendered, classed subjects are produced in relation to the restructuring of global capital (McDowell 2013; Wright 2006). This restructuring of capital leads to uneven global geographies of production and consumption, with patterns specific to a post-Fordist regime such as the long-distance migration of women from the Global South in precarious circumstances to provide commodified reproductive labor in the Global North, or the large-scale urbanization of many regions of the Global South leading to scarce, undervalued and insecure manufacturing labor (Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2003; Wright 2006).

The net effect of the interaction between market valuation processes and the public-private divide has been the systematic devaluation of work associated with the home, reproduction, care, and any work or tasks that are gendered as female (Davis 1981; England & Lawson 2005; Hanson & Pratt 1995; McDowell 2013; Sokoloff 1980; Wright 2006).

Neoliberal governance of care

Throughout the development of industrial capitalism in the countries of the Global North the state has relied on the privatization of care to a certain extent through the formation of heteronuclear families and gendered status obligations to care (Clarke 2004; Lawson 2007; Mies 1986). But against this backdrop of structural and ideological separation between productive and reproductive work under capitalism, states have undertaken different strategies for managing the “maintenance” of their populations “on a daily basis and intergenerationally” (Nakano Glenn 2010). Most notably, in the 1930’s, a Keynesian strategy for coping with the disastrous effects of the Great Depression led to the construction of so-called “welfare states” in the United States and much of Europe and Latin America (Clarke 2004; Harvey 2005; Fraser 2013; Fraser & Gordon 1994). The governments adopted fiscal policies that involved massive amounts of government spending on infrastructure projects and a variety of public programs that provided monetary support for the poor, sick and elderly. In the U.S., the period between 1930 and 1970 saw record levels of state investment in public education, as well as state funding of highways, public parks, healthcare and welfare programs (Fraser & Gordon 1994; Harvey 2005). Public childcare programs were also a prominent feature of welfare state apparatuses in many countries, although the United States was unique in that childcare remained largely privatized throughout the twentieth century (Douglas & Michaels 2005; England 1996; McDowell 2008). This era of public policy coincided with “Fordist” production structures that were characterized by stable

male-dominated manufacturing employment in large-scale companies that was typically long-term, secure, and relatively high-waged (Fraser 2013; McDowell 2008). Social policy was predicated on the idea that workers would earn a “family wage” and be supplied with generous benefits through their employers, even though this ideal was formed on the basis of gendered, racial and class exclusions (Fraser 2013; Fraser & Gordon 1994).

But political-economic events of the early 1970s coincided with the disintegration of the welfare states and the advent of an era of neoliberalization (Harvey 2005; Endnotes & Benanav 2010). Neoliberalization involves the variegated global implementation of neoliberalism, which “combines a commitment to the extension of markets and logics of competitiveness with a profound antipathy to all kinds of Keynesian and/or collectivist strategies. The constitution and extension of competitive forces is married with aggressive forms of state downsizing, austerity financing, and public-service ‘reform’” (Peck & Tickell 2002, 381). This restructuring of public policy coincided with the rise of “post-Fordist” production-consumption structures, characterized by the expansion of the low-wage service sector, the growth of information-technology, and shorter-term, more flexible employment patterns (Fraser 2013; McDowell 2013).

These interconnected political and economic restructurings have meant the increasing privatization of care under neoliberalism (Clarke 2004; Lawson 2007; Nakano Glenn 2010). Former “welfare states” have cut their provisions of welfare, healthcare, education and other forms of collectivized care, promoting market-based strategies instead (Hall et al 2013; Harvey 2005). The rise of post-Fordist structures of production, exchange and accumulation whereby corporations are subject to heightened global competition has meant the retrenchment of benefits that had been provided by employers at a much higher rate during the Fordist era (Lawson 2007).

Under neoliberal capitalism and the rollback of the state provision of services, the privatization of care into the home and the market has led to its further marginalization and devaluation, and the unevenness of its distribution has intensified (Clarke 2004; Lawson 2007; Nakano Glenn 2010). The ability of the population to reproduce ourselves increasingly depends upon our own individual access to material wealth. Childcare is structurally inaccessible in the United States, with severely limited forms of public childcare and no federal parental leave policy (England 1996; Douglas & Michaels 2004), and is increasingly privatized in other rich countries as well (Fraser 2013; McDowell 2013).

The pressures of market processes on childcare decisions in the context of neoliberalization are sometimes a topic of mompreneur discourse, and they certainly shape its context. The founder of the mompreneur-oriented crowdfunding platform “Mums Mean Business,” Babou Olengha-Aaby, says in her 2014 Pecha Kucha talk that the rising cost of childcare is the fourth main reason why moms are turning to entrepreneurship. One article on mompreneurship cited the fact that online childcare provision platforms indicated a 19% rise in the cost of childcare in the U.K. between 2012 and 2013, including a 25% increase in the cost of hiring a nanny (Christie 2014).

These patterns are effects of the neoliberal restructuring of care, whereby even as market solutions to the provision of public services become more common, households must choose between working and paying, working and finding another way, and giving up work to provide care themselves. This structural context highlights the elitism of intensive mothering. Marketized childcare services are sharply differentiated, with high-energy, resource-intensive, low caregiver-to-child-ratio programs costing the most and publicly-subsidized, lower-resourced programs or alternative arrangements becoming the only available options for those who cannot pay more

(Douglas & Michaels 2004). In fact, the more expensive options include one parent (overwhelmingly the mother) giving up paid work in order to “stay home” with the children- or adopting some flexible employment strategy that allows them to provide the majority of care (Gonzalez 2012).

The “dilemma” at the core of the mompreneurship discourse thereby narrates a true material problem in an ideologically-distorted way, posing it as a choice to be decided privately by individual mothers. This construction reinforces the common sense of care-as-private. The “dilemma” of the mompreneur serves to demarcate the realm of possibility for solutions to a structural care crisis in a moment of extreme retrenchment of the public provision of care.

It also, alongside popularized “feminist” debates between elite figures like Cheryl Sandburg and Anne-Marie Slaughter, focuses attention on childcare at the exclusion of all other forms of care. As Evelyn Nakano Glenn points out, “the fastest-growing aspect of the [“work-family] conflict” is engendered by elder care responsibilities,” citing the fact that the average couple in the U.S. now has more parents living (over two) than children (less than two), and that “women now spend more years providing care for elderly parents (18) than for dependent children (17)” (2010, 2). The formation of a normative ideal, and the narration of the problems that are relevant to that ideal, as in the case of childcare and the mompreneur, can therefore govern practices that are separate from and not even mentioned by that narrative. The marginalization that results from the privatization of care in general, is invisibilized in the discourse of the mompreneur; and through this, deepened (Nakano Glenn 2010; Tronto 1993).

The discursive move of romanticizing and structurally separating the biological mother-child relationship therefore presupposes and reproduces the privatization of care. Its emphasis and its silences reify gendered responsibilities for care, nullifying private male responsibility for

childcare alongside public responsibility. It also ultimately reinscribes the division between productive and reproductive labor in a new way, reproducing the devaluation of social reproduction and furthering the “super-exploitation” of unwaged work upon which capitalist surplus-value production depends (Mies 1986), while also suggesting that it is desirable for individual elite women to evade the sacrifices involved in such a surrender to status obligations. The feminine subjectivity produced through the mompreneur discourse thereby upholds the “common sense” of care-as-private, and reinforces the devaluation of care work.

The mompreneur, work-at-home-moms, and techno-utopian postfeminism

The mompreneur appears at a particular conjuncture in which care is increasingly relegated to the private realm, and in which digital technologies play an increasingly important role in constructing what some refer to as the “knowledge economy.” The knowledge economy is characterized by post-Fordist flexible employment structures and the increased flow of information through the proliferation of digital technologies. I argue that this context is justified through the pseudo-feminist ideology espoused by much of the mompreneur discourse as well as complementary discourses on the “new economy” and flexible work patterns (Benkler 2006; McDowell 2008). In the following section, I describe this ideology, which I call “techno-utopian postfeminism,” how it is constructed in the mompreneur discourse, and how that discourse relates to broader narratives in the following section.

The mompreneur as multi-tasking supermom

The mompreneur is presented as not just an excellent mother, but a highly-productive yet over-extended supermom, as in the following typical quote: “But when you're an entrepreneur, there's no such thing as use it or lose it vacation time. Being an entrepreneur is pretty much a

24/7 job. Add being a mother into the mix, you've got another 24/7 job on your plate (O'Brien 2014)." At the same time, mompreneurship as a structure is claimed to embody the possibility of balance, contentment, and inner peace. Often it is yet another form of brilliance and superiority that allows the mompreneur, filled with both zealous innovative passion and motherly love, to work hard, efficiently and effectively, and to constantly maintain a state of calm happiness at the same time. The mompreneur quoted above continues: "Burnout can happen to any of us, super moms and successful entrepreneurs are not immune. I teach how to prevent this kind of stuff on a daily basis. I've simplified my life down to be filled with 100% meaningful and purposeful people, tasks, events, etc" (O'Brien 2014). The impossibility of this confluence is thus a common theme, and supposedly ameliorated by the proliferation of advice-oriented articles, blog entries, coaches and lists of "tips" on the topic of achieving "balance" as a mompreneur. Advice lists may be the most common category of online articles on mompreneurship, containing suggestions like "Affirm Your Success" (Patrice 2015), "Include your kids where possible" (Druxman 2010), and "Find inspiration at home" (Palmer 2014).

Mompreneurs and digital technology

But this impossible figure of the perfect mother merged with the brilliant, successful entrepreneur depends on more than lists of tips. She is realized only through the intervention of a magical mediator: digital technologies. Every artifact that I reviewed relating to mompreneurship featured digital technology as a primary actor in the story of the mompreneur problematic. Technology figures as central not only in allowing mothers to squeeze "productive" time into tiny increments between the performance of intensive mothering, but also in networking mompreneurs to, for example, other mothers who work from home, and potential funders.



Figure 2d, from the MoolaHoop (mompreneur-only crowdfunding platform) blog

Many if not most images associated with the mompreneur feature digital technology as a main character- 46 out of 50 of the first images that show the mompreneur figure in a Google Image Search of “mompreneur” depict a mother using a mobile phone, laptop computer, tablet, and/or (more rarely) desktop computer, often simultaneously. Figure 2d shows how the focus on celebrating digital technology blurs the lines between the mompreneurs’ status as producer and consumer, inviting her to use apps (and making sure we remember how feminine it is to do so too). Praising the consumption of technology and personalizing it to the needs of motherhood is perhaps the most obvious way that the mompreneur discourse helps to construct consensus around technological advance, in its clearest commercial functions. In an interview with Randi Zuckerberg, Mark Zuckerberg’s mompreneur sister, *Entrepreneur* magazine asks her, “You recently welcomed a second child to your family. Congratulations! What apps and tech do you lean on two make your life a little easier?” to which she responds “Luckily, behind every great parent are a whole bunch of great apps and gadgets. A few of our favorites include....” (Shandrow 2014).

But much of the celebration of technology in mompreneur discourse operates at a more subtle level than this. In the narrative that sees the proliferation of ICTs as contributing to broader economic restructuring, digital technologies reshape fundamental structures of the mode of production and exchange. All steps of the business practice are improved by digital technology, from raising the startup capital to go into business, to being able to manage the globalized industrial production of their products, to marketing a product for sale (Costin 2011). These improvements apply to all businesses, but they have particular meaning in the discourse of mompreneurship, because they allow for liberation from geography and thereby the spatial public-private divide, and also from the discriminatory world of banks and venture capital (Bosse & Taylor 2012; Brush et al 2014; Stengel 2015). Broader techno-utopian discourses tend to pose technologically-enabled flexible employment patterns as especially relevant for discussions of gender (Caminiti 2014; Marom et al 2014; Overly 2013; SSTI 2014).

Techno-utopian (post)feminism: below and beyond liberal feminism

Some of this celebratory discourse hinges on challenging liberal feminism. It does this by contrasting the “new”ness of technologically-enabled structures with older structures of employment, which (neo)liberal feminists are naïve enough to think can be consistent with (gendered) caregiving structures. In this way, the discourse echoes radical feminist critiques of capitalism that pointed out that when structured to be gender-blind, the market would always necessarily reproduce gender inequality because of the continuation of gender as a social reality (Gonzalez 2012; Sokoloff 1980). However, the central differences between this discourse and radical feminist theory are (1) its failure to critique gendered status obligations, assuming the mother’s role as primary caregiver to be natural, inevitable, and for the best; and (2) its conclusion that only *older* forms of capitalism were incompatible with gender inequality, and

that digital technology in relation to economic restructuring in itself negates the status of gender as a power relation. For these reasons, I classify this pseudo-feminism as “techno-utopian postfeminism.”

The role of digital technologies in solving the “dilemma”, the mompreneur problematic, is a central actor not only in mompreneurship, but broader discourses on “working mothers.” In this Canadian Broadcasting Company radio interview about “Working moms,” former editor of the *Washington Post* and *Huffington Post* Katharine Zaleski’s analysis starts off echoing feminist critiques of capitalism. But as she continues she transitions toward techno-utopian postfeminism, suggesting that technological progress is fixing the discriminatory tendencies of the economic system on its own:

Why do men, at least in the United States, statistically they make more money when they talk about their children. And women don’t...Women feel like ‘even though I am working my butt off here, maybe they don’t want me, I mean I’m never going to ascend because they’re really evaluating me on the fact that I can go to more closing dinners.’ So I mean that’s really, you’re never, women are always going to be unable to compete. Same with single fathers, same with people that are caregivers, I mean, we really need to reimagine the way that work is essentially done especially in this age where we can communicate so seamlessly across borders, through Google docs, through different tools. I mean, the workforce was set up hundreds of years ago essentially for men to leave the home every day, get away from their families and just focus on work. It doesn’t work that way anymore....yes, [I have optimism that we can change the way the workforce is], because my numbers are very U.S.-based, but statistically if you

look at what's happening at least in the U.S. something like 40% of the population is moving towards remote work in the next couple of years and 92% of millennials want to work remotely. The other thing is, you know, as a new company you're really making a mistake if you don't hire remotely. Here in New York, it's very hard to find developers for example. And it's not only very hard, they're very, very expensive because they live in New York. We now live in a global economy, or we live in an economy too, where I can hire a great woman in Austin, Texas, to build our IOS app, and pay her incredibly competitive rates, but I'm not competing over the five people in downtown New York that everybody wants. Furthermore, she's happier, she's working from her home, she can see her family. We actually do have a woman like this who works for Hearst Corporation. She gets to come up once a month but she's got three girls in Austin and it's a great arrangement for her. And so, yeah it's the way of the future (CBC 2015).

In the interview, Zaleski and the CBC host go on to discuss the way that technological advances in the past "10 years" have enabled a work structure that is mutually beneficial for women as well as business. For example, Zaleski says at one point that being evaluated by "face time" "doesn't work for one half of the population."

This broader conversation, which never mentions the term "mompreneur," is consistent with the ideological assumptions underpinning the discourse of mompreneurship. Its messages are often promoted in mompreneurial webspace, as in the retweet shown in Image 2e. And it is elaborated in blogs and articles about mompreneurship as well, often represented as undermining masculinist value systems. Prominent mompreneur Lisa Cash Hanson blogs, "I also realized that I had a lot of friends asking why I wasn't at this event or that conference. The Truth? I'd rather

spend time with my 3 year old playing catch, than to miss these precious years with her being on a plane non-stop”(Hanson 2015). Several “-emic” codes in my discourse analysis involved themes of economic restructuring, referring to a “new economy” in which at least some businesses were structured around the provision of care.

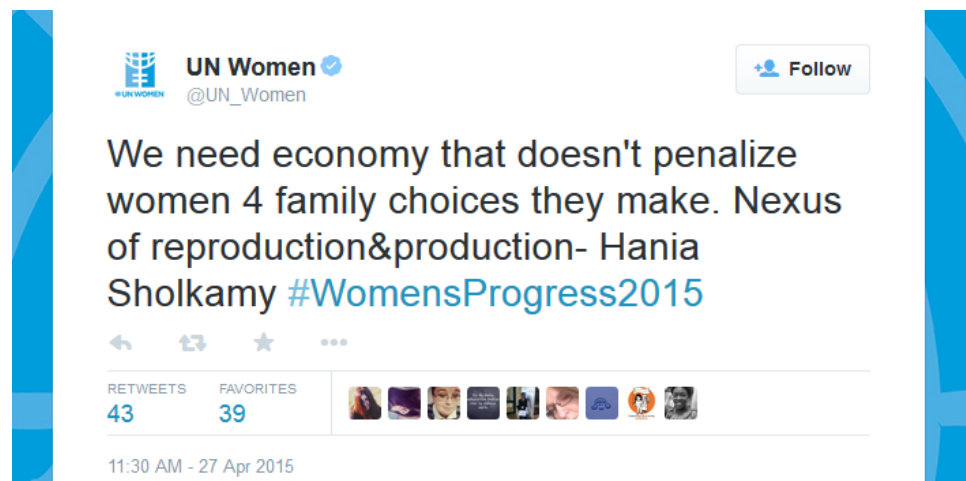


Image 2e, retweeted by @momprenneurLatAm

The discourse, in its claim that capitalist markets are inherently gendered, takes on some of the ethical and emotional persuasive power of classical feminist critique. It is distinguished as “techno-utopian” in its references to mutually (even universally) beneficial economic restructuring and radically different, more egalitarian and efficient iterations of capitalism, which fall into step with a broader discourse on the effects of “disruptive” technologies (Benkler 2006; McDowell 2008). But its critiques of older forms of capitalism obscure the privatization and marginalization of care under contemporary capitalism, and frame gender inequality in a way that obscures the devaluation of labor and the reproduction of gender. As such, it is a form of postfeminism, lacking analysis of gender as a relation of power (Curthoys 1997; McRobbie 2004).

Chapter 3: Entrepreneurship and capitalist crisis

As discussed in Chapter 2, entrepreneurship in the mompreneur discourse is represented as a path to fulfillment in the public sphere. But, the mompreneur is distinct from the WAHM (work-at-home mom) in her role as not only a worker, but an enterprising, creative, entrepreneur: someone who starts, owns and runs their own for-profit business.

A multidimensional continuum of value is encapsulated in the discourse, where working in the “public sphere” is valued as “work” in the masculine, marketized sense, at a different level from reproductive caring labor in the home. Beyond that distinction, entrepreneurship, too, is valued differently compared with waged work. This continuum is cryptically represented in the graphic at the bottom of Figure 2a from Chapter 2, zoomed in below:



Image 3a, from Image 2a from Pinterest

A mother produces value through love, symbolized by the heart, a value defined in the realm of moral and spiritual. A working mother produces masculinist value in the mind, as well as the heart- I take the lightbulb to symbolize the production of value in the realm of logic and reason, and intellectual stimulation. The distinction between the two boxes correlates to masculine-feminine binaries of reason and emotion (Curthoys 1997; Nakano Glenn 2010). And finally, a working *mompreneur* produces value in the heart, in the individual mind, and for the collective: I take the image of the globe to symbolize the idea of world-changing action. This image depicts an ontology that takes capitalism for-granted as the only possible (economic) system. It exemplifies the ways in which the mompreneur discourse and movement does more

than reify the public-private divide, but also adopts a neoliberal ideology regarding social transformation.

In this chapter, I situate the mompreneur discourse's version(s) of entrepreneurship within neoliberalism and techno-utopian discourse on economic restructuring. The entrepreneurial subject has always been important in liberal and neoliberal ideology, but it undergoes some shape-shifting in discourses that envision the "disruption" engendered by the technology sector and the so-called "sharing economy" (Benkler 2006; McDowell 2008; Ritzer & Jurgenson 2010; Schor 2014). I then examine the political-economic context of the mompreneur-as-discursive figure within a feminist historical materialist approach, situating her and the economic practices to which she is linked within a broader context of capitalist over-accumulation crisis. I develop the argument that the restructuring of capital and care in the United States fulfill a structural function in absorbing surplus capital and surplus population (Endnotes 2013a; Endnotes & Benenav 2010; Harvey 1985; Mandel 1975). In this context, the mompreneur as an aspirational discursive figure signals the appeasement of surplus population that increasingly includes the ranks of the elite, and points to the intensification of gender and capital as mutually constitutive relations (Endnotes 2013b; Gonzalez 2012; McDowell 2008; Mies 1986).

Business-starters in the discourse of the mompreneur

The discourse of the mompreneur presents thematically consistent narratives about businesses, entrepreneurship, and the economic system. In the following sections I describe how the discourse narrates entrepreneurial subjectivity and business-starting.

The mompreneur's motivation: passion and fulfillment, and better products

Economic security is rarely cited as the central motivation for pursuing entrepreneurship, but rather a sense of emotional or spiritual fulfillment that is said to accompany the pursuit of career goals. A secondary motivation is also often cited, one of producing better products and/or services for other mothers. The market is taken-for-granted as the means of providing these goods and services. What is made invisible in the emphasis on these motivations is the fact that the businesses are started in contexts where the needs for care are materially secured, often by explicit or implied partnership with a male breadwinner. These stories ignore the financial insecurity of many would-be mompreneurs, whose precarity was rising simultaneously along with the mompreneur discourse in the years immediately following the financial crisis of 2007-2008 (Fisher 2012; Roberts 2012).

Advice lists for mompreneurs typically feature “find your passion” as a prominent tip, suggesting things like “No matter what kind of business you decide to start, it's important that you're pursuing it because it's fulfilling and you're passionate about it” (Fallon 2013), or “Find your passion. Starting a business isn't easy, but neither is parenting. Find something you love, so when the going gets tough, your passion for it will keep you going” (Druxman 2010). And the results of a survey of mompreneurs published in *Business News Daily* celebrated the fact that “nearly three-quarters of ‘mompreneurs’ would still want to work if money weren't an issue” (Fallon 2014). Narrating this statistic, a commentator said that “Many of the mothers we spoke to found that running their own business provides a much-needed sense of balance between their identities as a mom and as an adult professional” (Fallon 2014). These sentiments present an extreme vision of entrepreneurship, as in Image 3b, that it is so fulfilling and rewarding that it is easy to lose all awareness of its economic role at all.

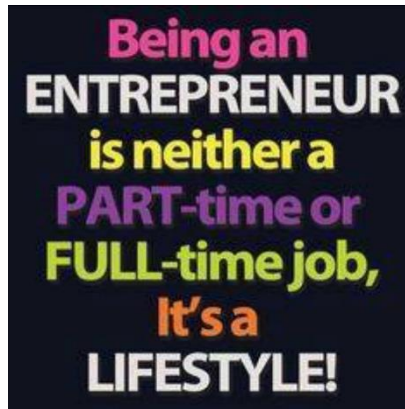


Image 3b, Pinterest board, "S.H.E. is a Mompreneur"

If mompreneurs aren't starting a business to fulfill their career ambitions, they are usually represented as solving a problem through initiating the production and distribution of a good or service. Take, for example, the title of a *New York Times* article about mompreneurship, "If These Moms Can't Find It, They Invent It" (Laporte 2011), or this introduction to one in the *Wall Street Journal*: "When these women saw a need for healthier children's fare, they decided to become entrepreneurs" (Buss 2010). This narrative about entrepreneurship takes the capitalist mode of production to be the primary mode of governance, with markets as the taken-for-granted means of allocating resources to meet peoples' needs. The narrative of new-goods-as-solutions forecloses other realms of possibility and positions new products and commodified services as unquestionably good goods whose existence in the world are indisputably for the better.

Mompreneurial enterprises

Articles, blogs and websites feature a wide range of examples of mompreneurial enterprises. Many of the businesses that mothers start in the celebratory accounts of "mompreneurship" published in the media or in mompreneurial webspace are directly linked to motherhood. In fact, several mompreneur bloggers or other commentators on mompreneurship

specify that their very definition of mompreneurship involves businesses that are somehow related to raising children. The examples here are endless: “Zoobean,” the online resource that helps parents find the best books and other learning tools for their kids. “The Honest Company” started by Jessica Alba, a line of eco-friendly, non-toxic but colorful baby products. “BoogieWipes,” tissues moistened with saline, designed for children. “Baby Loves Disco,” a national tour of kid-friendly dance parties. “NurturMe” a line of dried baby food that can be rehydrated with water, milk, breastmilk, any liquid. The “BeBand” for helping clothes fit during and immediately after pregnancy. “Princess Awesome,” a clothing line for girls that provides alternatives to traditionally "girly" prints.

There seems to be nothing “new” about the denser marketization that these various enterprises might represent, producing a greater number and variety of products and services to choose from, all mediated by markets. But the common enabler to these specialized goods and services is digital technology; in the stories of these startups, the Internet is an essential factor for mothers in a variety of aspects of entrepreneurship. These may include to various degrees depending on the case: being empowered to pursue the idea, acquiring the appropriate information to know the product would be relevant (R&D), acquiring funding, being able to manage the globalized industrial production of their products, marketing the product for sale, and networking with potential relationships for expansion.

Another level of business formations relating to mompreneurship are those that support “mompreneurship” themselves. There is a wide array of companies like “Bizymoms,” a website where you can chat with other mompreneurs, get business ideas, browse an e-book store, and read articles. “M.O.M.- Motivating Other Moms,” is an online space dedicated to providing “a safe and secure environment where they are surrounded by other entrepreneurial moms that are

supportive and understanding of the struggles that come with being a mompreneur.” “Mommy Millionaire” is an online business coaching community. “Mom Invented,” sells products online and gives advice to mothers who are inventors. “Home-Based Working Moms” is a support network for moms who own businesses in Spring, Texas. “My Work Butterfly” offers interviews with celebrity entrepreneurial moms, as well as information and resources in other formats. “Mompreneurs Online” features a forum, articles, live chat, blog and marketplace. “Power to Fly,” is a company that helps connect women with jobs that lead to work-life balance. These networks are typically featured in stories about mompreneurs *as* mompreneurial enterprises themselves; their existence is the founders’ ticket to “work-life balance.” Some of these networks charge membership fees, while others hold conferences for which they charge fees. However, most of these online support spaces are not obviously monetized.

Coaching services are another story- to a certain extent. In my survey of mompreneurial webspace, I encountered dozens of women who market themselves as “coaches” for, variously, “moms,” “modern moms,” “working moms,” or “entrepreneurial moms.” These individualized services are enabled by the flow of information and communication mediated by digital technology. Maria Bailey is described as a “business consultant, author and a leading authority on all things “mom.” Nicole Orozco’s massive webspace “Mompreneur Media” is centered around her billable services as a coach. And the website “MOMentity” is run by “coach” Nicole Carpenter, who beckons you to “find balance between life, motherhood, and your identity.”

What I refer to as “mompreneurial ecosystems” are an even higher level of business formation relating to mompreneurship. In their promotional texts, these platforms claim to utilize the Internet, in particular the Web 2.0 and its peer-to-peer capacity, in order to cultivate not only individual businesses or even individual marketplaces, but entire “ecosystems” or “supportive

communities.” The logic behind the language of ecosystem is that businesses need a variety of supportive systems to grow and thrive, and that they may only be able to survive in environments particular to their kind (Mums Mean Business 2015). Other enterprises, including some of those listed above, use the more direct language of building a “supportive community” for women- and mother-led businesses, but rely on a similar logic of using the Web 2.0 to craft economic and social conditions that destroy traditional discriminatory dynamics (Mompreneur Media 2015). There is a distinction between those enterprises that utilize webspace to facilitate interaction, through blogging, articles, web chats and forums- and those that enact a more concretely market activity, the most obvious example being crowdfinance platforms. However, purely support space enterprises are nevertheless clearly and constitutively connected to market activity- either by featuring “marketplaces” where visitors can shop online, or even more ubiquitously, through their selling of adspace on the webpages that boast high traffic (Piersall 2007).

Entrepreneurship and social transformation

But the discourse of mompreneurship doesn't stop at praising the use and effectiveness of its enterprises. Many champions of mompreneurship, and the services, networks, organizations or companies that support it, appeal to broader narratives that see entrepreneurship as socially transformative, deflecting attention from the for-profit nature of the economic relations produced. For example, in her 2014 Pecha Kucha talk, Babou Olengha-Aaby, founder of “Mums Mean Business,” a crowdfunding platform geared specifically toward mompreneurs, claims that “What it means to all of us to invest in a mompreneur, is that when we're investing in a woman, we're investing in better business and business for the better. And when we invest in a mother, we're actually investing in future generations, in the well-being of future generations. And when we're investing in an entrepreneur, we're investing in the realm of hope and possibility.” In this

discourse “mothers” are framed within naturalizing, heteropatriarchal ideologies about parenting, and entrepreneurship is strongly linked to visions of societal progress.



Images 3c and 3d, from the “Raising the Next Billion Campaign” album on the Mums Mean Business Facebook page

Patty Lennon, mompreneur coach and creator of the “Mom Gets a Life Conference” appeals to similar “common sense” narratives in explaining the broader purpose of her work on the “About” page of her website, saying “**Our world needs change.** Our children deserve a place filled with peace and love. And **I believe at the very center of my being that women entrepreneurs will create that change.** But that will only happen when our businesses thrive and are financially successful” (Lennon 2015, emphasis in original).

This vision of the entrepreneurship of mothers leading to social transformation is also indicated in the ubiquitous use of the term “movement” to describe the supposed trend toward mompreneurship. The homepage of “Mompreneur Media” encourages you to “Join the Community and Become a Part of the Movement.” In what sort of ideological context can the starting up of online businesses by mothers caring for their children in their homes be seen as a “movement”?

Context of “entrepreneurship”

The concept of “entrepreneurship” emerges into an ideological landscape shaped by neoliberalism. Doreen Massey theorizes the neoliberal ideological context in which “this vocabulary of customer, consumer, choice, markets and self-interest molds both our conception of ourselves and our understanding of and relationship to the world. These ‘descriptions’ of roles, exchanges and relationships in terms of a presumption that individual choice and self-interest does and should prevail are in fact not simply descriptions but a powerful means by which new subjectivities are constructed and enforced” (Massey 2013). The formation of subjectivities through power relations iterated through discourse (Foucault), ideology (Althusser) or common sense (Gramsci), all referenced by Massey, is thus an important dimension of my analysis of the mompreneur-as-aspirational norm. Pratt’s framework of discourse as socio-spatial circuits allows us to conceive as discursive processes as always already material (Wright 2006).

All of these aspects of neoliberal subjectivity mentioned by Massey- customer, consumer, and so on- are encompassed within two major aspects of normative subjectivities under neoliberalism: personal responsibility and entrepreneurialism (Joseph 2014). Joseph examines the production of gender in relation to entrepreneurial subjectivity, with a particular focus on financial management, finding that gendered norms around financial management “are deployed

... as a pedagogy of 'entrepreneurial' subjectivity,” whereby “stories about women's financial pathologies mark the boundaries of the normative ideal for all” (xii). In this analysis, entrepreneurial subject formation is never complete- it is an ongoing process, mediated by uneven social and political landscapes and complex practices that also open up opportunities for disruption (Gibson-Graham 2008; Joseph 2014). There is no perfect entrepreneurial subject just as there is no perfect revolutionary subject. But, normative entrepreneurial subjectivities are co-constituted with the neoliberal, financialized, socio-economic relations of their contexts.

I bring the discourse of mompreneurship to this theorization of gender in relation to entrepreneurial subjectivity formation. In this, I assume that stories about women's characteristics with respect to flexibilized, technologically-enabled entrepreneurship “mark the boundaries of the normative ideal for all” within this anglophone techno-utopian discursive context. But before delving into a historical materialist analysis of the co-constitutive socio-economic relations of the mompreneur, I situate her narrative within more sprawling stories about global capitalism.

Economic restructuring in the discourse of the mompreneur

These references to mutually (even universally) beneficial economic restructuring and radically different, more egalitarian and efficient iterations of capitalism fall into step with broader techno-utopian discourses on economic restructuring (Benkler 2006; Rifkin 2014). These discourses find traction when they take on the claims of “techno-utopian postfeminism” in theorizing the dissolution of uneven power relations (McDowell 2008). When applied to tech-enabled women's entrepreneurship and flexible employment, this means that the renegotiation of unpaid care and income-earning responsibilities is seen to be especially beneficial for women,

who are assumed to be the “natural” primary providers of unpaid care work (CBC 2015; James 2008; McDowell 2008; McDowell 2013).

Mompreneurship discourse often embraces language of a “new” economy, also referenced in Chapter 2, in which (privatized) care is at the center of employment and even production structures. Take this example of a business highlighted in *Entrepreneur*, run by mompreneur Lisa Druxman:

My business, Stroller Strides, is run by moms for moms. Our franchisees are predominantly moms who have a passion for fitness and motherhood. But more than anything, they are moms who want to have careers that are supportive of motherhood. They want careers where it's OK to say that family is first. Our franchisees tell us they average no more than a few hours of work per day and, during most of those hours, they work at home or have the baby in tow. For all these reasons, we are one of the fastest-growing franchises in the country year after year. Other businesses should consider employing this strategy. Our rocket-fueled growth proves that women are looking for flexible careers that fit with their family (Druxman 2010).

In sentiments like, “I run my business around my kids” (Mielach 2013), “Their connections to their products and services are palpable—and incredibly personal” (Casserly 2011), and many similar descriptions of mompreneur businesses as structurally different, a new construction of efficiency is promoted. This new business form is made possible through the birth of technologically-enabled, flexible enterprises. This theme resonates with that highlighted at the end of Chapter 2, where this restructuring is connected to a feminist critique of the inherently-gendered market, and the re-valorization of the “private” sphere. But in this section, I

want to underscore the political-economic aspect of this argument that “it’s the way of the future” as in the analysis by Katharine Zaleski discussed on page 58.

Mompreneurship and “the knowledge economy”

By allowing for the construction of so-called “ecosystems” that cultivate mompreneurship, the Internet thereby would represent a solution, internal to capitalism, to capitalism’s most exclusionary practices. “Mompreneurial ecosystems” exhibit patterns that resonate with wider political-economic shifts. These shifts are often categorized as characteristics of the so-called “knowledge economy” or “cognitive capitalism” in revisions of critical political-economy’s analysis of post-Fordism (Benkler 2006; Kolođlugil 2015; McDowell 2008). There is a general consensus that there is “added value” from the productivity gains that emerge from increased information and technological progress (Rifkin 2014; Singer 2014; Slee 2015). The way that this value flows into and transforms capitalism and its co-constitutive systems of power is more debated (Evans 2013; Kessler 2014; Lobo 2014; McDowell 2008). Some commentators think that these patterns signify the structural transformation of the political-economic system, and some even see glimmers of an egalitarian utopia in the abundance of shared information that digital technologies usher in (Jourdan 2012; Peace Pirates 2013; Rifkin 2014).

This picture of dynamic, flexibly-structured businesses thriving in a “new economy” is envisioned in a range of contemporary techno-optimist neoliberal ideologies. In the following sections, I outline how they are constructed with respect to the growth of the technology sector, the “disruptive” effects of digital technology in established industries, and the technologically-enabled market relations referred to as “the sharing economy” (Schor 2014; Singer 2014).

Techno-utopian accounts of the tech industry and “disruption”

The tech-led economy is sometimes seen as destroying entrenched power relations that have thus far tarnished capitalism’s potential to be an equitable system. In this account, technology allows for more equitable, beneficial economic structures, and the technology sector itself prefigures a just, “creative” form of capitalism within its bounds.

This supposed democratization of capitalism occurs through the widespread adoption of digital technologies, which enable a reciprocal relation amongst actors, further blurring distinctions between producers, consumers and investors (Humphreys & Grayson 2008). In this discourse, economic restructuring is represented as a “shift to digital” or a set of “disruptive forces” acting upon industry (King 2013). This language implies disembodied causality, naturalizing the process and obscuring the structural, institutional and individual actors who make it happen. The so-called “shift to digital” is represented as infiltrating all public and private sectors as a disembodied force, sweeping in and transforming the terms of existing social and economic relations (King 2013; Leimer 2013; Park 2012; Shaikh 2012). This “disruption” is partially embodied by the encroachment of tech companies into economic activities previously dominated by non-digital modes of production and distribution. The increasing dominance of tech “giants” is demonstrated with information like the fact that Amazon currently sells half of the books and over half of the e-books sold in the United States, or that Facebook claims to work with 1.3 billion active members (“Everybody wants” 2014).

The techno-utopian assumptions behind this narrative have broad appeal, and can be demonstrated in examples like *The Economist* magazine’s discussion of Google’s concentrated market share. 68% of online searches in the U.S. and over 90% in Europe are performed through Google (“Everybody wants” 2014). When the European Parliament passed a resolution targeting

its market power, *The Economist* criticized the vote in a moralistic appeal to technology-as-progress: “Instead of attacking successful American companies, Europe’s leaders should ask themselves why their continent has not produced a Google or a Facebook. Opening up the EU’s digital services market would do more to create one than protecting local incumbents” (“Should digital” 2014). In a separate article the editors suggest that treating Internet monopolies like “regular” monopolies could harm “innovation and growth.” They theorize: “Something about the Internet clearly favors such mushrooming quasi-monopolies. But rather than being a regrettable by-product of internet commerce and in need of strict oversight, might they instead be an integral part of what makes it so prone to rapid growth and life-improving innovation- not a bug, as the phrase has it, but a feature?” (“Everybody wants” 2014). They quote Peter Thiel, a founder of PayPal, as arguing that tech sector monopolies “add entirely new categories of abundance to the world.” These arguments resonate with neoliberal techno-utopian narratives that the Internet fundamentally transforms laws of production and exchange (Benkler 2006; Cowen 2013; Rifkin 2014).

Disruption and fintech

Representations of technological “disruption” almost always rely upon a juxtaposition of new and old paradigms. Fintech, the financial technology sector which includes crowdfinance, represents a helpful case for understanding this discourse as it applied to the disruption of an industry. The description of this “disruption” within celebratory discourse of fintech are elaborated along recurring themes: efficiency and friction, the role of profit, a different business model, the obfuscation of complexity, and the role of the consumer. These themes represent the narration of technological disruption more broadly, but here I draw on examples specifically pertaining to fintech.

In these discourses, the old paradigm of finance is slow, inefficient and “friction”-full. “Friction” in services is created through the imperfect “physical distribution of a physical product” in physical space (King 2013). Friction is produced when customers have to physically travel to distant locations in order to conduct transactions. In the new paradigm, digital technology allows the provision of fast, seamless, efficient service. It eliminates friction that the consumer- a particular type of consumer, it is often specified- cannot tolerate. “As soon as someone can figure out a way to get rid of that friction, the physical distribution model is indefensible,” because “there is a new generation of customers that will represent half of the retail banking population by 2020 who want to do banking in the simplest, most efficient way. And if you tell those Y-gen and digital natives that they’ve got to come in the branch and sign a piece of paper, that’s not a value-add anymore. It’s just friction” (King 2013). Pressure is applied to businesses to adapt to the preferences of consumers increasingly accustomed to quick, efficient, and free services. This theme is widespread in visions on the future of finance and crowdfunding and its disruptive effects: “So how will crowdfunding affect venture capital? Through the process of disintermediation, or removing the middleman, because smart money, like innovation, abhors friction” (Meyer 2013).

The role of profit-making in the new paradigm is often obscured in popular representations, either by complete omission or through implied contrast to the existing profitable, “predatory” industry (Leimer 2013; Park 2012; Shaikh 2012). The economic relations undertaken by consumers and providers, mediated through digital technologies are unclear, and highlight the “consumer experience” at the expense of the clarification of relations of economic production or exchange (“Everybody wants” 2014). Processes of capital accumulation are obscured in fintech outside discursive representations as well, in the everyday user-friendly

encounters experienced by consumers- costs to consumers for these services are typically much lower than in non-digitized forms of service (“Everybody wants” 2014). For example, the fact that Google is free to consumers has protected it in many anti-trust allegations.

The old and new paradigms of finance are also described as based upon fundamentally different business models. The current financial system is structured hierarchically: it is made up of large, vertically-integrated corporations. The corporate structure is not only hierarchical, but (again) inefficient and bureaucratic. It is slow in the provision of services but more importantly, slow to respond to innovation (Park 2012; Shaikh 2012). The new, fintech paradigm operates through highly-specialized, horizontally-disaggregated business models. In one account published by Venture Beat, “The banks are creaking under the weight of old legacy systems. They just can’t evolve fast enough alone; they need to collaborate with and buy into fintech companies in order to successfully compete in the new digital landscapes” (Gesess 2014). A system that operates with these flexible, horizontally-disaggregated firms at its base is seen as fundamentally destabilizing the entrenched nature of the existing financial system.

Information plays a crucial role in the differentiation between old and new paradigms of finance as well. Celebrations of fintech often claim that the industry shines a light on the previously opaque and inaccessible world of finance. In this account the financial system is complex, and financial corporations and service providers actively exploit the consumer’s lack of technical financial knowledge (Leimer 2014; Park 2012). However, in the same breath critics also praise fintech for hiding the “messy underbelly” of banking (Leimer 2014). Fintech leaders describe their ambition to produce the “Apple model of finance,” which covers up the complexity of financial service provision and delivers a user-friendly experience described as “intuitive” and “beautiful” (Park 2012).

Within this narrative about old and new paradigms, consumer choice is the catalyst which shifts the industry between them. The account goes that the shift to digital in the wider economy changes consumer behavior, and it is consumer behavior to which market forces in the financial sector respond (King 2013; Leimer 2013). “Consumer behavior is the killer app when it comes to business disruption (King 2013).” So in this framing, everything becomes about consumer preferences and decisions. In this discourse, the boundaries which define “consumers,” “producers,” “entrepreneurs” and other economic agents are becoming increasingly blurred (Humphreys & Grayson 2008; Ritzer & Jurgenson 2010).

Crowdsourcing, the Web 2.0, and the broader structures of the new “knowledge economy” seem to allow the common consumer to win out over powerful corporations on the basis of sheer talent and innovation. This is because digitization makes many service provisions a reciprocal relationship. This happens by tapping into the “wisdom of the crowd” to leverage accurate information (Benkler 2006; Park 2012). Crowdsourced investment advice, risk management, and product designs are becoming more common and are celebrated as more accurate and effective than traditionally-managed services. For example, on StockTwits, investors can tap into the “crowd” of internet users for portfolio advice. And Estimote, an earning protections crowdsourcing application, has found that none of their top 20 estimates come from investment banking experts: all are filled by Internet users who are members of “the crowd” (Shaikh 2012). The consumer plays the role of the ultimate relatable (capitalist) subject in this narrative, with whom every “common person” can identify (Massey 2013). The discourse is clearly speaking to an audience who is presumed to identify less with a subjectivity as “worker” and more with one as “consumer.”

These narratives on technological disruption converge to paint a vision of a radically egalitarian, efficient and meritocratic economy. Another more specific narrative of economic change refers to “the sharing economy.”

Techno-utopian accounts of “the sharing economy”

Also called the peer-to-peer economy, the mesh economy, the collaborative economy, the access economy, or collaborative consumption, the sharing economy encompasses the assemblage of relations of production, exchange, and consumption, mediated by the Web 2.0, that involve the leveraging of increased information and communication to shape the terms of those relations (Singer 2014; Slee 2015). It is assumed that these patterns improve the transparency of costs involved in the “production” of the goods or services to be exchanged, thereby lowering the price of exchange by “cutting out the middleman” (Meyer 2013). Practices are sometimes brought into the domain of “the sharing economy” from the traditional economy, where production was mediated by formally-organized and regulated companies (as in the case of taxi services to Uber, or hotel services to AirBnB), or are brought in from previously non-commodified spaces of production, as, say, a person’s un-sold skilled labor being put up on “TaskRabbit” to tend gardens or fix furniture (Lobo 2014).

Some celebrants of these changes paint them in the highest revolutionary light, as in “This approach puts the power back with the people” (Peace Pirates 2013), and others praise its socially transformative potential more subtly: “The sharing economy is the response to the legacy economy where we tend to be reliant on resources from outside of our communities, and where the work we do and the purchases we make mostly generate wealth for people outside of our communities. The rich are still getting richer, and the sharing economy can reverse that”

(Orsi 2013). One prominent aspect of the “sharing economy” is the practice of crowdfunding, whereby one can access potential donors or investors through internet platforms.

Crowdfunding platforms

Crowdfunding is the practice of raising money to fund a venture or project from many funders by means of an Internet platform. There are several models of crowdfunding, including donation-based, reward-based, lending, and equity-based platforms. The “rewards” model is currently the most common model for crowdfunding. This type features some rewards in exchange for funds that are otherwise donated by funders. Funders effectively donate the sum of money that they contribute to the funding of a campaign, and usually receive some pre-identified set of rewards related to the project seeking funding in exchange for various levels of donation. Both of the two largest CFP’s in the world in terms of total funds raised and number of projects successfully funded, Kickstarter and Indiegogo, are rewards-based platforms; in fact, this model is sometimes called the “Kickstarter model” (Agrawal et al 2011).

Lending models, also called debt crowdfunding, or most commonly peer-to-peer lending (P2P lending), represent another major category of crowdfunding. Under this model, investors lend any amount, often as low as \$25, which is distributed by the platform amongst multiple loans. Prominent P2P lending company Lending Club caps loans at no more than \$35,000. This diversification is meant to mitigate the risk incurred by lending to unknown borrowers. Some sites also match individual funders to individual borrowers but allow ample information-sharing in order to manage risk (Smith 2014). 54.2% of projects seeking loans through peer-to-peer lending platforms are in the category of business and entrepreneurship, compared with only 12.8% under donation models (James 2014).

Under the equity model, investors fund a project under the understanding that given its success, they will become partial owners (therefore holding equity) in the business or venture seeking funding (NYU Stern 2014). This model has been particularly common in real estate funding and startup funding (James 2014). The legal foundations necessary for equity crowdfunding in the United States were laid in April 2012, when Congress passed the “Jumpstart Our Business Startups” (JOBS) Act, relaxing restrictions on the sale of securities that had been established by the U.S. Securities Act of 1933, which was designed to protect investors (Bradford 2012). Since the passage of the JOBS Act and the subsequent release of necessary SEC regulations concerning various practices regarding advertisement and vetting of investors, equity crowdfunding platforms have launched at various levels of professionalization (Koplovitz 2014; NYU Stern 2014). Since September 2013, Crowdfunder, an equity crowdfunding data-collection platform, has recorded \$482.5 million in capital commitments through ECF, through the top 13 ECF platforms (Crowdfunder 2015).

Ranked by volume of funds, the top ten countries in global crowdfunding are all in North America, Europe, Australia and Japan. 67% of funded projects and 80% of funds raised in the second quarter of 2014 were from the U.S. and the U.K., where success rates for projects seeking funding on CFP’s are roughly double those from other countries (James 2014). Crowdfunding volumes worldwide stood at an estimated \$2.7 billion as of 2012, the majority of that activity being geographically based in North America, which had \$1.6 billion and Europe, which had \$945 million (Massolution 2013). At that same moment, donations- and rewards-based models made up the majority of activity, with \$1.4 billion, while crowdlending made up \$1.2 billion and equity crowdfunding only \$116 million (Massolution 2013).

In general, platforms that are based in donation, rewards, or a combination are much more likely to fund projects focused on social causes, music, films, art, fashion and publishing arts. Models that involve some sort of financial return for funders, either through interest on loans (P2P lending) or ownership of equity, are more likely to facilitate the funding of businesses, real estate, and projects related to energy and environment, information and communication technology, and science and technology (Massolution 2013).

Existing research on CFPs reveals that while 86% of capital came from funders located over 60 miles from those seeking funding, funding still follows patterns of agglomeration, whereby funding continues to flow to traditional financial centers. Although crowdfunding platforms (CFPs) link entrepreneurs to geographically disparate funders, 95% of funds raised on CFPs in 2012 came from Europe and North America. At a city level, the CFP industry reproduces existing financial geographies with some significant exceptions. For example, the top three cities in which successful projects are located include, in order from the top: New York City, Los Angeles, and London (Crowdnetic 2015).

This is especially notable considering that crowdfunding's representation in the media tends to emphasize its redistributive function, with emphasis given to companies like Kiva. Kiva is a platform aimed at poverty-alleviation, which raises donations to be given to entrepreneurs in the Global South. There is also an emphasis on poignant stories relating to social injustice, such as the campaign that raised over \$144, 700 for a Phoenix mother who, homeless at the time, left her two children in her car while she interviewed for a job and was arrested and charged with two felonies (Finnerty 2014). This techno-utopian discourse of social transformation through the equalizing effects of the Web 2.0 also means that CFP's directed toward womens' and/or mothers' entrepreneurship get quite a bit of airtime (Stengel 2015; Vanderbrug 2013).

Feminism, mompreneurship and crowdfunding

The liberal feminist discourse buttressing the crowdfunding industry is gaining momentum. Equity CFP CircleUp recently published research showing that women who start campaigns on their platform have a higher success rate than men (Caminiti 2014; Greenberg & Mollick 2014; Stengel 2015), and studies conducted by Hebrew University, Kauffman Foundation and UC Berkeley that showed similar results for Kickstarter are widely cited in popular media (Caminiti 2014).

However, the underrepresentation of women on equity crowdfunding platforms is widely-documented as well. For every five men using equity crowdfunding to raise money, only one woman is (Brown 2015). These numbers resonate with the bigger picture in traditional venture capital, where 80- 90% of angel investors are men (Brown 2015) and less than 5% of businesses receiving venture capital had women on their teams (Brush et al 2014).

As explained earlier, some founders of crowdfunding platforms have expanded this logic to justify the cultivation of “ecosystems” which are especially hospitable for women-led businesses. For example, MoolaHoop, MsGenuity, Mums Mean Business, Nap Time Startups, and Plum Alley are crowdfunding platforms geared entirely toward women- and/or mother-owned businesses. MsGenuity explains its mission to take advantage of a niche, saying: “MsGenuity is a new generation of crowdfunding where women and moms through their collective efforts can fund, shop and help shape new products and ventures created by anyone.”

This was also the discourse used to promote the highly-publicized crowdfunding campaign for “Naptime Startups,” a crowdfunding platform itself geared toward funding women and mother-led businesses:

Nap Time Startups, a crowdfunding platform under development for mom and women entrepreneurs, today announced the launch of a crowdfunding campaign to raise seed capital on Indiegogo. The funds will be used to complete the development of a crowdfunding ecosystem and to recruit additional coaches. Both are needed to achieve the Company's 2014 goal of funding 1,000 women startups (Crowdfund Beat 2013).

Two and a half years later the campaign is only an Internet artifact, having failed to meet its \$90,000 funding goal by almost \$87,000. The website's mission statement read that "We Are Building a Crowdfunding Ecosystem for Moms and Women, Exclusively." The construction of CFP's solely on the concept of the "mompreneur" seem to be overrepresented in techno-optimist discourses on economic restructuring. They represent only a small subset of the economic practices tied to the discourse of mompreneurship.

All of these techno-utopian visions, from those about "disruption" to those about the sharing economy rely on contrasting new economic formations with an unjust "old regime," a corrupt, historically-contingent version of capitalism in which people were exploited and inequality was produced on unjust premises (Roy 2010). But inherent in this juxtaposition is a silence on the relations of production and accumulation reproduced under newer, technologically-enhanced iterations of capitalism.

Historical materialist analysis

Marxian historical materialist analysis allows us to situate mompreneurship and its accompanying array of economic relations within a movement toward financialization as a way to govern surplus capital, and flexibilization as a way to govern surplus labor in a moment of

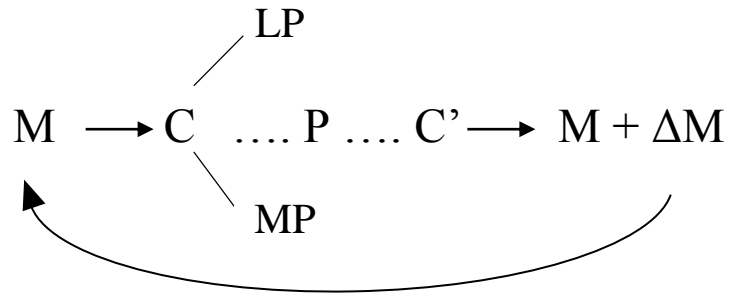
capitalist over-accumulation crisis. According to Ernest Mandel, applying a historical materialist framework involves studying “the history of this mode of production” as “the history of the developing antagonism between capital and pre-capitalist and semi-capitalist economic relations, which the capitalist world market perpetually incorporates into itself” (1975, 43). So, this approach examines the expansion and restructuring of capital as a historical process.

Enclosure, or the expropriation of land and other resources into private property, has been a foundational process for the formation of capitalist economic relations. This property forms the basis for the market system in both its capacity as capital that capitalists invest in production, and in the fact that the “proletariat”- or working class, formerly landed population are now forced to sell their only property- their own commodified labor- on the market for a wage with which they can purchase the means of subsistence, formerly available through some arrangement of subsistence production and exchange (Levy 2012; Polanyi 1957). This process of incorporation is referred to as “primitive accumulation” (Harvey 1985; Roberts 2012). The term “accumulation by dispossession” is sometimes employed in place of “primitive accumulation” in order to distinguish the fact that the process of incorporation of resources like land and capital, as well as human labor power, into the system of capitalist social relations is ongoing, and varies across the globe at different points in history (Harvey 1985).

A Marxian historical materialist approach to understanding the current moment theorizes the mompreneur movement, the “sharing economy,” and the broader flexible employment patterns described above in terms of the history of capital accumulation on a global scale. Particularly relevant is capitalism’s tendency toward secular “over-production/under-consumption” crisis (Harvey 1985; Endnotes 2013a; Mandel 1975).

Capitalism's crisis tendency

The capital relation is embodied by the mode of production and accumulation of surplus value process described in Figure 2c, provided again below:



As indicated by the arrow, this process occurs in a continuous cycle and can be understood as a *circulation process* that must be ongoing for the reproduction of the capital relation. Marx theorized that the reproduction of the capital relation depends upon several processes that make it inherently prone to crisis (Harvey 1985; Mandel 1975). These processes, which constitute “internal contradictions” include the following:

The circulation of capital depends upon constant growth in surplus value (ΔM), and this surplus value is produced through the exploitation of human/living labor in that workers produce more value than they receive in the wage. This relation also then depends on a class relation whereby those who accumulate the surplus value- the capitalist class, or just “capital”- are categorically distinct from those who depend upon the sale of their labor in order to survive- the proletariat class, or just “labor.” This relation is antagonistic in that the interests of each class are inherently opposed. Another significant aspect of the reproduction of the capital relation is its inevitable capacity to produce technological innovation as a function of both competition with other capitalists to increase productivity, market share, and profits, as well as the antagonistic

class relation in that labor-saving technology undermines the laboring class's leverage in demanding higher wages. Technological innovation is therefore at the center of the circulation of capital. And finally, this technological advance is made possible by the investment of capital and labor power (Harvey 1985).

Its most basic contradiction is therefore the fact that its expansion depends upon the increasing incorporation of human labor into surplus value production, while also at the same time depending upon the development of labor-saving technology, which limits the capacity for the production process to produce surplus value. This contradiction between growth and technological advance manifests in declining profit rates across the board, as well as the production of surplus labor and surplus capital that can no longer be absorbed into production processes (Gilmore 2007; Harvey 1985; Lapavistas 2011; Mandel 1975). This secular "over-production/under-consumption" crisis is marked by a "scarcity of jobs in the midst of an abundance of goods" (Endnotes & Benanav 2010). Its perpetual escalation is periodically offset by spatial and temporal "fixes" that temporarily absorb surplus and render it profitable (Harvey 1985; Gilmore 2007).

The theoretical claim that capitalism's own internal contradictions will lead to a long-term decline in the rate of profit overall is borne out by empirical research on the historical patterns of global capital. The waves of industrialization that hit the United States, Europe and Japan over the past two to three centuries saw progressively smaller propensities to absorb labor and capital profitably, with, for example, automobile and consumer durable industries of the mid-twentieth century absorbing less excess than the industrial boom of the late nineteenth century, and microelectronic production absorbing even less than the boom of the mid-twentieth (Endnotes & Benanav 2010). Furthermore, macroeconomic reports highlighted in the news

media tend to overstate recoveries in growth rates and hide the overall trend of long-term decline. Declining national growth rates and the accumulation of surplus capital are ameliorated by spatial-temporal fixes like debt and financial speculation, leading to growing national deficits and “bubbles,” markets that have taken on falsely inflated values (Harvey 1985; Endnotes & Benanav 2010; Endnotes 2013a). Despite these disguising features, “per capita GDP growth-rates fell, decade by decade, in high-income countries, from 4.3 percent in the 1960s, to 2.0 percent in the 1970s, to 2.2 percent in the 1980s, to 1.8 percent in the 1990s, to 1.1 percent in the 2000s” (Endnotes 2013a, 26). Furthermore, growth in employment in the rich countries is falling across the decades, from 1.3% between 1980 and 1990, to 0.2% between 2000 and 2010 (Roberts 2014). 1973 was an especially significant turning point in global geographies of production, when gluts of surplus capital led to the fall of the gold standard, signaling the end of the Bretton Woods Period and the beginning of what some theorists call “the long downturn” (Endnotes 2013a; Harvey 2005). Thus, the tendency toward secular crisis envisioned by Marx writing in the mid to late 1800s has been most intense in the period since the early 1970s.

Surplus capital, financialization and fintech

Surplus capital can be absorbed and ameliorated by the interrelated mechanisms of finance and debt. Scholars of contemporary capitalism have reached broad consensus that overall economic activity is increasingly driven by, connected to, or directly embodied by financial services and speculative investment activity (French et al 2011; Harvey 1985; Pike & Pollard 2010). Many have named this phenomenon “financialization,” often referring to “the financialization of the world economy” (Krippner 2005), and those writing in Marxian frameworks have connected it directly to the historical mode of production by theorizing it as a spatial fix to long-term over-accumulation crisis (Lapavitsas 2011; French et al 2011). Finance

allows surplus capital to be productive of surplus value at spatial and temporal distances from the actual realization of that value (Mann 2013; Harvey 1985). Surplus capital also enables debt, which has the dual functions of rendering surplus capital profitable through financial activity, and allowing for the maintenance of living standards even amidst the general stagnation of wages (Endnotes and Benenav 2010). But, the amelioration of declining growth through debt appears to be hitting limits, as currently high levels of public debt limit the ability of governments and other debtors to take on more (Endnotes 2013; Endnotes & Benanav 2010).

The limit in the absorption of surplus capital is met by increasingly elaborate modes of debt and speculation, including those enabled by the Web 2.0 (Smith 2014). Thus, crowdfinance such as peer-to-peer lending and equity crowdfunding could be seen as new pathways for absorbing surplus capital and making it profitable.

Surplus population and the flexibilization of labor

The expansion of surplus population, or sections of people separated from the means of production, dependent upon markets for subsistence but unable to sell their labor, is therefore a central tendency of a system that also seeks to incorporate greater and greater proportions of living labor into itself (Endnotes 2013a; Gilmore 2007; Harvey 1985). In a system where the drive for profit accelerates at the same pace as that system's own crisis tendency, "surpluses that cannot be absorbed are devalued, sometimes even physically destroyed" (Harvey 1985, 132). The devaluation and destruction of those rendered surplus to capital occurs within a complex geography of multidimensional power relations, and the mutually reinforcing effects of capitalism, heteropatriarchy and white supremacy become clear in the governance of surplus population (Gilmore 2007).

For example, gender has functioned to structure the undervaluing of reproductive labor under capitalism (Gonzalez 2012; Sokoloff 1980). Race has functioned to normalize the criminalization, incarceration and execution of people of color who are left surplus to capitalist production under conditions of intensifying over-accumulation crisis (Gilmore 2007; Marable 1983). Capitalism's inherent capacity to produce inequality through the extraction of surplus value under the class relation is perpetually deepened through the advent of crisis, as well as its dependence on racialized and gendered power relations.

The restructuring of capital in contemporary times in response to its crisis tendencies has meant the increasing flexibilization of labor, also called "flexible specialization" in analysis of post-Fordist production patterns (Fraser 2013; McDowell 2008; McDowell 2013). It has also been connected to structural theories of gender by feminist historical materialists and called the "housewifization" (Mies 1986) or "feminization" (Endnotes 2013) of labor, whereby the structural devaluation of labor in the context of capitalist crisis is linked to the historical separation between spheres and the social devaluation of "female" (McDowell 2008).

According to Mies, the devaluation of "female" work is thoroughly accomplished through the figure of the housewife, whose work is seen to be like a free and natural resource to be used toward the reproduction of the waged worker: "After this all female work is devalued, whether it is wage-work or housework" (Mies 1986, 110). But housewifization is also linked to the structure that this devalued labor takes on: "housewifization means at the same time the total atomization and disorganization of these hidden workers" (110). The labor market was theorized to be divided into two main sectors, formal, and informal or unorganized. Mies identifies the informal/unorganized sector as:

ranging from part-time jobs, to non-free contract labor, so-called self-employment, the new putting-out system in tele- and other types of homeworking to domestic labor proper and any other paid or unpaid or low-paid work. This sector is characterized by low wages, absence of any job security and high 'flexibility.' ...People working in this so-called informal sector are like housewives. They work, often more than the 'free' wage-workers, but their labor is invisible. And thus it can become a source of unchecked, unlimited exploitation. The dualization of the economies and labor markets along the pattern known from underdeveloped countries is the method by which Western corporate capital is trying to bring the real wage level down, to save production costs and to break the power of the trade unions, because workers in the informal sector, like housewives, have no lobby and are atomized. What the experts call 'flexibilization of labor,' some of us have called the 'housewifization of labor' (16).

This informal or unorganized sector is further characterized by the fact that it is invisible. And Mies links the advent of neoliberalism, and the cutting of public social services, to processes of capital accumulation: "Only by simultaneously cutting down state expenditure on social welfare can the governments force the people who are thrown out of the formal sector to accept any work at any wage and any condition in order to produce their own survival" (17), and "women are the hardest hit by this combined strategy of cuts in social welfare and the rationalization and flexibilization of labor" (17).

This shift toward "housewifization" or "feminization" is seen to be a *general shift* in the structure of labor (McDowell 2008), "the movement by capital towards the utilization of cheap short-term flexibilized labor-power under post-Fordist, globalized conditions of accumulation,

increasingly deskilled and ‘just-in-time’” (Endnotes 2013b, 77). The devaluation of labor accomplished through gender (as a structural relation) becomes increasingly important for the reproduction of capital, whose reliance on labor power for the production of value continues even as its propensity for technological advance “throws off” labor as surplus population (Endnotes 2013a; Endnotes 2013b; Harvey 1985; McDowell 2008). Thus, the re-encroachment of paid work into homes, and the overlaps between productive and reproductive work seen in the mompreneur figure, is not a symbol of workers, women workers in particular, regaining power in a context where the public-private divide is disintegrating. Rather, it can best be understood as a mechanism of the restructuring of capital to devalue labor in the context of surplus population and over-accumulation crisis.

The mompreneur and crisis

The mompreneur figure as a classed, gendered, racialized subject emerges into her broader political-economic context as an elite member of surplus population. Her construction as a relatable, aspirational figure suggests that she serves a discursive function in the governance of the underemployed, devalued labor force more broadly.

Another portion of the interview quoted in Chapter 2 between the Canadian Broadcasting Company and Katharine Zaleski that resonates strongly with the discourse on mompreneurship comes from the radio host’s reflection on her friends:

My friends who are stay-at-home-moms, so many of them say to me that ‘I am just struggling.’ They either struggle with their identity, or they just struggle with the fact that our society doesn’t really give them full respect- you don’t have this *business card* and don’t look so *important* when you’re out in the world, but

it's [parenting is] of course so vital. And so the problem that they constantly say is that there just isn't *meaningful* part time work. These are women that are educated, they're so brilliant and they have a lot to contribute, but they don't want to just do something part time that doesn't feed their soul too! (2015)

This broader conversation on women caregivers and public-sphere employment deeply resonates with the ideological assumptions underpinning the discourse of mompreneurship, and the narratives of dissatisfied “stay-at-home” mothers that appear throughout it. Thinking of these stay-at-home mothers in their political-economic context suggests that the struggles of elite women narrated in mainstream media may find resonance with the concerns of a broader population increasingly surplus to the needs of capital under over-accumulation crisis.

The privatization of care in this era makes especial sense given that the state's incentive to provide care at all is partially fueled and motivated by economic growth (Endnotes & Benanav 2010; Endnotes 2013a). In the case of childcare and mompreneurship, since marketized childcare must be provided by workers whose wages are lower than the wages of the working mother who buys it – to purchase a (temporary) replacement for her own status obligation- and if wages are declining across the board, fewer families may choose to purchase childcare on the market (Christie 2014). Those who will are wealthier and can pay more, thus causing the cost of childcare to rise (Endnotes 2013; Cowen 2013). Those who can't afford to pay increasingly retreat from the marketized sphere altogether in their meeting of (childcare) needs. In this, they form what contemporary historical materialist theory calls “the abject”- “that which is not worth subsuming” because of the context of crisis (87).

As noted in the sample of discursive artifacts used for this thesis, the most significant growth in the discourse about mompreneurs occurred in the years immediately following the financial crisis of 2007-2008. The celebratory accounts of women, un(der)employed and working in their homes therefore coincided with a context of economic recession in which un(der)employment rates were soaring- and those rates were (and continue to be) especially high for women, with women laid off at disproportionate rates in the aftermath of the financial crisis (Fisher 2012; Roberts 2012). The birth of the mompreneur discourse materialized amidst these extreme conditions, but the “long downturn” had already seen a more gradual devaluation of labor (Mies 1986; McDowell 2008). This was a structural context justified by positive discourse on entrepreneurship in general. As discussed in the introduction, economic commentators have noted an increase in the measured rate of female entrepreneurship in the past five to ten years, as well as a disproportionate increase of media celebration of that rise (Duberley & Carrigan 2012; Vanderbrug 2013).

Even with post-recession recoveries in employment rates, widely cited by mainstream news, there is evidence that the structural devaluation and flexibilization of labor is increasing, and that it is linked to a rise in self-employment: “Despite an employment rebound — last year, the U.S. economy regained the 8.7 million jobs lost in the financial crisis — the number of “solopreneurs” rose 12.5 percent from 2011, according to a study by MBO Partners, a business services company. By 2019, the number of people who derive all or part of their income from independent work will grow ‘from 30 million today to nearly 40 million’” (Yang 2015). According to the Harvard Business Review, “The fastest-growing segments of America’s job market — by far — are temporary and part-time employment” and “the UK has also set records in the contingently employed” (Schrage 2013).

French social commentator Stanislas Jourdan joins many others in analyzing these shifts in conjunction with the restructuring of the “knowledge economy” or “sharing economy,” going so far as to say, “what we are witnessing with the collaborative economy is a shift from jobs towards unpaid labor from a crowd of volunteers. Take open-source softwares or Wikipedia for instance, and imagine this for the whole economy. Long story short, this is not about less work, but about having fewer paid positions” (2012). Connecting this analysis to the structural devaluation, or “feminization” of labor is not a far leap to make (Endnotes 2013b). The restructuring embodied in digital “disruption” and “the sharing economy” begins to look more like it is managing a transition toward value-production that depends on a smaller and smaller proportion of amply-remunerated labor, and less like an anti-capitalist revolution.

In fact, the discourse of mompreneurship does not always ignore or entirely misrepresent its structural context. The link to recession was actually referenced somewhat frequently. Tamara Monosoff, founder of “Mom Invented” and “Mogul Moms” explains the appearance of mompreneurship and its context like this: “Nowadays, ...the landscape is much different for moms. We’ve come so far. I think at this point, it’s never been easier to do this kind of thing,’ ...[and points] to the plethora of advice Web sites, coaching programs and even crowd-funding resources that help raise seed money for products. Those developments ...have ‘coincided with the rotten economy, so a lot of moms are out of jobs, they’re at home with the kids’” (Laporte 2011). But even as her analysis is anchored by this critical understanding of the structural context, the bulk of her quote (and certainly the bulk of the article overall) is dedicated to glorifying the conditions that make mompreneurship possible, especially digital technology, rather than emphasizing the conditions that make it vital.

These discourses of radically-democratized access to opportunity alongside the glorification of bourgeois motherhood in many ways are not new. They parallel the disciplinary mechanisms that have enabled capitalism's expansion by dispossession to the present day. But in a context where the realization of value through capital accumulation depends on the perpetual devaluation of human labor alongside the heightening complexity and expansion of digital technologies, the political and social imperative to appease surplus population might easily be expected to produce a figure like the mompreneur. She negotiates the anxieties of an elite group made surplus to the needs of capital in changing times, pointing to ways that gender as a devaluing category may take on increased importance at the level of subjectivity formation (Massey 2013; Joseph 2014). And she exemplifies the value-laden division between productive and reproductive labor, intensifying gender as a structural mechanism for devaluing labor, intersecting with race, class and other relations of power (Crenshaw 1991; Curthoys 1997). In this, she justifies the increasing privatization of care in its dual process: into increasingly high-valued markets for those earning higher income in the digital/financial economy, and back into the unwaged realm for those lacking the resources to pay.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

In this thesis, I set out to explore the interrelated governance of care and capitalist over-accumulation crisis in anglophone techno-utopian discourses. I examine the mompreneur as an emergent figure in online discursive spaces as an opportunity to do so. Found amidst celebrations of technology and its capacity to “disrupt” “the economy” in its “business-as-usual” operation, the mompreneur is a rich object of investigation in that she encapsulates several central contradictions in dominant ideologies. Her idealization in anglophone techno-utopian discourses embodies the romanticization of motherhood along with the intensification of gender as a relation of power; the glorification of technology as a means to transparency and democracy in a context of increasing market concentration; a broad obfuscation of the geographies of that technological expansion; and the positioning of entrepreneurship as the key to “having it all” amidst precarious, flexible, devalued labor. I investigate the discourse of mompreneurship within these contradictions to theorize the production of gendered and entrepreneurial subjectivities in relation to capitalist crisis, grounded in the U.S. tech-sector-centered context.

In two empirical chapters, I deconstruct this discourse and analyze its context within a feminist historical materialist framework (Davis 1981; Lawson 2007; Nakano Glenn 2010; Wright 2006). My analysis is based on evidence from both discourse and content analyses of mompreneurial webspace. I set out to describe the characteristics of the discourse of mompreneurship and its geohistorical boundaries, as well as to identify the practices through which the discourse comes to be and within what political-economic contexts it operates.

My ability to accomplish this was necessarily limited by the resources available for the project, as well as by the inherent epistemological constraints of my focus on discourse and representation. I undertook this project as my Masters’ thesis and focused primarily on

discourses of mompreneurship. With additional time and resources to devote to conducting the discourse and content analysis, I would have been able to respond more fully to my research goals. Additional research on the political economy of mompreneurial enterprises, the practices through which the mompreneur-as-discourse circulates, and the reconfiguration of race in relation to gender and capital would be fruitful investigations of the mompreneur figure. Furthermore, I receive and interpret the discourse of mompreneurship through my own particular positionality as a white, middle-class, straight and cis-gendered woman, expecting my first child and employed in the academic sector. Within a methodology centered on a discourse analysis of online content, this positionality allowed me to perceive certain aspects of the circulation of mompreneur discourses through power-laden geographies of everyday experience, and simultaneously concealed other aspects of that circulation.

My research raises important questions about the political economy of the digitized enterprises produced in conjunction with mompreneurship. Due to my primary focus on discourse, the conclusions I was able to draw regarding profitable investment opportunities, increased marketization, and the flexibilization of labor were partial because the evidence of economic relations I collected was limited. However, this project identifies a research agenda that explores the nature of these economic relations, involving a systematic empirical investigation of the forms of ownership, labor, production, exchange and consumption connected to and created through mompreneurship.

Likewise, the boundaries of my discourse analysis left me unable to fully portray its socio-spatial circulation. Since I did not perform interviews or sustained ethnographic engagement with the mompreneur movement, I was unable to contextualize the online representation of mompreneurship within its offline practices. I know little about who uses these

webspaces, how and why. A broader project would investigate the offline practices of mompreneurship and how they relate to those online.

The brief section on the geographical context of the mompreneur discourse in Chapter 1 introduces an important topic as well. Further exploration of the geographical scope of online practices can reveal ways in which international power relations operate through discourses of femininity and entrepreneurship. My survey of social media relating to mompreneurship shows that the discourse takes shape outside of anglophone webspace, and beyond the places listed in that section. Focused research on the form of that discourse and its relation to anglophone techno-utopian iterations based in the U.S. and U.K. would help illuminate global geographies of power and privilege. The analysis in this thesis is grounded in only one part of an interdependent global political-economic context, and explorations of how the discourse is unfolding in different locations and languages are needed as well.

This research reveals the normative whiteness of representations of mompreneurs in the webspaces I researched. This raises crucial questions about the interaction between processes of racialization and the governance of care in techno-utopian discourses. My analysis centered on gender, and through the mompreneur I focused on white, middle class, anglophone heteronormative iterations of gender. Exploring the interactions between race and capital through the case of the mompreneur is another vital research agenda that would engage theoretical scaffolding more substantially based in Black feminist literature and critical race theory. It would also require reading texts and images with deeper and more focused concentration on the configuration of racialized power relations. Such research would contribute to theory on the role and function of race with respect to subjectivity formation, the mediation of capitalist crisis, and the reproduction of systems of power and value in contemporary anglophone digital landscapes.

My analysis also contributes to feminist research on the political economy of care. In the preceding chapters, I honed in on the construction of “the problematic” relating to the mompreneur and located its ideological roots in the “public-private divide” (England & Lawson 2005; Mies 1986; Nakano Glenn 2010). My analysis of the mompreneur demonstrates a spatial reconfiguration of the ideology of “private” in contemporary anglophone techno-utopian discourse. In this however, the mompreneur discourse reinforces gendered status obligations to care (Douglas & Michaels 2004; Nakano Glenn 2010). This work also places the discourse of mompreneurship within a broader “techno-utopian postfeminist” discourse that obscures the reproduction of gender as a relation of power, while accommodating its function in relation to the restructuring of capital (Fraser 2013; McRobbie 2004; McDowell 2008).

I also analyzed the representation of “entrepreneurship” in the mompreneur discourse, broadly situating it within its political-economic context. This involved drawing on Marxian theory of capitalist over-accumulation crisis to theorize post-“Great Recession” economic restructuring (Endnotes 2013a; Harvey 1985). The thesis critiques techno-utopian discourse and the neoclassical economic theory that underlies it, finding that capitalism increasingly depends upon the expansion of digital technology through its facilitation of financialized economic relations and the flexibilization and devaluation of labor (French et al 2011; Harvey 1985). I connected this to feminist political economy analysis of the general “housewifization” or “feminization” of labor and its function in ameliorating over-accumulation crisis, thereby relating the reproduction of capital in the contemporary context to the intensification of gender (Endnotes 2013b; Gonzalez 2012; McDowell 2008; Mies 1986; Sokoloff 1980).

In conclusion, I argue that the mompreneur as a discursive figure reveals much about the restructuring of capital and care in contemporary anglophone political-economic contexts. The

employment, consumption and investment practices justified through her narrative fulfill structural functions in absorbing surplus capital and surplus populations. More specifically, the romanticized narration of her anxieties in being rendered surplus amid conditions of intensifying over-accumulation crisis help to appease the harm done by inadequate systems for providing care. The mompreneur at a fundamental level advances consensus around capitalism as a mode of governance in all its uncertainty. Beyond this, her embodiment of glorified digital technologies, heteropatriarchal motherhood and neoliberal entrepreneurship opens up opportunities to build critical political-economic theory fit to contemporary contexts.

References

- About us*, 2015. Mums Mean Business. URL <http://mumsmeanbusiness.com/index.php/about-us/> (accessed 5.17.15).
- Abrams, S., 2012. Mompreneurs: No Time to Eat When You Own A Food Biz. The Huffington Post. URL http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sandy-abrams/mompreneurs-small-biz_b_1266859.html (accessed 4.16.15).
- Agrawal, A., Catalini, C., Goldfarb, A., 2011. Friends, family, and the flat world: The geography of crowdfunding. NBER Working Paper 16820.
- Benkler, Y., 2006. The wealth of networks how social production transforms markets and freedom.
- Bosse, D., Taylor, P., 2012. The Second Glass Ceiling Impedes Women Entrepreneurs. *The Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship* 52–68.
- Bradford, C.S., 2012. Crowdfunding and the Federal Securities Laws. *Colum. Bus. L. Rev.* 2012, 1.
- Brown, C.M., 2015. New Resource to Help Women Entrepreneurs Use Equity Crowdfunding. Black Enterprise.
- Brush, C., Greene, P., Balachandra, L., Davis, A., 2014. Women Entrepreneurs 2014: Bridging the Gender Gap in Venture Capital.
- Buss, D., 2010. The Mothers of Invention. *Wall Street Journal*.
- Caminiti, S., 2014. The X factor: Women close the funding gap online. CNBC. URL <http://www.cnbc.com/id/101963663> (accessed 4.29.15).
- Canadian Broadcasting Company, 2015. An open letter to working moms. URL <http://www.cbc.ca/1.2998642> (accessed 4.18.15).
- Casserly, M., 2011. Mother’s Day: Mompreneurs Shine & Big Business Takes Note. *Forbes*. URL <http://www.forbes.com/sites/meghancasserly/2011/05/05/mothers-day-mompreneurs-big-business/> (accessed 5.23.15).
- Christie, S., 2014. Rise of the “mumpreneurs” as childcare costs hit £12,000. URL <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/10772101/Rise-of-the-mumpreneurs-as-childcare-costs-hit-12000.html> (accessed 1.30.15).
- Clarke, J., 2004. Dissolving the Public Realm? The Logics and Limits of Neo-liberalism. *Journal of Social Policy* 33, 27–48. doi:10.1017/S0047279403007244
- Clark, K., 2014. Mother-Daughter Publishers Talk Business Tips & Raising Capital. Black Enterprise.

- Costin, Y., 2011. ICT as an Enabler for Small Firm Growth: The Case of the Mompreneur. *International Journal of E-Politics* 2, 17–29.
- Cowen, T., 2013. Average is over : powering America beyond the age of the great stagnation.
- Crenshaw, K., 1991. Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review* 43, 1241–1299.
- Crowdfunding Site Empowering Mom and Women Entrepreneurs, 2013. CrowdFund Beat.
- Crowdnetic, 2015. Crowdnetic’s Quarterly Private Companies Publicly Raising Data Analysis: For the period ending December 31, 2014.
- Curthoys, J., 1997. *Feminist Amnesia: The Wake of Women’s Liberation*.
- Davis, A.Y., 2005. *Abolition democracy : beyond empire, prisons, and torture*. Seven Stories Press, New York.
- Davis, A.Y., 1981. *Women, race & class*. Vintage Books, New York.
- DeFelice, M., 2015. Small Businesses Can Reap Benefits From Contracted Working Mothers. *The Huffington Post*. URL http://www.huffingtonpost.com/manon-defelice/small-businesses-can-reap_b_6549818.html (accessed 3.17.15).
- Dittmer, J., 2010. Textual and Discourse Analysis, in: *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*. pp. 274–286.
- Doughney, J., Leahy, M., 2006. *Women, Work and Preference Formation: A Critique of Catherine Hakim’s Preference Theory*.
- Douglas, S.J., Michaels, M.W., 2004. *The mommy myth : the idealization of motherhood and how it has undermined women*. Free Press, New York.
- Druxman, L., 2010. Make Yours a Mom-friendly Business. *Entrepreneur*. URL <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/217256> (accessed 5.1.15).
- Duberley, J., Carrigan, M., 2013. The career identities of “mumpreneurs”: Women’s experiences of combining enterprise and motherhood. *International Small Business Journal* 31, 629–651. doi:10.1177/0266242611435182
- Duttagupta, I., 2015. Meet 8 successful mompreneurs who chose to start up a business while bringing up children. URL http://articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/2015-03-08/news/59894141_1_biggest-challenge-huffington-post-corporate-jobs (accessed 4.27.15).
- Ehrenreich, B., Hochschild, A.R., 2003. *Global woman : nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy*. Metropolitan Books, New York.

- Ekinsmyth, C., 2014. Mothers' business, work/life and the politics of "mumpreneurship." *Gender, Place & Culture* 21, 1230–1248. doi:10.1080/0966369X.2013.817975
- Ekinsmyth, C., 2011. Challenging the boundaries of entrepreneurship: The spatialities and practices of UK "Mumpreneurs." *Geoforum* 42, 104–114. doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2010.10.005
- Endnotes, 2013a. The Holding Pattern: The ongoing crisis and the class struggles of 2011-2013, in: *Endnotes No. 3: Gender, Race, Class and Other Misfortunes*. Endnotes US, Oakland, CA.
- Endnotes, 2013b. The Logic of Gender: On the separation of spheres and the process of abjection, in: *Endnotes No. 3: Gender, Race, Class and Other Misfortunes*. Endnotes US, Oakland, CA.
- Endnotes, Benanav, A., 2010. *Misery and Debt: On the Logic and History of Surplus Populations and Surplus Capital* 2.
- England, K., 1996. *Who will mind the baby?: geographies of child care and working mothers*. Routledge, London; New York.
- England, K., Lawson, V., 2005. *Feminist Analyses of Work*, in: *A Companion to Feminist Geography*, Blackwell Companions to Geography. Blackwell Pub, Malden, MA.
- Evans, J., 2013. Meet The New Serfs, Same As The Old Serfs. TechCrunch.
- Everybody wants to rule the world, 2014. . The Economist.
- Fallon, N., 2014. *Modern Motherhood: The Truth About Being a Working Mom*. BusinessNewsDaily.com. URL <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/6585-working-mom-advice.html> (accessed 5.23.15).
- Fallon, N., 2013. *Mom Businesses: How to Be a Successful "Mompreneur"*. BusinessNewsDaily.com. URL <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/5560-mom-entrepreneur-startup-tips.html> (accessed 5.23.15).
- Finnerty, M., 2014. *Facing 2 felonies, but Phoenix mom is crowd-funding wonder*. URL <http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2014/04/05/facing-felonies-phoenix-mom-crowd-funding-wonder/7338097/> (accessed 11.13.14).
- Fisher, M.S., 2012. *Wall Street women*. Duke University Press, Durham, NC.
- Foucault, M., 1977. *Discipline and punish : the birth of the prison*. Pantheon Books, New York.
- Fraser, N., 2013. *Fortunes of feminism : from state-managed capitalism to neoliberal crisis*.
- Fraser, N., Gordon, L., 1994. *A genealogy of dependency: Tracing a keyword of the US welfare state*. *Signs* 309–336.

- French, S., Leyshon, A., Wainwright, T., 2011. Financializing space, spacing financialization. *Prog Hum Geogr* 35, 798–819. doi:10.1177/0309132510396749
- Gessess, P., 2014. Are we in a fintech bubble? *VentureBeat*. URL <http://venturebeat.com/2014/10/04/are-we-in-a-fintech-bubble/> (accessed 12.11.14).
- Gibson-Graham, J.K., 2008. Diverse economies: performative practices for `other worlds'. *Progress in Human Geography* 32, 613–632. doi:10.1177/0309132508090821
- Gidwani, V.K., 2008. Capital, interrupted agrarian development and the politics of work in India.
- Gilmore, R.W., 2007. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis and Opposition in Globalizing California*. University of California Press, Berkeley, California.
- Glaser, B.G., Strauss, A.L., 2009. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Transaction Publishers.
- Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2012. *GEM 2012 Womens Report*.
- Gonzalez, M.A., 2012. Communization and the Abolition of Gender, in: *Communization and Its Discontents: Contestation, Critique, and Contemporary Struggles*. Autonomedia ; Compass Academic [distributor], New York; Edinburgh.
- Goudreau, J., 2012. Mompreneur Jessica Alba Gets Honest About Business. *Forbes*. URL <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jennagoudreau/2012/01/24/mompreneur-jessica-alba-gets-honest-about-business/> (accessed 5.23.15).
- Graham, M., 2014. Internet Geographies: Data Shadows and Digital Divisions of Labour. *Graham, M* 99–116.
- Greenberg, J., Mollick, E.R., 2014. Leaning In or Leaning On? Gender, Homophily, and Activism in Crowdfunding (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. ID 2462254). Social Science Research Network, Rochester, NY.
- Hall, S., Massey, D., Rustin, M., 2013. After neoliberalism: analysing the present. *Soundings* 53, 8–22.
- Haney- López, I.F., 2010. Post-racial racism: Racial stratification and mass incarceration in the age of Obama. *Cal. L. Rev.* 98, 1023.
- Hanson, L.C., 2014. If You Died Today Did You Live Your Passion? *Mompreneur Mogul: Building a business, keeping the faith, loving my family, and balancing it all!*
- Hanson, S., 2009. Changing places through women's entrepreneurship. *Economic Geography* 85, 245–267.
- Hanson, S., Pratt, G., 1995. *Gender, work, and space*. Routledge, London; New York.

- Harvey, D., 1985. The Geopolitics of Capitalism, in: *Social Relations and Spatial Studies*.
- Hays, S., 1996. *The cultural contradictions of motherhood*. Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Humphreys, A., Grayson, K., 2008. The Intersecting Roles of Consumer and Producer: A Critical Perspective on Co-production, Co-creation and Prosumption. *Sociology Compass* 2, 963–980. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9020.2008.00112.x
- Irish, A., 2015. Ramblings of a WAHM. Ramblings of a WAHM. URL <http://www.ramblingsofawahm.com/> (accessed 5.20.15).
- James, A., 2008. Gendered Geographies of High-Tech Regional Economies. *Geography Compass* 2, 176–198.
- James, B.E., 2014. The Crowd Data Center: Mapping the State of the Crowdfunding Nation.
- JMG Consulting, Wyckoff Consulting, L.L.C., 2013. *Venture Capital, Social Capital and the Funding of Women-led Businesses*.
- Joseph, M., 2014. Debt to society: accounting for life under capitalism.
- Jourdan, S., 2012. L'économie collaborative va détruire les emplois ? Pas grave ! OuiShare EN - Connecting the Collaborative Economy. URL <http://magazine.ouishare.net/2012/10/collaborative-economy-destroying-jobs-whats-next/> (accessed 3.24.15).
- Kelly, M., 2012. Mumpreneur – More Than A Word. Sage Ireland Blog. URL <http://www.sage.ie/blog/index.php/mumpreneur-mumpreneurs/> (accessed 5.24.15).
- Kessler, S., 2014. Pixel And Dimed: On (Not) Getting By In The Gig Economy. *Fast Company*. URL <http://www.fastcompany.com/3027355/pixel-and-dimed-on-not-getting-by-in-the-gig-economy> (accessed 3.24.15).
- King, B., 2013. *Disruption in Banking*.
- Knerl, L., 2011. 5 successful “mompreneurs”: Female business owners are finding both personal and professional success. *msnbc.com*. URL http://www.nbcnews.com/id/40969268/ns/business-small_business/t/successful-mompreneurs/ (accessed 4.27.15).
- Kolođlugil, S., 2015. Digitizing Karl Marx: The New Political Economy of General Intellect and Immaterial Labor. *Rethinking Marxism* 27, 123–137. doi:10.1080/08935696.2014.980678
- Koplovitz, K., 2014. Equity Crowdfunding at Year One, What's The Impact? [WWW Document]. *Forbes*. URL <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kaykoplovitz/2014/09/26/equity-crowdfunding-at-year-one-whats-the-impact/> (accessed 9.29.14).

- Krasnoff, I., 2015. Getting Into the Right Frame of Mind for Being a Mompreneur. *Aspiring Mompreneur*.
- Lapavistas, C., 2011. Theorizing financialization. *Work Employment Society* 25, 611–626. doi:10.1177/0950017011419708
- Laporte, N., 2011. If Moms Can't Find It, They Invent It. *The New York Times*.
- Lawson, V., 2007. Geographies of Care and Responsibility. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 97, 1–11. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8306.2007.00520.x
- Lawson, V., with Middle Class Poverty Politics Research Group, 2012. Decentring poverty studies: Middle class alliances and the social construction of poverty: Decentring poverty studies. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 33, 1–19. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9493.2012.00443.x
- Leimer, A.B., 2013. There Will Be Blood: The Era of Engagement Banking. *Discerning Technologist*.
- Lennon, P., 2014. The Power of Time Off. *Patty Lennon: Intuitive Entrepreneur Coach For Women*.
- Levy, J., 2012. *Freaks of fortune: the emerging world of capitalism and risk in America*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.
- Lobo, S., 2014. S.P.O.N. - Die Mensch-Maschine: Auf dem Weg in die Dumpinghölle. *Spiegel Online*.
- Loh, M., 2008. *Mompreneur Asia | Mompreneur Asia*.
- Mandel, E., 1975. *Late capitalism*. NLB ; Humanities Press, London; Atlantic Highlands [N.J.].
- Mann, G., 2013. *Disassembly required : a field guide to actually existing capitalism*. AK Press, Edinburgh; Oakland, CA.
- Marable, M., 1983. *How capitalism underdeveloped Black America: problems in race, political economy, and society*. South End Press, Boston, MA.
- Marom, D., Robb, A., Sade, O., 2014. Gender Dynamics in Crowdfunding (Kickstarter): Evidence on Entrepreneurs, Investors, Deals and Taste Based Discrimination (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. ID 2442954). Social Science Research Network, Rochester, NY.
- Massey, D., 2013. Vocabularies of the economy. *Soundings: A journal of politics and culture* 54, 9–22.
- Massolution. *The crowdfunding industry report 2013, 2013*. Massolution.com, Los Angeles, CA.
- McDowell, L., 2013. *Working lives : gender, migration and employment in Britain, 1945-2007*.

- McDowell, L., 2008. The New Economy, Class Condescension and Caring Labour: Changing Formations of Class and Gender. *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 16, 150–165. doi:10.1080/08038740802302547
- McRobbie, A., 2004. Post-feminism and popular culture. *Feminist Media Studies* 4, 255–264. doi:10.1080/1468077042000309937
- Meyer, S.R., 2013. How the sharing economy will kill mediocre VCs. *PandoDaily*.
- Mielach, D., 2013. “Mompreneurs” Reveal Tricks for Work-Life Balance. *BusinessNewsDaily.com*. URL <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/4467-mompreneurs-life-work-tips.html> (accessed 5.25.15).
- Mies, M., 1986. Patriarchy and accumulation on a world scale : women in the international division of labour. Zed Books ; Distributed in the U.S.A. and Canada by Humanities Press, London; Atlantic Highlands, N.J., USA; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.
- Mitchell, K., 2003. Educating the national citizen in neoliberal times: from the multicultural self to the strategic cosmopolitan. *Transactions of the institute of British geographers* 28, 387–403.
- Mitchell, K., Marston, S., Katz, C., 2003. Introduction: Life’s Work: An Introduction, Review and Critique. *Antipode* 415–442.
- Morrow, O., Hawkins, R., Kern, L., 2015. Feminist research in online spaces. *Gender, Place & Culture* 22, 526–543. doi:10.1080/0966369X.2013.879108
- Nakano Glenn, E., 2010. *Forced to care : coercion and caregiving in America*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.
- Nel, P., Maritz, A., Thongprovati, O., 2010. Motherhood and entrepreneurship: the mumpreneur phenomenon. *International Journal of Organizational Innovation* 3, 6–34.
- O’Brien, K., 2014. Why This Mompreneur Is Taking an Entire Month Off and Why You Might Want to Do The Same. *The Huffington Post*. URL http://www.huffingtonpost.com/katie-obrien/why-this-mompreneur-is-ta_b_6355946.html (accessed 3.17.15).
- O’Reilly, A., 2010. Twenty-first-century motherhood experience, identity, policy, agency.
- Orozco, N., 2015. How To Be A Multi-Tasking & Guilt Free Entrepreneurial Mother. *Mompreneur Media*.
- Orsi, J., 2013. The Sharing Economy Just Got Real. *Shareable*. URL <http://www.shareable.net/blog/the-sharing-economy-just-got-real> (accessed 3.24.15).
- Overly, S., 2013. Crowdfunding expands access to capital for women, minority entrepreneurs. *The Washington Post*.

- Palmer, 2014. Tips From Successful Mompreneurs - US News. US News & World Report. URL <http://money.usnews.com/money/personal-finance/articles/2014/09/10/tips-from-successful-mompreneurs> (accessed 3.17.15).
- Park, S., 2012. #Lift 2012 Conference | Anthemis.
- Patrice, T., 2015. The Ugly Truth About Being Your Own Boss. The Huffington Post. URL http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tiana-patrice/the-ugly-truth-about-bein_b_6414814.html (accessed 5.25.15).
- Pavoni, S., 2011. “Mumpreneurs” juggle children and business. Financial Times.
- Peace Pirates, 2013. The Sharing Economy Offers a Way to Empower The People | The Peace Pirates.
- Peck, J., Tickell, A., 2002. Neoliberalizing Space. *Antipode* 34, 380–404.
- Piersall, W., 2007. What is the best homebased business for stay-at-home moms? *Entrepreneur*. URL <http://www.entrepreneur.com/answer/220901> (accessed 5.25.15).
- Pike, A., Pollard, J., 2010. Economic geographies of financialization. *Economic geography* 86, 29–51.
- Polanyi, K., 1957. *The great transformation*. Beacon Press, Boston.
- PRWeb, 2015. Hispanic Chamber of E-Commerce Launches Campaign To Support Mompreneurs. PRWeb. URL <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2015/02/prweb12538120.htm> (accessed 4.15.15).
- Q&A: Equity Crowdfunding - What Is the Future Post-jobs Act? 2014.
- Richomme-Huet, K., Vial, V., 2014. Business Lessons From a “Mompreneurs” Network. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence* 33, 18–27. doi:10.1002/joe.21550
- Rifkin, J., 2014. *The zero marginal cost society : the internet of things, the collaborative commons, and the eclipse of capitalism*.
- Ritzer, G., Jurgenson, N., 2010. Production, Consumption, Prosumption The nature of capitalism in the age of the digital “prosumer.” *Journal of consumer culture* 10, 13–36.
- Roberts, A., 2012. Financial Crisis, Financial Firms... And Financial Feminism? The Rise of “Transnational Business Feminism” and the Necessity of Marxist-Feminist IPE. *Socialist Studies/Études socialistes* 8.
- Roberts, M., 2014. De-industrialisation and socialism. Michael Roberts Blog.
- Rottenberg, C., 2014. The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism. *Cultural Studies* 28, 418–437. doi:10.1080/09502386.2013.857361

- Roy, A., 2010. Poverty capital: microfinance and the making of development, 1st ed. ed. Routledge, New York.
- Said, E.W., 1979. Orientalism. Vintage Books, New York.
- Salzman, J., 2011. Why Moms Make The Best Entrepreneurs, TEDx Talks.
- Schor, J., 2014. Debating the Sharing Economy.
- Schrage, M., 2013. Prepare for the New Permanent Temp. Harvard Business Review. URL <https://hbr.org/2013/07/prepare-for-the-new-permanent> (accessed 3.24.15).
- Scotti, C., 2014. Female Entrepreneurship Growing Faster Than Ever. FOXBusiness. URL <http://smallbusiness.foxbusiness.com/entrepreneurs/2014/06/27/women-are-becoming-entrepreneurs-at-faster-rate-than-ever-but-are-still-less/> (accessed 11.14.14).
- Shandrow, K.L., 2014. Randi Zuckerberg's Simple Secret for Juggling Career and Kids. Entrepreneur. URL <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/241125> (accessed 5.23.15).
- Should digital monopolies be broken up?, 2014. The Economist.
- Singer, N., 2014. In the Sharing Economy, Workers Find Both Freedom and Uncertainty. The New York Times.
- Slee, T., 2015. Sharing and Caring | Jacobin.
- Smith, Y., 2014. The Economics of P2P Lending. naked capitalism.
- Sokoloff, N.J., 1980. Between Money and Love: The Dialectics of Women's Home and Market Work. Praeger, New York.
- SSTI, 2014. Crowdfunding: Gender and the Democratization of Small Business Finance. URL <http://ssti.org/blog/crowdfunding-gender-and-democratization-small-business-finance> (accessed 5.25.15).
- Stengel, G., 2015. How Crowdfunding Is Closing The Funding Gap. Forbes. URL <http://www.forbes.com/sites/geristengel/2015/04/29/how-crowdfunding-is-closing-the-funding-gap/> (accessed 4.29.15).
- Stevens, N., 2013. Are You Tapped Into The Power Of Moms? The Huffington Post. URL http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nancy-stevens/are-you-tapped-into-the-p_b_3839550.html (accessed 4.16.15).
- The World Bank, 2013. Gender and Development - Female Entrepreneurship Resource Point — Introduction and Module 1: Why Gender Matters. The World Bank. URL

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/0,,contentMDK:23392638~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:336868,00.html> (accessed 1.24.15).

Tronto, J.C., 1993. *Moral boundaries : a political argument for an ethic of care*. Routledge, New York.

Vanderbrug, J., 2013. The Global Rise of Female Entrepreneurs. *Harvard Business Review*. URL <https://hbr.org/2013/09/global-rise-of-female-entrepreneurs> (accessed 1.24.15).

Waters, R. by R., 2014. "The Zero Marginal Cost Society", by Jeremy Rifkin. *Financial Times*.

Westwood, R., 2014. Moms Know Best: How To Achieve Success As A "Mompreneur". *Forbes*. URL <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ryanwestwood/2014/10/17/moms-know-best-3-tips-for-success-as-a-mompreneur/> (accessed 4.28.15).

Who We Are, 2015. *The Mompreneur*.

Wright, M.W., 2006. *Disposable women and other myths of global capitalism*. Routledge, New York.

Yang, C., 2015. Why Now Is the Best Time to Start Your Own Business. *Entrepreneur*. URL <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/243993> (accessed 2.23.15).