

# **Female Entrepreneurship, Motherhood, Neoliberalism, and the Internet: A Digital Ethnography of Mumpreneurs**

Submitted by

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# Abstract

This thesis explores the contemporary interplay between motherhood, neoliberalism, entrepreneurship, and technology as experienced by a group of entrepreneurial mothers known collectively as ‘Mumpreneurs’. Methodologically ethnographic, this research draws on digital and ‘traditional’ ethnographic fieldwork methods to gather, parse, and analyse qualitative and quantitative data from 18+ months of fieldwork in digital and physical fieldsites. Approaching these women’s lives as a complicated interplay of various phenomena, this thesis aims to contextualise Mumpreneurship. Overlapping cultural, economic, and domestic webs of motherhood, entrepreneurship, technological innovation, and digital media constitute Mumpreneur’s lifeworlds, defining their relationship to their families, work, and self. As such, it was necessary to consult a broad range of relevant technological, feminist, economic, entrepreneurial, neoliberal, and digital humanities literatures to form an accurate picture of the group. This thesis found that Mumpreneurship consists of, and is a response to, (1) feminism, (2) neoliberalism and (3) a hopeful ‘everyday’ techno-progressivism. A compromise between family and career, Mumpreneurship represents middle class Australian women’s continued attempts to ‘have it all’ – a desire that is, as of yet, unrealised. Underpinned by neoliberal logics and Third Wave ‘personal choice’ narratives, Mumpreneurs look to entrepreneurship and technological innovation to overcome cultural and economic inequalities, exacerbated in their attempt to shoulder paradoxical expectations of full commitment to motherhood and work. However, rather than empowering the women of this study, this thesis shows that; (1) ‘personal choice narratives’ frame structural inequalities as the exclusive consequence of individual life-choices and, (2) technological solutions to complex structural inequalities do not address the issues that

facilitate those inequalities in the first place. Though Mumpreneurs hope that digital technologies will help them manage the competing pressures of motherhood, entrepreneurship, work and home, this thesis shows that such cultural tensions cannot be - and have never been - solved by technological innovation alone.



# Statement of Authorship

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution

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And finally, I would like to dedicate this work to my father, Patrick Byrne. Though it may seem strange to devote a thesis about motherhood to a father, Dad, you showed me that a man can do anything a woman can do. Your love, humour, and practical, everyday kindness still reverberates. From the day you first convinced me that 'school was an adventure', you set me

on a path that led right here. My biggest regret is that I can't show you where it led me or where I'm heading next. I'll keep people-watching over coffees for you. You are sorely missed.



# Impact Statement

There were some unforeseen limitations to this project. In 2016, part way through fieldwork, my father was diagnosed with cancer. His prognosis was serious but not insurmountable. He underwent surgery and then chemotherapy and radiotherapy. My mother, father and I are the only members of our family in Australia. While my mother worked, I cared for my father, taking some months away from fieldwork in late 2016 – mid 2017 to attend to his intense care needs. Despite his earlier, positive prognosis, it was found that the cancer had spread. He died in May 2017. This had a significant impact on myself and my mother, who fell into a depression from which she has not fully recovered. Returning to fieldwork while caring for my mother was a difficult process and progress was lost with some participants.

My research was impacted again in 2018 when the housing co-operative responsible for our family home abruptly issued my mother and I a Notice to Vacate within the week. Even though the notice was later found to be unwarranted, our home had been sold rapidly by the cooperative and we were never able to return. The impact of the forced relocation, loss of our home of 27 years, subsequent legal battle and protracted grief had a substantial impact on my ability to conduct research in 2018.

However, relative to opportunity, I was able to complete a total of 18 months of fieldwork with participants, many of whom sympathised with the juggling of care duties and research. While progress was lost, the circumstances I found myself in opened the door to revealing

conversations with many participants, enabling them to open up about their own regrets, fears, sadness, shames and hopes that may not have been accessible otherwise.

# 1. Introduction

The gazebo had been particularly tricky to set up today, Miranda tells me as she wraps her black shawl tighter around her shoulders. She had arrived at the park at 7 am with two of her daughters in tow. It was cold and unexpectedly windy. When I arrived at 8 am with coffee and giant cookies to split between us, the sun was peeking through the clouds, and she looked relieved. Miranda, like the other traders there that day, knew bad weather kept people away from open-air markets. But the sun and the forecast of a mild spring day was promising. I gave Miranda her coffee and split a cookie down the middle, handing both halves to Miranda's 15-year-old daughter, Penny, to share with her younger sister, Emily. Miranda had left behind one of the four weights that hold down the gazebo's corners, so we quickly cobbled together a makeshift weight made up of spare rolls of coins, held together with duct tape and hope. Then, with a quick but relaxed efficiency, the four of us set about decorating her stall before potential patrons arrived at 10 am.

Miranda had particular way of setting up her stall that she hoped would stay in the minds of those who walked past, 'even if they didn't buy anything today'. Familiar to me now after some months of fieldwork, the gazebo was flanked on all four corners by the usual fake trees and bushes, her stall a lush rainforest of toys, blankets, and scarves. Today, I was stringing fairy lights from the trees to the gazebo, framing the shopfront in a slow twinkle of warm light while her daughters were tasked with arranging the products on the table and in the plastic trees. All of this, Miranda explained, helped draw people in. 'Offering a moment of peace and greenery in a



sea of uniform black and white tents' meant that she stood out more, with people lingering longer than at other stalls.

When I asked her in her interview if the effort she put into her stall meant she got more sales at the market, she replies "no, not immediately. But I've had so many orders come through later from people who I've met at a market, and they've remembered the stall and the toys and the story and just had to get one later. It sticks with people. Some traders get really frustrated and want to sell, sell, sell, to anyone who stops so they get desperate and push people away". With a final zip tie, the lights are secured, and I step down from the foot stool as the first patrons trickle in.

Miranda spends much of the morning chatting to potential customers, making some sales and handing out business cards. Every potential customer is greeted with Miranda's well-rehearsed backstory of travel, disillusionment, Laotian women's poverty, the benefits of social-enterprise businesses (such as hers) and how the potential customers' purchase will help the women who make the products for sale today.

In a lull of people before the afternoon rush, I want to talk to Miranda about her attitude to starting up her business. "You've got such a great attitude to business - it's not so much about profit". Taken aback, Miranda replies "of course it's about profit". I must have looked confused as, unprompted, Miranda continued "No, I'm not like some of your women who can afford to pour money into nothing. I'm a very practical person - I have to make a profit – not just for me but for everyone relying on me". "Who's everyone?", I ask. "My women," she starts as I glance

at the familiar poster on the back sheet of the gazebo – a poster Miranda uses at all her market stalls – and dozens of Laotian women smile back, holding up the products they have made for Miranda’s business. “My family”, she says, as Emily places more toys in the branches of the artificial fig tree. “My business”, she continues as I note the sleek white square payment system attached to her phone. “And myself”, she finishes. Frantically tapping the interaction into my phone’s notes app, I look up to ask her more, but she is already turned towards another potential customer and her spiel is starting again – “yes, these are all handmade, they’re very special. Do you want to know how they got here all the way from Laos?”

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This thesis originally set out to explore Mumpreneurship as a subculture. As a group of mothers using digital technologies to set up businesses during maternity leave; one could hardly ask for a more cohesive ethnographic field. The question I posed was thus twofold; ‘What factors have facilitated Mumpreneurship?’ and ‘What does Mumpreneurship reflect about contemporary motherhood, work, and the use of technology?’. To adequately answer these questions, however, the nature of my project had to change. The subcultural lens was not adequate to explain the various phenomena experienced by the women of the study, so was discarded early in analysis. Relevant technological, feminist, economic, entrepreneurial, and neoliberal literatures all gave some insights but could not adequately capture Mumpreneurship as a whole. A feminist reading of the women’s lives was not sufficient to investigate or explain their business practises, for instance. Nor were technology literatures enough to adequately discuss

the women's motivations for pursuing Mumpreneurship. In Mumpreneurship, feminist ideals, motherhood, work (both economic and domestic), neoliberalism, self-identity and entrepreneurship are not separable phenomena - they form the lifeworld of the participants.

Thus, this became a project about Mumpreneurship's compromises, unmet expectations, and entangled meanings. The everyday lives of these women were an unfinished lacework they monitored, managed, and tried to pull together into a cohesive whole. It was not possible to bring motherhood to the forefront of analysis without interrelated webs of meaning – feminism, neoliberalism, technology – also warping to accommodate it. For the everyday lives of these women, feminism begets reflections on economy. Neoliberalism begets discussions on motherhood. And digital technologies are used as daily and unassumingly as a dishwasher. To accurately and honestly represent, let alone analyse, Mumpreneurship it was necessary to acknowledge this inherent complexity holistically. As such, this thesis presents a grounded picture of Mumpreneurship, acknowledging the interplay of various phenomena as experienced by the group of largely middle-class, heterosexual, Australian women of European descent who take to Mumpreneurship<sup>1</sup>. Underpinned by neoliberal logics, Mumpreneurship encapsulates these women's contemporary compromises between family, work, feminism, career, self-identity, and entrepreneurship.

Taking a grounded approach, this thesis' argument is multifaceted. On the broadest level, this thesis argues that Mumpreneurship is a response to both feminism and neoliberalism realised

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<sup>1</sup> This is not to suggest one needs to be heterosexual, white, and middle class to be a Mumpreneur. Rather, the stark majority of those who publicly self-identify as 'Mumpreneurs' are, indeed, heterosexual, white, and middle class.

through a hopeful 'everyday techno-progressivism'. From a grounded approach to data collection and analysis, this thesis also argues that Mumpreneurship is a compromise between family and career, reflecting middle class Australian women's continued attempts to 'have it all'. To expand; underpinned by neoliberal logics and Third Wave 'personal choice' narratives, Mumpreneurs look to entrepreneurship and technological innovation to overcome cultural and economic inequalities that are exacerbated when they attempt to shoulder paradoxical expectations of full-time commitment to motherhood and work. On a granular level, ethnographic analysis of the data gathered in the course of this thesis shows that: (1) 'personal choice narratives' frame structural inequalities as the exclusive consequence of individual life-choices and, (2) that technological solutions to complex structural inequalities do not address the issues that facilitate those inequalities in the first place. Mumpreneurs hope that digital technologies will help them manage the competing pressures of motherhood, entrepreneurship, work, and home. However, this thesis ultimately shows that such phenomena constitute an interrelated whole that cannot be - and has never been - resolved by technological innovation alone.

## **1.1 Chapter Overview**

The remainder of this section shall outline the structure of the thesis. Chapter 2 offers a brief history of the Mumpreneur movement, providing context for the following chapters. First defining 'Mumpreneur' and 'Mumpreneurship' followed by an exploration of what differentiates women's business ownership from Mumpreneurship, I argue that Mumpreneurship is a relatively new concept. Chapter 2 then outlines the rise of Mumpreneurship in the Australian context. Ultimately, this section shows that Mumpreneurs

straddle the line between domestic and economic spheres in a way that is distinct from previous women's business ownership.

Chapter 3 locates the study's methodology in Digital anthropology and ethnographic methods. Though this is a wholly ethnographic thesis, the methodologies employed over the course of this project require some expanded discussion. Participant observation, formal and semi-formal interviews, digital data collection, and an additional survey were all employed during this thesis. However, the qualities of the group studied also necessitate the inclusion of broader digital methods such as: data capture, web scraping, and other 'big-data' methods. This chapter expands upon the specifics of this digital ethnographic project, detailing digital and physical methods as well as the reasons behind their use.

Chapter 4 and 5 are literature review chapters. Chapter 4 discusses literature on Feminism and Neoliberalism, arguing that their intertwined influence significantly shapes participants interpretation of (economic and domestic) labour and motherhood. To do so effectively, this chapter is split into five main sections. Chapter 4 starts with an exploration of the history of women's movements particularly in regard to mothers' relationships to labour and wider economic structures. The second section discusses the impact of Second Wave feminist movements, suggesting that questions about domestic and childcare arrangements with two parents working full time were not resolved by Second Wave activism or scholarship. The third section will discuss the resulting Third Wave feminist activism and scholarship, as well as address the influence of neoliberal logics on such social movements. Spring-boarding from this to a broader discussion of neoliberalism, the fourth section defines and explores the neoliberal concept. The fifth and closing section discusses the confluence of these intertwined factors in

the context of intensive mothering. Chapter 4 concludes that Mumpreneurs thrive in neoliberal economic and social domains where underlying cultural and legal frameworks define women as primary caregivers to children. Analysing relevant literature throughout, these sections ultimately aim to contextualise Mumpreneurship, situating it in a continuum of women's negotiations over labour and motherhood when an economy is underpinned by neoliberal rationales.

Chapter 5 is the second of the two literature review chapters. It presents a review of the literature on 'superwomen', women's entrepreneurship, and technology, arguing that technology has been framed as a means to manage the competing pressures of work-life balance since the mid-20th century. This chapter explores the specifics of how many Mumpreneurs use technology and the promises of digital innovation to manage the tensions between conflicting expectations of motherhood and career. Intertwined with the history of women's changing relationship to technology is the concept of the 'superwoman'. A term first coined in the 70's, the 'superwoman' does not just take on or manage the competing pressures of work home and motherhood, but, through her own hard work and self-management, excels in each of them. Following historical precedent, Mumpreneurs look to technological innovations as a means to overcome structural inequalities. However, the efficacy of technological innovation in confronting societal issues has been overstated, limiting participants' ability to become the superwomen they aspire to be.

Turning to ethnographic data gathered over the course of this project, Chapter 6 contends that motherhood and feminism interact in the everyday lives of the women in this study. Chapter 6 aims to contextualise Mumpreneurship, arguing that Mumpreneurship has emerged as a

multifaceted response to interwoven historical, economic, political, and domestic circumstances. The chapter explores the interaction between women's movements and life narrative, particularly in regard to mothers' relationships to labour. As imagined, experienced, and practised, 'motherhood' and 'work' hold various meanings to the women of this study. Semi-structured interviews and guided discussions of participants' life-narratives reveal how the conception and practice of both 'motherhood' and 'work' impact Mumpreneurs' relationship to the self, motherhood, and labour. Their experiences with each inform their choices, desires, ambition, and worldview. As such, Chapters 6 - 8 inclusive analyse data from a grounded, contextual perspective, discussing participants' lived experiences in relation to relevant literature.

Subsequently, Chapter 7 contends that entrepreneurship and neoliberalism intertwine with motherhood in the everyday lives of Mumpreneurs. Chapter 7 argues that neoliberalism's main influence on the lifeworld of participants is cultural – found primarily in stark economic individualism and the slow creep of market logics into traditionally separate domains. This chapter also extrapolates on and introduces the term 'Nappy Valley' to describe the lifetime loss of income experienced by women but not men after the birth of children.

Reflecting on their education and own lives as working mothers, Mumpreneurs can articulate historical economic and social factors that have devalued women's labour and put forward opinions as to why these discrepancies persist, largely from feminist perspective. However, while structural factors are acknowledged, what to do about motherhood and potential solutions to the discrepancies between men and women in the workplace are framed through 'personal choice' narratives and individual action. Being working professionals who are (most

often) partnered with high wage-earning spouses, the women of this study occupy privileged economic and social positions. And, yet, even for these women, second and Third Wave feminist discourse, protest and scholarship have not provided a cohesive counter to the particular impact of motherhood on their work and home lives – an impact that is not shared by their spouses' transition to fatherhood. Unsatisfied, the women of this study aim to address these discrepancies through Mumpreneurship. Mumpreneurship is seen as a means to manage competing pressures to be, all at once, 'good mothers', 'good feminists', economically productive and maintain a meaningful career. Though Mumpreneurs do gain some level of control over their work and home lives (particularly regarding the flexibility of workhours), by individuating their solutions, this chapter additionally argues that Mumpreneurs: (1) maintain the structure of social and economic pressures that lead them to Mumpreneurship in the first place and meaning they; (2) become more vulnerable to long-term economic losses over their lifetime.

Chapter 7 contends that Mumpreneurship adopts and responds to neoliberalism, helped by a broad shift to neoliberal rationales in economic and cultural spheres. Early scholarship concerning entrepreneurship described it as a means to take advantage of turbulent and changing economic circumstances through 'creative destruction'. This chapter details how the women of this study strategically differentiate themselves from Schumpeter's entrepreneurs and the cultural tropes surrounding the concept of 'the entrepreneur', yet they thrive in turbulent neoliberal economic and social domains. The savviness with which Mumpreneurs utilise time and resources reveal a neoliberal approach to work- and home-life – an approach not anticipated by early scholars. Underpinning Mumpreneurs' work ethic and neoliberal frame



of reference, however, are deeply structural precarities that have not been solved by neoliberalism or technological innovation.

Chapter 8 contends that women interpret and use domestic and digital technologies in similar ways. Primarily, Mumpreneurs look to technology to save time and to free them of the burdens of domestic tasks. However, Chapter 8 argues that this is an unmet promise of digital and domestic technology. By drawing on ethnographic data and analyses collected and conducted in the course of this research, Chapter 8 explores how Mumpreneurs use digital and domestic technologies in their home- and working lives in an attempt to manage the competing pressures of work and home. This also means that this chapter discusses the unmet promises of technological and digital innovation and Mumpreneur's complicated incorporation of technoprogressive narratives in their work- and home- lives. Mumpreneurs have largely taken to digital technologies to become 'superwomen' who manage work, home, career, and family through proficiency and knowledge in domestic and digital technologies. In this sense, Mumpreneurship is an identity project as much as it is a practical response to domestic and economic pressures.

Chapter 8 also suggests that this inclination is culturally informed. When applied to the life-worlds of Mumpreneurs, the dominant narrative around technology in post-industrial societies is twofold; (1) that domestic technologies (whitegoods, washing machines, etc) 'freed' women from time-consuming domestic tasks, emboldening them to move into the public sphere and (2) that such technological innovations are the main driving force behind social change. This general narrative of women and technology has been taken up by Mumpreneurs to mean that further

technological innovation in the digital sphere and participant's own 'hard work', savviness and individual choices can be used to liberate contemporary women from the triple-bind of home, work, and childcare. Looking to technology to overcome structural inequalities, however, is a misnomer. Though Mumpreneurs hope their savvy use of digital technologies will be enough to become the 'superwomen' they aspire to be, technological innovation's efficacy in confronting societal issues is overstated and is inefficient to counter social and economic inequalities alone.

Chapter 9 concludes this thesis by offering a synthesis of the various arguments presented herein. This thesis set out to contextualise the Mumpreneur movement, identify the factors that facilitate it and highlight what Mumpreneurship reflects about contemporary motherhood, work, and the use of technology.

To tackle the questions posed by this thesis thoroughly, this had to be a project of many parts. Methodologically ethnographic, it employs the use of digital and physical ethnographic fieldwork, gathering qualitative as well as quantitative data from digital- and physical fields. To reiterate, taking this grounded, holistic approach allowed this thesis to contextualise the lifeworld's of participants in a deeply nuanced way. The argument of the thesis is, thus, multifaceted. (1) Mumpreneurship both constitutes and is a response to both feminism and neoliberalism, attempted through a hopeful 'everyday' techno-progressivism. (2)

Mumpreneurship is a compromise between family and career, reflecting middle class Australian heterosexual women's continued attempts to 'have it all'. That middle-class Australian women frame their life worlds in this way reflects Third Wave 'personal choice' narratives as well as the slow creep of neoliberal logics into previously separate domains. Mumpreneurs look to entrepreneurship and technological innovation to overcome the cultural and economic

inequalities produced by the intertwining of Third Wave feminism and neoliberalism. Therefore, (3) Mumpreneurs take on Third Wave 'personal choice narratives' to frame structural inequalities as the exclusive consequence of individual life-choices. This is closely related to the fourth part of this thesis' argument, that: (4) despite numerous leaps in technological innovation, the continued presence of gendered constructions of labour are applied to women but not men after the birth of children (the Nappy Valley, the ideology of Intensive Motherhood, the Superwomen, etc). This adds to contemporary scholarship, arguing that technological solutions to complex structural inequalities do not address the issues that facilitate those inequalities in the first place. Glibly, you can swap a broom with a vacuum but, in doing so, you haven't changed who is doing the sweeping. Underpinned by neoliberal logics and Third Wave 'personal choice' narratives, Mumpreneurs hope technological innovation will help them manage overlapping cultural and economic inequalities that are exacerbated when they attempt to shoulder paradoxical expectations of full-time commitment to motherhood, entrepreneurship, work, and home. However, this thesis ultimately shows that the uneasy cohesion between the demands of work, home and family cannot be - and have never been - resolved by technological innovation alone.

## **2. Methodology**

This is primarily an ethnographic thesis. Ethnography encompasses a range of practises, and many have been used over the course of this project. Underpinned by ethnographic approaches to data collection, this project incorporated participant observation, formal and semi-formal interviews, digital data collection, and an additional survey. As Mumpreneurs largely network, socialise, and conduct business through digital spaces, it is also possible to also include digital data collection such as: systematic data extraction, optical character recognition (OCR) and other 'big-data' tools that will be explored in more detail below. This section will therefore expand on the specifics of this ethnographic project – encompassing both digital and physical elements – and the reasons behind their use.

### **2.1 Locating the Mumpreneurial Field**

Approaching Mumpreneurship in the initial stages of fieldwork brought up debates around the concept of 'the field' that anthropologists have been dealing with since the reflective turn of the 70s and 80s. Mumpreneurship, on the surface, present a problem for some interpretations of 'the field'. The group is a highly fractured one, not bound within a physical space, whose members interact asynchronously through digital social media platforms. For instance, a Mumpreneur may post a question about her business in a Facebook group and receive replies over the course of a few days from other Mumpreneurs physically based in various locations.

This problematises traditional fieldwork methods predicated on physically 'being there' with participants as Mumpreneurs inhabit both digital and physical fields. As shall be explored, following Hine (2015), Burrell (2009) and Horst & Miller (Horst and Miller, 2012), the digital and the physical are not separate 'fields'. To prioritise one at the expense of the other would be an inaccurate reflection of Mumpreneurs everyday lifeworlds. It is therefore possible and necessary to gather data from Mumpreneurs physical, everyday lives as well as the digital platforms they populate. Such is the crux of this chapter. With new tools available to capture, collate and analyse the digital footprints participants leave in their everyday lives: how can we; how have I; and how have others incorporated such methods into their ethnographic practices? The rest of this chapter is devoted to exploring these ideas and outlining how this particular thesis approached the opportunities and pitfalls that digital data-capture can bring to ethnographic methods.

To begin, a brief history. Physical space has been used historically to describe and demarcate the boundaries of cultural groups and, thus, the fieldsites of anthropological study. However, critical reflections on presupposed concepts such as 'the field' have argued that such physical demarcations are not as unambiguous as previously presumed. This is contended most clearly by Gupta and Ferguson's (1997) critical renegotiation of the fieldsite. Gupta and Ferguson argue, among other things, that the distinct separation of 'field' from 'home' sets up a false notion of purity of the fieldsite that the ethnographer contrasts with their own experiences 'from home'. Rather than provide deeper or more nuanced insights, they suggest that this adherence to the Malinowskian archetype can blinker ethnographers and over-prioritise the concern over examining 'pure' fieldsites (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997, pp 13 & 45). They argue instead for a shift in perception from 'bounded fields' to 'shifting locations' (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997, p. 38).

Such theoretical insights allow for the reprioritisation of ethnographic attention. Rather than concern with finding 'pure' fields as a bounded whole – a fiction Gupta and Ferguson argue against – it is possible, and indeed necessary to reflect on and define the particularities that demarcate the field of fieldwork. Amit, for instance, notes that “social landscapes— the substance of anthropological enquiry—are often conflated with the physical spaces which serve as a shorthand way of referring to them” (2011, p. 55). What then, is 'the field' if not a physical space? Madden provides some insight, suggesting that the field is, and always has been, a construction. To Madden, the field is “part geographical, part social, part mental construct” (Madden, 2010 pp. 37 - 39). This definition of 'the field' acknowledges the interwoven social webs participants inhabit. It allows for a more nuanced discussion of these social worlds and enables ethnographers to discuss the digital and physical spaces participants inhabit without either being seen as a disjuncture from a 'real' or 'pure' field. Following Gupta and Ferguson (1997), Amit (2011) and Madden's (2010) discussions of the field, I approached this project on the basis that the field is not a single physical place or bounded whole, but a construct demarcated in tandem by participants and ethnographer.

Mumpreneurs - being so highly spread across geographical distances - may have once problematized ethnographic practice. However, as contended above, the theoretical groundwork has already been laid for such groups' inclusion in the anthropological repertoire. The Mumpreneurial fieldsite, like all fieldsites, is constructed - part digital, part geographic and part imagined - whose boundaries are amorphous and negotiable. What constitutes the Mumpreneurial fieldsite, like all fieldsites is “built discursively, or through connection, interest, and flow, rather than geography, nationality, or proximity” (Markham, 2016, p. 2). This synthesis of digital and physical fieldwork echoes Kramer (2016) where the 'binary of online versus offline

is compared to 'home' versus 'field', Burrell (2009) where the field is a network of interconnected digital and physical elements, Hine (2015) where the digital field is 'embedded, embodied and everyday' and also Markham (2016) where the field is not an object, place or whole, but ethnography remains a way to understand how we live in informational as well as ecological systems. Mumpreneurship, then, is a field defined not by location but by participation. Definitions and boundaries around those considered 'real' Mumpreneurs have an effect on the shape of the field of study. The field site, as noted by Markham, "is not necessarily online, but is in some way mediated by the capacities of the Internet" (2016, p. 8). Thus, it is necessary to use variety of data-gathering techniques within the context of ethnographic fieldwork to capture and acknowledge the complexity of the participants' everyday digital and physical lives.

## **2.2 Fieldwork Methods**

In initial digital ethnographic projects from the late 80s to mid-90s, activities such as talking to participants through digital media were labelled as new, novel forms of fieldwork. However, joining the groundswell of digital ethnographic work (see: Horst and Miller, 2012, Hine, 2015, Burrell, 2009, Pink et al., 2016, Miller and Sinanan, 2017, Miller et al., 2016), I do not categorise them as such. Many of these research activities fit into the toolkit of fieldwork methods as, at their core, they enable the researcher to communicate with participants in the ways they communicate with each other. Far from being a break with traditional, physical methods, this simply allows the researcher to participate with and observe (in this instance) Mumpreneurship as Mumpreneurs experience it themselves. As is often noted in reflections on digital fieldwork, recording and taking notes on my phone during in-person conversations was not an intrusion to

the flow of conversation (Sanjek and Tratner, 2016, Kraemer, 2016). We have a responsibility to talk to participants in the way they talk amongst themselves, not only as it is a highly effective form of qualitative data gathering, but also as it allows greater insight into the emic experience of being in this community. The particular methods I have employed in the course of this project – such as systematic data capture and OCR - will be expanded upon in the digital data collection section below. The remainder of this section will continue to discuss the deployment of traditional, physical ethnographic methods in a digital context.

### **2.2.1 Digital and Physical Participant Observation**

The overarching method used in this project is that of participant-observation (Spradley, 1980). In the Mumpreneurial context, participant observation took the form of: joining a variety of online and offline groups populated by Mumpreneurs; informal chats over coffee with participants; visiting their homes (spaces that doubled as both workspaces and warehouses); chatting regularly to participants on the digital platforms they populate; taking part in their stalls at weekend markets; attending Mumpreneur conferences, award ceremonies and upskilling; networking events for Mumpreneurs, etc. On a daily to weekly basis, I interacted with participants in both the digital and physical spaces they populate. This mixing and mingling of digital and physical interactions are not just typical of the Mumpreneurial experience, it is a reflection of the ‘embedded, embodied and everyday’ (Hine, 2015) navigation of digital and physical social worlds. For example, a talk with a participant at a cafe could be punctuated by improvised photo-shoots of products next to coffees topped with latte art or a particularly photogenic dish and promptly posted to Instagram (or saved, to be posted at a more opportune



time later). It would not be possible to know the full context of such posts without physically 'being there' in the production of content. Nor would it be possible to see the strategic framing of such content without seeing such posts on digital social media. In this sense, participation, and observation of Mumpreneurial activities needed to take on both physical and digital elements (Hine, 2015, Pink et al., 2016).

## 2.2.2 Digital and Physical Spaces

Clarity of terminology is crucial in understanding this project. However, the debate over the nomenclature of 'digital' and 'physical' space remains open. Digital space has been referred to as; cyberspace, computer-mediated space, the virtual or 'online' (as well as a variety of other terms – see: Boellstorff et al., 2012, Carter, 2004, Crichton and Kinash, 2003, Garcia et al., 2009). But if this is a new space, then what do we term the old? Labels such as 'the real', 'the actual', 'analogue', 'physical' or even, jokingly, 'meatspace'<sup>2</sup> have been used interchangeably to offer such counterexamples (see: Boellstorff et al., 2012). In an attempt to disambiguate, Horst and Miller (2012) move away from defining 'the Internet' as a new, separate space, arguing that there is no divide between 'the Internet' and 'the real'. To Horst and Miller, the Internet is a constructed space, fundamentally intertwined with social realities and consequences. They define all that can be reduced to binary code as 'digital' (e.g., text, images, social networks, social media) and all that cannot as 'non-digital' or 'physical' (2012: 666). Unlike earlier attempts to define 'the Internet' and 'real life', the 'digital' and 'physical' divide does not prioritise one space as 'more real' than another. It also does not rely on the technology through which 'the digital' is accessed. For example, describing digital spaces as 'computer-mediated' ties the definition to a particular technology and thus does not adequately reflect the range of digital engagements available. With further developments and an ever-expanding repertoire of hardware, it is inaccurate and unreflective to rely on descriptions of the technology through which 'the digital' is accessed. Clear and unambiguous language - 'digital' and 'physical' – allows

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<sup>2</sup> Derived from the cyberpunk movement, the term 'meatspace' is sometimes used colloquially to refer to physical spaces.

this project to explore the meaning and social use of digital (Facebook, Instagram, social media) and physical spaces (cafés, participants' homes, conferences) unambiguously.

### **2.2.3 Digital and Physical Interviews**

In addition to digital and physical participant observation, semi-structured one-on-one interviews were used as a means to expand upon themes, ideas or questions born out of participant observation (Spradley, 1979). These interviews, similar to the wider methodological considerations of this project, took on both digital and physical elements. Some interviews were conducted face-to-face in Mumpreneurs' homes or at local cafés or meet ups. Due to time and geographic constraints, many were also conducted via digitally mediated communication technologies<sup>3</sup> such as Skype, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp. These digital interviews were structurally more formal than face-to-face interviews. Those who requested such interviews were not usually able to commit to a very long discussion or had blocked of a set period of time for which we were able to communicate<sup>4</sup>. Thus, it was imperative to structure the time available in order to maximise the amount of data one could feasibly collect.

### **2.2.4 Digital and Physical Fieldnotes**

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<sup>3</sup> Taking place between 2016 – 2018, this fieldwork predates the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020. As such, the range of commonly known, accessible and used digital communication technologies were comparatively limited. Zoom had not yet become a prominent form of digitally mediated communication, nor had Microsoft Teams or many other work-from-home software suits with integrated messaging or video chat features. This underscores Horst and Miller's assertion that tying digital methods and theory to particular technologies is an inherently limiting endeavour for digital anthropological research.

<sup>4</sup> Mumpreneurs' negotiation of work-life balance and management of time will be expanded upon in later chapters.

This being an ethnographic project, I systematically documented my interactions with participants in fieldnotes, photographs, transcripts of audio recordings and screengrabs<sup>5</sup> of digital activity. The conversations, insights and observations that make up the fieldnotes were first written down 'in the field' as rough notes on paper or, most often, on a simple notetaking app (that had limited text-editing options) on my phone. This was done so as not to disrupt the flow of conversation as participants - being largely middle class, affluent families living in Australian metropolises - are used to the ubiquity of phones. These rough notes were then written out in long form in a Word document and coded in NVivo.

If conversations occurred in a digital context such as a Facebook group page, an Instagram comments section, a messaging app or other such digital platform, the text of the conversation was screengrabbed then converted to readable text using digital Optical Character Recognition (OCR). When screengrabbing a conversation, text and images are captured in an image format (for example, .JPG, .PNG). Text in this form is represented by pixels and is not searchable. OCR is a technology that can identify and recognise text in such formats. Through OCR<sup>6</sup> it is possible to convert these images (for example, screengrabs of Facebook comments) into searchable text. In software like NVivo, this can be invaluablely convenient – helping in the coding, categorization, and analysis of screengrabbed conversations in the same manner as written textual documents. While technologically facilitated, this too does not represent a disjuncture from earlier ethnographic aims or methods. Rather, converting digital images to searchable text is an addition to the anthropological toolkit that we can draw on in the collation, coding, and analysis of ethnographic data.

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<sup>5</sup> 'Screengrab' refers to a digital snapshot of a graphical user interface (for example, webpage). Screengrabbing comments, discussions and replies enables the capture of text as well as images. Screengrabbing ensures that the visual context of the digital field is not lost as it would be in other techniques like text-scraping.

<sup>6</sup> For an example OCR output, see Appendix I.

Like taking fieldnotes on a smartphone or conducting fieldwork and interviews in digital social spaces, the use of OCR does not represent a dramatic break from traditional, physical ethnographic methods, rather it is an addition to the methodological toolkit. This is not to suggest, however, that no new or novel methods can be employed in the course of a project. As a complement to the rich, qualitative data collecting techniques described above, I found it useful to employ techniques more commonly used in 'big-data' projects that systematically gather and extract images, comments, and metadata from social media platforms.

## 2.3 Big Data in Small Spaces

This project utilises big data techniques such as scraping and systematic data extraction.

However, I posit that this is not a 'Big Data' project. 'Big Data' – more a marketing term than a cohesive set of methods - refers to “large-volume, complex, growing data sets with multiple, autonomous sources” (Wu et al., 2014 p. 97) such as social media. Though critiqued (see: boyd and Crawford, 2012, Byrne and Cheong, 2017), the statistical insights gleaned from big data analyses are often uncritically used under the assumption that they can enable businesses or governments to “measure and therefore manage more precisely”, “make better predictions” and “target more-effective interventions” (McAfee et al., 2012). In many Big Data projects, a strong correlation between a series of variables is enough to present as a conclusion. As an example, a big data project may:

1. scrape data from the Instagram feeds of a particular group – let us use the example of students
2. identify a variable in the scraped data – the presence of Instagram filters, for instance
3. analyse the frequency of the filters over time
4. compare the frequency of particular filters with periods associated with stress, such as exam times;

and then,

5. conclude that particular Instagram filters are a predictive indicator of stress and anxiety if they exhibit strong mathematical correlation with the increase of use by students during exam time

Following Ford (2014), there can be surprising and significant overlaps between ‘big data’ and ‘ethnography’. For instance, both recognize that what people do – as opposed to what people say they do – is an invaluable source of data. Drawing on Burrell (2012), she suggests that the difference is in what ethnographers and data scientists emphasise. For instance, ethnographers “do a lot of complementary work to connect apparent behaviour to underlying meaning through in situ conversations or more formal interviews. Data scientists, on the other hand, tend to focus only on behavioural data traces” (Ford, 2014, p. 2).

This project, then, takes on the dual role of ethnography and data science, with anthropology as its disciplinary framework. This project attempts to incorporate captured data into an ethnographic framework by keeping data in context through manually coding key images, comments and posts and keeping an open dialogue with participants about the captured data. For instance, in interviews I have spoken to participants about their manual and automatic postings; asking why they posted in a particular way, why that time, what tools they used, the motivations behind it, etc. These are the insights that often get lost or are not considered in the quantitative crunching of digital social data in large-scale ‘big data’ projects. This is the crux of my approach to digital ethnography in this project – I aim to make use of the vast swathes of data produced on a daily basis by participants in digital spheres by placing it in context through a grounded dialogue between participants and ethnographer.

The dialogue and concerted effort to keep data in-context, paired with systematic data capture has allowed for deeper insights into the use and social meaning of social media in Mumpreneurs’ life-worlds. Working now in a global economy, a Mumpreneurs’ pool of potential customers (as well as product manufacturers, suppliers, and retail outlets) traverses geographic limits. As such, the techniques employed by Mumpreneurs on social media to tap into potential

customers is sophisticated and involved. A Mumpreneur targeting a global market could have automatic posts timed to be released at peak social media usage periods in other countries. Within the geographic confines of Australian Eastern Standard Time (and Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time, as appropriate), it is not possible to gather these posts as they are released. In addition, social media platforms algorithmically prioritise certain posts above others through past user behaviour and engagement as well as pay-per-view advertising. Thus, systematic data capture is a way to step outside the filter bubble (Pariser, 2011)<sup>7</sup> and collect content outside of that which is pushed in individual newsfeeds 'algorithmically'.

### **2.3.1 Algorithms**

Algorithms are a key feature of the social media platforms participants inhabit. Understanding (1) how and why platforms use algorithms; (2) how algorithms are understood by participants; and (3) the gaps between these interpretations can be a rich source of interpretive meaning. 'Algorithm' is a deceptively ambiguous term with a deep history of debate over its specifics. Corman et. al.'s ground-breaking work defines algorithms as "any well-defined computational procedure that takes some value, or set of values, as input and produces some value, or set of values, as output. An algorithm is thus a sequence of computational steps that transform the input into the output" (2009, p. 5). In this sense of the word, Algorithms are analogous to recipes. A cake recipe is an 'algorithm' for a cake – a set of instructions outlining inputs (eggs, flour, butter, sugar, mixing method and bake time) that, when followed, produces and output – cake! To offer a more relevant example, Facebook famously shows ads to its users. Who gets

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<sup>7</sup> The 'Filter bubble' - a term coined by Eli Pariser (2011) - refers to a contemporary phenomenon wherein an individual is blinkered to dissenting news and media sources due to the increasing personalisation of news, social media and web searches optimised by companies such as Google and Facebook.



shown what ads, when these ads are shown, and where they are displayed (for example, sponsored posts in news feed or sidebar ads) are all determined algorithmically. This means that the decision-making process has been created using a series of intertwined ‘recipes’ that base decisions on a variety of inputs (such as age, gender, location, time of day and previous user activities)<sup>8</sup> to determine the output (the display of an ad). Thus, in data science, IT (Information Technology), and computer science, ‘algorithm’ is an informal, abstract term used as a way to describe underpinning ‘recipes’ or processes.

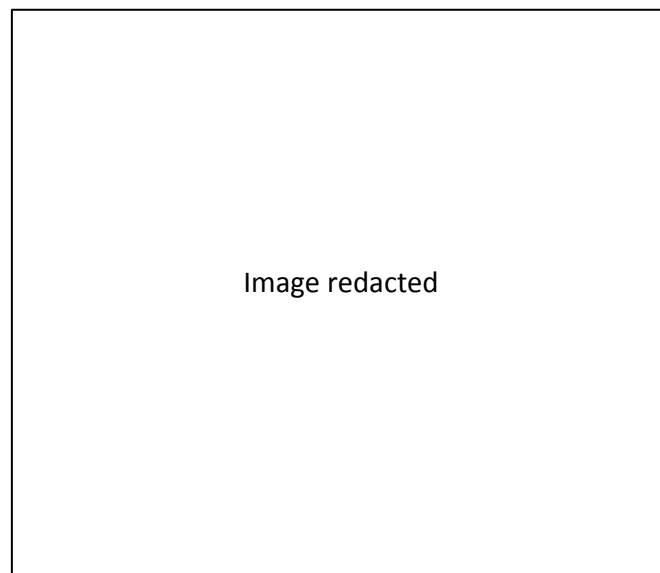
This, however, belies their use and social meaning. At the forefront of the anthropological discussion of algorithms, Seaver suggests that algorithms are social constructions (Seaver, 2019, Seaver, 2017) in as much as they are reified beyond their theoretical definitions in STS and computer science literatures (Seaver, 2019). Although many Mumpreneurs have little in-depth technical expertise in IT or computer science, they believe in the importance and influence of Facebook and Instagram recommender systems and aim to ‘game’ the algorithm. To Mumpreneurs, the emic, intuitive understanding of algorithms – the definition that has the most impact in their everyday life-worlds – is that they are a set of ‘rules’ established by social media companies that determine, among other things, which posts are shown to which users on social media platforms. To disambiguate, Mumpreneur’s understanding of the inner workings of Facebook is such that the ‘algorithm’ is the thing that makes decisions about what is posted and when. This decision-making process is not autonomous, objective, or self-generating – rather it is determined by a variety of algorithms developed by a collection of programmers and data scientists. They are, in turn, instructed by stakeholders to develop algorithms (or ‘recipes’) to

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<sup>8</sup> In the case of Facebook, we can’t confirm the particulars of the inputs used to determine which user is shown which ad and when as Facebook uses proprietary algorithms. We can only observe the outputs of these processes (the ads themselves and relevant metadata) to try and determine such inputs.

achieve certain outputs (for example, more clicks on ads, maximise time spent on the platform, more views on videos, etc).

Mumpreneurs are, thus, constantly trying to work out the points that underpin the promotion of content and dynamically react, respond, and incorporate such changes. For example, it is colloquially known that images get more engagement than text-only posts. As a response to this in the mid-2010s, many Mumpreneurs began consistently posting ‘inspo’ (ostensibly inspirational quotes) from their business pages; not as text posts, but as stylised images of text in an attempt to gain traction and recognition of their business pages. While not having an intimate knowledge of the inner workings of the machine they inhabit, Mumpreneurs attempt to ‘game’ the algorithms underpinning the social platforms they use to promote their businesses.



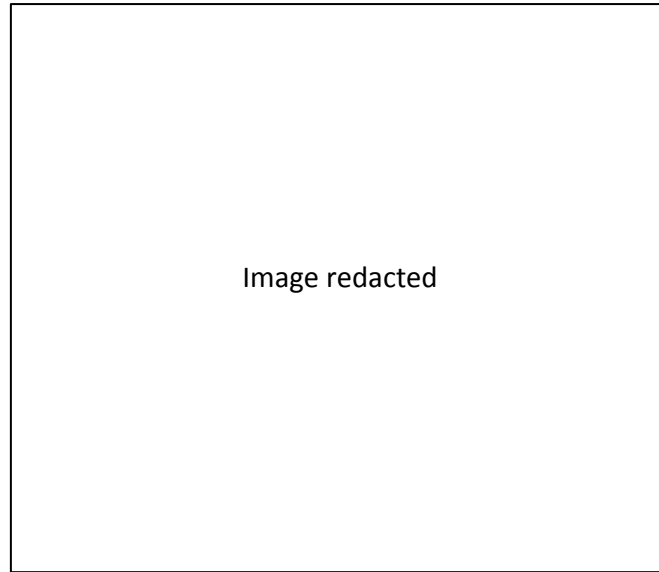
*Figure 1: Ostensibly inspirational quote shared by participants. The black text on a white background reads ‘There are People less qualified than you doing the things you want to do simply because they decided to believe in themselves. Period.’*

### 2.3.2 Affordances of Digital Platforms

Mumpreneurs have a keen interest in monetising social media. An attempt is made by all Mumpreneurs to turn comments, 'reactions'<sup>9</sup>, and social media engagement into sales or market research. For instance, an extensive email list of potential customers gives one substantial influence in Mumpreneurial groups. Many Mumpreneurs prefer to collaborate with others whose email lists, follower counts, or Facebook page likes are at least as extensive as their own. They see digital social space as multifaceted – simultaneously, a marketplace, diary, avenue to communicate with friends, site for both social and business networking, tool for market research, and a pool of potential customers. In an attempt to monetise these ostensibly social digital platforms, automated posts, search engine optimisation (SEO), cross-promotion, and a plethora of techniques are used to try to understand, then 'game the algorithm' underpinning Instagram and Facebook feeds.

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<sup>9</sup> During fieldwork (2016 – 2018), 'Reactions' were Facebook nomenclature for the range of responses ('Like', 'Love', 'Haha', 'Wow', 'Sad' and 'Angry') available to users besides commenting on the post itself. Previously, it had only been possible to 'like' or comment on posts.



*Figure 2: Facebook 'reactions' available to users during fieldwork (2016 – 2018). The image shows the 6 reactions available to users to respond to posts during fieldwork - 'like', 'love', 'haha', 'wow', 'sad' and 'angry'. Each reaction is accompanied by an image reflecting the sentiment of the reaction. 'Like' is represented by a white hand on a blue background doing the 'thumbs up' gesture. 'Love' is a white heart on a red background. 'haha' is represented by a stylized emoji face laughing. 'Wow', 'Sad' and 'Angry' are similarly styled, with emoji faces displaying the described emotion*

In an effort to keep the collected data in context by pairing it with other insights gained from traditional, physical ethnographic fieldwork, it is possible to enhance the ethnographer's insight into the digital practices of a particular group. Because of the particularities of Mumpreneurship (primarily tech-savviness and the global nature of their business' customers, supply chain, distributors, and retailers), it is necessary to collect different types of data in order to gain deeper insight into the social, economic, and digital impact of Mumpreneurship.

## **2.4 Survey**

A supplementary survey was also developed and distributed in March and April of 2018 (see Appendix C). The survey instrument enabled the capture self-reported, participant-centric, demographic data supplementary to the ethnographic data already obtained through fieldwork.

The survey instrument also helped the capture of data based on themes found in initial ethnographic fieldwork and allowed for the incorporation of additional participants in the project. However, the response rate was not substantial. Expanding the breadth of accessible participants, posting the survey link to more general 'mums with businesses' groups, and employing the use of snowball sampling by asking participating Mumpreneurs to pass the survey on to other interested Mumpreneurs did not result in a significantly increased response rate. As the survey was supplementary to the ethnographic data already collected, the insights gained from it were minimal, though it did provide self-reported data from a wider breadth of participants than was accessible through ethnographic fieldwork alone.

## 2.5 Composite characters

An important note about the women of this text. Each named person in this ethnography is a pseudonymised composite character of research participants (see Appendix G). This composition of elements and characteristics also applies to the businesses created by the women of this study; all named businesses are the pseudonymised composites of participant's own businesses. The reason for this decision is predominantly confidentiality. It is of particular importance not to identify individuals and businesses in this ethnography as the material produced by participants – curated content relating to their families, homes, suburbs, businesses, family histories and life stories – is available and published online and, thus, highly accessible to the public. They are businesswomen with ecommerce websites seeking customers through social media and search engine optimisation. They have spent a considerable amount of time, money, and effort to make sure they and their businesses can be found easily online. As a researcher, I was allowed into the uncurated home-lives of these women under the condition of privacy. With this confidentiality, the women felt comfortable disclosing deeply personal hopes, shames, fears, and reflections, knowing that such vulnerabilities would not be attached to their businesses or public profiles. Identifying information can easily be found through search engines (e.g., Google) and social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter). With powerful, indexed searching on sites like Google, relatively few search variables are needed to identify a specific person or business. It is not enough to only pseudonymise the businesses and women of this study as this research cohort in particular are actively aiming to be found. As the usual protection of pseudonymisation is insufficient, composite characters are a necessary part of this ethnography, and are hereafter used to articulate this research's findings.

## 2.6 Limitations

Sample size is often seen as a limitation of ethnographic projects by those outside the social sciences. However, ethnographic methods are geared specifically towards small populations. The collection of rich, qualitative data enables ethnographers to, at once, collect the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves and penetrate social life beyond socially acceptable appearances (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006). Encapsulating life as actually lived is incredibly valuable, with such insights requiring immersion in a field and the build-up of trust over time between researcher and participant. Since the aim of an ethnographic project is to capture the particular and the everyday, the issue of sample size has little bearing on the efficacy or validity of the project as a whole.

Within the context of an ethnographic project, then, the use of digital data capturing techniques has the potential to over-prioritise quantitative insights. Within this project, this tension was resolved through the discussion and contextualization of digital data with participants in formal and informal interviews. Captured data was discussed with participants so as to ensure that the valuable insights that ethnographic methods can provide were not lost in the capturing of digital data.

## **2.7 Methods Conclusion**

The methods used in this project are fundamentally ethnographic. Digital research methods can be used successfully within the context of an ethnographic project when the data gathered is collected, collated, and analysed in context. In this sense, the incorporation of new technologies into traditional methods does not represent a dramatic break from these methods, but a continuation of their relevance in digital contexts. The incorporation of various digital and physical data gathering techniques within this ethnographic project represents a typical contemporary ethnography that makes use of the tools available to capture valid, nuanced insights into participants' everyday social realities.



### 3. Defining Mumpreneur

In Australia, Mumpreneurs are largely heterosexual, middle-class women of largely European descent who, around the time they have children, decide to also start up a small, often home-based business. Starting in the United States, the term and movement spread quickly to European and Anglophone nations. This section will briefly outline a history of Mumpreneurship, providing context for the following chapters. First starting with definitions of the term, this chapter will then discuss the distinction between 'women's business ownership' and Mumpreneurship. Drawing on Google Search Trend data and archival web- and newspaper-records, this chapter will trace the movement from a global curiosity to a phenomenon enacted in the local Australian context. This section aims to define the term 'Mumpreneur' as it will be used in this thesis and show how the women who take to it straddle the line between domestic and economic spheres in a way that distinct from the history of women-in-business but predicated on traditional gendered conceptions of labour.

Who constitutes a 'real' Mumpreneur is debated within the community itself. For example, mothers who undertake multi-level-marketing (MLM, or otherwise termed 'network marketing') are sometimes explicitly excluded from Facebook groups devoted to Mumpreneurship. Moderators of many Mumpreneurial Facebook groups exclude those who are members of and take part in MLM business models, as they see MLMs as scams, pyramid schemes, and fundamentally illegitimate businesses. Other groups call for more unity, citing the similar stressors and problems faced by mothers who start up their own businesses and multi-level-marketers, such as fitting home-based work around home- and childcare. Many women who

participate in MLMs call themselves Mumpreneurs and there is an overlap between personal motivations for joining MLMs and Mumpreneurs' reasons for starting their own businesses, However, I see Multi-Level-Marketing as a distinct venture from Mumpreneurship as those who participate in it do not set up their own businesses. Rather, they join an existing business that focuses on recruiting new members and direct selling (Muncy, 2004, Nat and Keep, 2002, Keep and Vander Nat, 2014). For this reason, women who participate in Multi-Level-Marketing were excluded from the pool of participants but represent a potential future area of study.

Other works concerning Mumpreneurs define a Mumpreneur as “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” (Ekinsmyth, 2011, p. 105). In tandem, Richomme-Huet et. al. (2014b, 2014a) see Mumpreneurship as the creation of new business ventures by a woman who identifies as both a mother and a businesswoman. In the Australian context, ‘Mumpreneur’ – a neologism combining the words ‘Mum’ and ‘entrepreneur’ – could be used to describe a variety of women, with children, who run businesses. However, in practice, the term is not so broadly applied. A woman, with children, who runs a business (let’s say a fish and chip shop, for a very Australian example) would be unlikely to describe herself or be described by others as being a ‘Mumpreneur’. In this context, Mumpreneurship appears to be a pursuit of the middle-classes, though this is a murky delineation. Based on data collected over the course of this project, I posit that Mumpreneurial businesses coalesce around a few key business structures.

- (1) The import, export, and direct selling of goods such as: clothes, fashion accessories, makeup, jewellery, tea, homewares, sweets. Most Mumpreneurial

businesses of the sort focus on these products being boutique, organic, hypoallergenic, or eco-friendly.

- (2) The development and selling of new tangible products. Such new products are often centred around babies', toddlers', or children's needs. For example, cutlery designed for toddlers to grip, or diaper bags designed to look like handbags.
- (3) 'Lifestyle enhancement' and life coaching services such as: interior design, diet planning, and lifestyle blogging; as well as an array of Mumpreneur-run classes such as yoga, meditation or baby music, and social activities.
- (4) Social enterprise models. These can be broken down further into:
  - a) 'Buy one, donate one' business models (e.g., make-at-home meal kits that donate a 'hot meal to a needy family' with every purchase of a meal kit)
  - b) purchase-donation business models where a percentage of a product's profit is sent back directly to the people who made it.

Based primarily on research with French Mumpreneurs, Richomme-Huet and Vial specify that Mumpreneurship is motivated primarily by achieving work-life balance, and linked to the particular experience of having children (Richomme-Huet et al., 2013). Building on these insights, this thesis views Mumpreneurship as a distinct category of work that, while grounded in and heavily informed by existing domestic, economic, and social structures, represents a new and particular approach to work.

### 3.1 Brief History of Mumpreneurship

The history of Mumpreneurship is complicated and multifaceted. Some have argued that the history of female owned business is the history of Mumpreneurship (Lieshout et al., 2019). Historicising Mumpreneurship in such a way would technically extend the history of Mumpreneurship back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. However, such arguments are broad-reaching and do not acknowledge many elements that are particular to the definition of the term ‘Mumpreneur’ as used today. Particularly, this definition deemphasises Mumpreneurs’ use of new technologies in their business and home lives. While Richomme-Huet et al. acknowledge that that female entrepreneurship has always featured in local economies – and mothers have been running home-based businesses for centuries – they argue that ‘Mumpreneurship’ “represents a new concept that is still in its infancy in need of a theoretical definition” (Richomme-Huet et al., 2013, p. 251). Mumpreneurship – as a distinct and particular category of work experienced and enacted by mothers – can only be traced back to the 1990’s (see Figure 3).

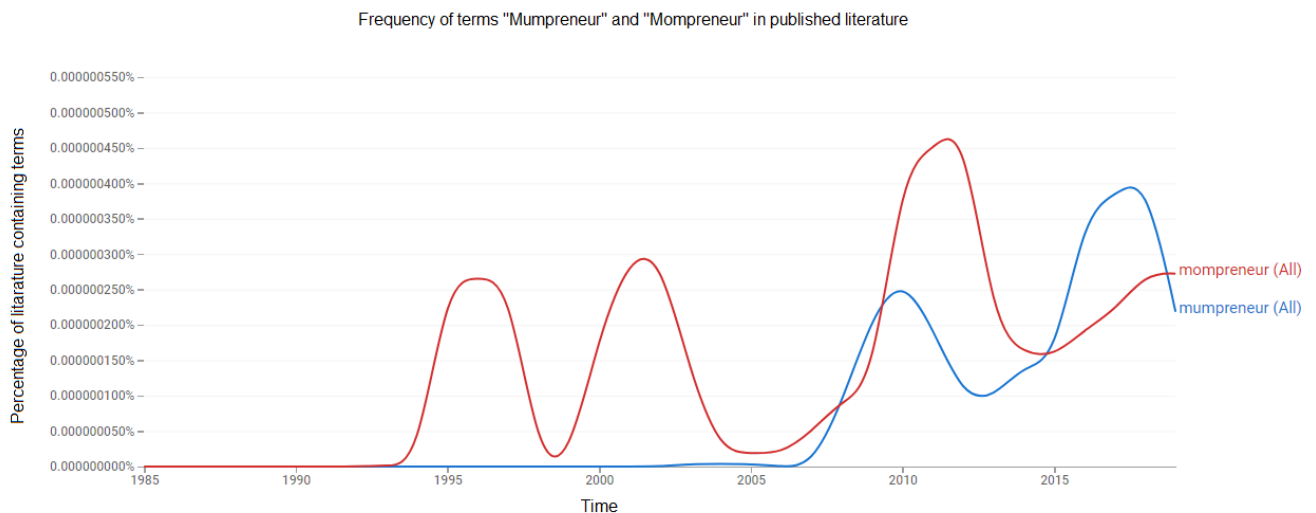


Figure 3: This graph generated through Google Books Ngram Viewer shows the rise in the number of times 'Mumpreneur' (blue) and 'Mompreneur' (red) have appeared in print since 1980 as a percentage of all published materials archived by Google Books.

Of particular note is the publication of Cobe and Parlapiano's (1996) text *Mompreneurs: A Mother's Practical Step-by-Step Guide*. As the title indicates, the book is written as a guide for mothers to help them start, build, and run a business from home. The text provides advice on scheduling, work-life-balance and daily management of both business and domestic work while also listing newly developed resources and e-commerce websites available at the time in the USA. Richomme-Huet and Vial (2014a) note that the first published instance of the word 'Mompreneur' comes from a 1991 USA Today article that describes "a new breed of working mothers who are trading business suits, long commutes, and nine-to-five jobs for the work-at-home life" (Kim, 1991). This article, and Cobe and Parlapiano's book, are the first published materials to explicitly use and define the Mumpreneur (or 'Mompreneur') as a separate and distinct group of working mothers. A later publication by Cobe and Parlapiano – *Mompreneurs Online: Using the Internet to Build Work @ Home Success* (2001) - is notable for their attempt through publication to register the term 'Mompreneur' as a trademark. Despite this, neither Cobe nor Parlapiano currently hold the registered trademark to the term 'Mompreneur', either

globally or in the USA<sup>10</sup>. ‘Mumpreneur’ and ‘Mompreneur’ are thus relatively new terms, predicated on access to technological advancements that make working from home feasible. In this sense, it would be disingenuous to stretch the contemporary concept of Mumpreneurship back to any and all female- or mother-owned businesses.

While some seek to lengthen the history of Mumpreneurship, others shorten it. Such work often cites the Global Financial Crisis as the sole catalyst for Mumpreneurship. Lewis (2010), for instance, argues that Mumpreneurship did not gain traction until 2008. Particularly, Lewis points to a morning television programme ‘This Morning’ broadcast on ITV (one of the largest commercial broadcasting companies in the UK) as the first major use of the term ‘Mumpreneur’. Indeed, the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2007-2008 brought about much economic uncertainty and did catalyse interest in entrepreneurship. However, as argued through contemporary newspaper articles, website archives and Google search-term interest over time interest in ‘Mompreneurship’ spiked primarily during and after the GFC, while searches for ‘Mumpreneurship’ grew over a broader period of time.

It is important to note here that ‘Mumpreneur’ and ‘Mompreneur’ are essentially the same term. The difference between ‘Mumpreneurs’ and ‘Mompreneurs’ is geographic, directly

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<sup>10</sup> Currently ‘Mompreneur’ is a registered trademark of Lenise Williams (WILLIAMS, L. 2014. *Mompreneur*. USA patent application 4642759. Williams applied for the trademark in late 2013 and received it in late 2014. A ‘Mompreneur’ herself, Williams has self-published an anthology of women’s experiences with Mumpreneurship (WILLIAMS, L. 2017. *Mompreneur: Business, Babies, Balance*, Atlanta, Georgia, Williams Enterprises LLC.). According to the terms of her trademark, Williams is also the sole company or individual allowed to use the term ‘Mompreneur’ on merchandise (such as bags, T-shirts, coats, etc.) or to use the term to describe a “social group designed to facilitate networking and socialising opportunities for business owners as well as assist individuals find and secure entrepreneurial endeavours” in the USA. As of writing, no similar trademark claims have been made over the term ‘Mumpreneur’ in Australia, New Zealand, or the United Kingdom.

reflecting the terms used in different anglophone countries for one's mother. To that end, searches from Canada and the USA use the term 'Mompreneur' and those from Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Ireland use the term 'Mumpreneur'. Though ostensibly insignificant, there are revealing differences in search term data between 'Mumpreneur' and 'Mompreneur'. Significant spikes in searches for 'Mompreneurship' occurred in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2016 (see Figure 4<sup>11</sup>). This is consistent with broad narratives that Mumpreneurship, as a global movement, was catalysed by the Global Financial Crisis. However, in the Australian context, significant spikes in searches for 'Mumpreneurship' occurred in 2007, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2016 (see Figure 5). Unlike most other major world economies, Australia avoided going into recession during the GFC, "not even experiencing two consecutive quarters of negative GDP growth," during the crisis (Davidson and de Silva, 2013). The reasons behind the Australian economy's resilience to the GFC are still heavily debated. Researchers and economists suggest numerous factors ranging from the effectiveness of the Fiscal Stimulus Package to global demand for Australian minerals at the time (Davidson and de Silva, 2013, Li and Spencer, 2016). Nevertheless, Australia was not as deeply affected by the GFC as other major world economies. Subsequently, in the Australian context, 'Mumpreneurship' cannot directly be tied to the negative impact of the global financial crisis as it has been in other contexts, such as the USA. From the comparison of worldwide and local search data, it seems that, in the Australian context, Mumpreneurship was not directly tied to the GFC. The meanings of and motivations for Mumpreneurship in the Australian context are therefore in need of further exploration.

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<sup>11</sup> Note that raw Google search data is not publicly available, and that in such 'relative search term' datasets, 'relative frequency' represents search interest relative to the highest frequency of the search term for the given region and time.

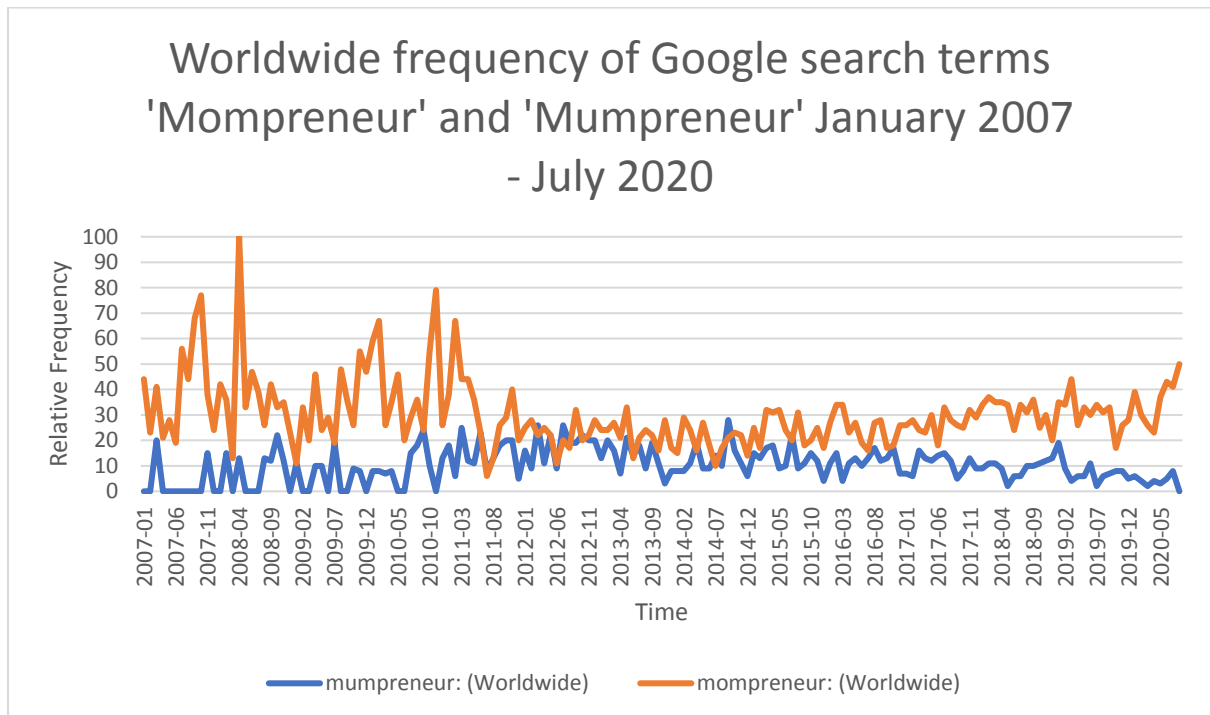


Figure 4: Google's relative search term data for Worldwide frequency of the Google search terms 'Mompreneur' and 'Mumpreneur', January 2007 - July 2020.

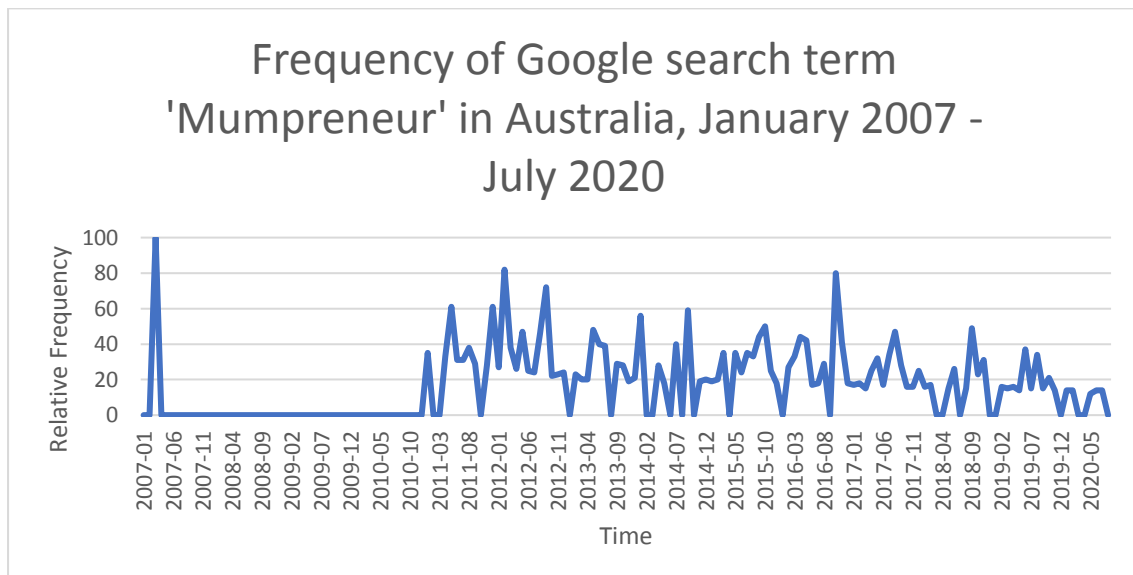


Figure 5: Google's relative search term data for Australian frequency of the Google search terms 'Mompreneur' and 'Mumpreneur', January 2007 - July 2020. As the term 'Mompreneur' is not used in the Australian context and did not return any significant results, it was eliminated from this graph.



In another way to track interest over time, Ekinsmyth (2011) notes that on January 28, 2010, a Google search using the terms 'Mumpreneur' and 'Mompreneur' returned 120,000 results. In 2011 the same search returned 701,700, and in early 2015 the terms returned 743,000 results. Krueger (2015) notes that the most significant growth of interest in these two terms combined was between 2008 and 2011. As of July 2020, the terms 'Mumpreneur' and 'Mompreneur' return a combined 3,390,000 results. A possible contribution to the Australian rise in interest in Mumpreneurship will be expanded upon below.

### **3.2 Mumpreneurship in Australia**

The prospect of mothers starting businesses or working from home has been discussed in the Australian media since the early 1990s. For example, newspaper articles from the early 1990s approach 'telecommuting' with optimism. At this period in time in Australia, 'telecommuting' referred to working from home (or simply away from the traditional office setup) via Internet-connected personal computers. Workers could keep in contact with colleagues via email and submit work by accessing work-based intranets and attend meetings via telephone conferencing. These early discussions of working from home optimistically muse over telecommuting's impact on productivity, organization and management ('Telecommuting: new work concept', 1992, 'Working from home: wave of future productivity?', 1991). However, these contemporary articles also espouse potential benefits regarding childcare arrangements and family life ('Family-friendly toil', 1993, 'Wired up for work', Anderson, 1993b). Some feature profiles of working mothers who 'telecommute to work' and argue that such working

arrangements will help women retain work after the birth of children ('Achieving a flexible working life', Anderson, 1993a). By the late 1990s and early 2000s, discussions around 'telecommuting' had shifted somewhat to discussions of the impact of 'the Internet boom'. Like the articles before, these reports remained optimistic at the prospect of workers – particularly women – using home computers to connect to work via the Internet or to start businesses from home.

In this 'Internet boom' of the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Australian federal government launched a website for businesses in Australia - 'business.gov.au' (see Appendix A). This portal catalogued resources for business owners and offered advice and training for prospective and home-business owners. The reasoning behind the establishment of the website was outlined clearly on its 'about' page. It states:

"In 1996, the Commonwealth Government decide to reduce the compliance and paperwork burden it imposes on small business and established a Small Business Deregulation Taskforce to identify measures which could achieve this aim.

In response to the recommendations of the Taskforce, the Prime Minister announced the More Time for Business initiatives on 24 March 1997. His statement pointed out that government in Australia need[sic] to simplify the range of on-line business access points, reduce the number of compliance forms, improve information services to business, streamline licensing and approvals processes and collect statistical data more effectively.

In particular, he said that the Commonwealth Government would consider establishing a single-entry point to governments for business and, as a first step,

would introduce a single process for the initial registration requirements of the Treasury agencies by 1 July 1998.

The Government has since decided to invest further in a 'whole of government' Business Entry Point based on a business case and implementation strategy developed in 1997. All states and Territories support the initiative"

Becoming a 'single access point' for business forms, resources and advice, business.gov.au was quickly expanded due to increasing demand from small, often home-based businesses seeking resources to continue operating or expand (see Appendices A.i and A.ii). As will be expanded upon in chapter 5, The Howard era (1996 – 2007) which was particularly market-oriented, saw a significant increase in 'market populism' and shifted to neoliberal approaches to governance. This era deemphasised the role of the state in social policy, privatising, deregulating, and offloading previously government-supported social programs to individual citizens and the private sector. Fiscal policy of this era also deemphasised the role of the state in market regulation and encouraged small business ownership through favourable tax breaks. Unlike other areas where state resources were cut back or removed, resources, advice, and training for the start-up of businesses, was made available to the public via business.gov.au. This was instrumental in encouraging small, home-based business ownership in Howard-era Australia.

The expansion of resources and training programs available to the public for small and home-based business ownership made starting up such businesses more accessible. This encouraged a steadily increasing rate of female business ownership in Australia (ABS, 2015). However, there was a significant oversight. While there was a marked increase in small business ownership, a

particular upswing in female-owned businesses, and a general excitement and encouragement around the affordances and possibilities for reshaping work in the 'Internet boom', there was little advice available for women and mothers. Few, if any, resources via [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au) directly tackled how to manage the care of children alongside small business ownership. There were substantial gaps between the Howard government's encouragement of small business ownership through digital technologies and the resources available for women to actually undertake business ownership. The resources and advice available did not adequately support, account for, or acknowledge the very people who were told they would benefit the most from it. It is in this gap that communities like the Australian Mother's Business Network found their niche.

In 2009, the group 'Ozzie Mumpreneurs' was registered on Facebook. Though initially slow to gain traction, this Facebook group represents the first group to explicitly use the term 'Mumpreneur' in the Australian context. After registering the domain name 'AMBN.com' (that is, Australian Mother's Business Network) in 2011, the 'Ozzie Mumpreneurs' Facebook group was changed to 'The Australian Mother's Business Network'. Since then, the Australian Mother's Business Network has expanded its reach beyond that of a social network, by organising: a yearly conference, an annual awards show, frequent state-based networking events and educational or instructional content regarding a range of topics related to the constraints of running a business as a mother. This is as well as producing: a quarterly digital magazine, a podcast, and a frequent newsletter for Australian Mumpreneurs. The Australian Mother's Business Network, with both a website and considerable Facebook group following, remains the largest networking association, social group, and resource for Mumpreneurs in Australia, claiming to reach over 16,000 in their online community with over 33,700 followers on its

Facebook page alone. So too, the Australian Mumpreneurial movement - as a particular and distinct group of mothers with businesses - can be traced to this period in the early 2010s.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

The popularization of Mumpreneurship is inexorably tied to the rise of home-based digital technologies. Attempting to historicise Mumpreneurship risks obscuring its roots as a means to manage competing pressures of work and home life, facilitated by the use of digital technologies. Similarly, suggesting that Mumpreneurship was catalysed by the GFC risks obfuscating Mumpreneurial movements in differing geographic areas. The GFC did not affect Australia in the same way as it did most other world economies. To call Australian Mumpreneurship a response to the GFC is, thus, inaccurate. Additionally, to attribute Mumpreneurship to the GFC obscures other factors that may have supported the burgeoning movement in Australia, such as: Howard era tax cuts for small business, broad shifts to neoliberal governance, and women's adoption and use of new technologies in the home. Paying particular attention to Mumpreneurship in Australia, this thesis views Mumpreneurship as a distinct category of work that, while grounded in and heavily informed by existing domestic, economic, and social structures, is distinct from previous forms of women's business ownership.

## **4. Literature review – Part 1: Intersections between Feminism and Neoliberalism**

This section explores the role of feminism and neoliberalism in the evolution of Mumpreneurship as a concept and movement. To fully explore these intertwined and overlapping influences, this section is divided into five parts. The first explores the history of women's movements - particularly regarding Australian mothers' relationship to the labour force - and the social impact of the Second Wave feminist movement. This section will then explore the Second Wave's lack of embedded cultural critique over mothers entering the labour force. Section 4.2 discusses the Third Wave of feminist activism and scholarship, while acknowledging and addressing the influence of neoliberal logics on such social movements. Section 4.3 shall discuss the history and influence of the neoliberal concept in relation to female-lead labour and feminist movements. Section 4.4 will discuss the confluence of these intertwined factors on the on the concept of intensive mothering. Mumpreneurs thrive in neoliberal economic and social domains where underlying cultural and legal frameworks define women as primary caregivers to children. Analysing relevant literature throughout, these sections aim to contextualise Mumpreneurship, situating it in the intersections of feminist and neoliberal literatures. I thereafter suggest that Mumpreneurship encapsulates contemporary Australian women's negotiations over labour and motherhood in response to neoliberalism.

## 4.1 Female Labour Movements and the Second Wave

As explored in Chapter 3, the term 'Mumpreneur' was coined in the mid-90s and gained popularity worldwide over the next decade. However, to contextualise Mumpreneurship, it is necessary to discuss the history of women and labour that extends to the post-war period. This is not intended to extend the history of Mumpreneurship back further than the 1990s, but to establish and discuss the theoretical and social frameworks that formed the backdrop to Mumpreneurship.

To that end, female-lead post-war labour movements set the groundwork for the Second Wave feminist push into public and economic spheres (Cobble, 2005). The underlying theoretical base for this Second Wave feminist activism is summarised in the concept of 'adequate similarity' (Evans, 1995). That is, the Second Wave feminist movement was predicated on the assumption that there were 'no differences that could justify discrimination on the grounds of sex' (Evans, 1995, p. 16). Underpinned by this assumed commonality of the experience of womanhood, the 'Second Wave' of feminism (alternatively styled Women's Liberation) sought to counter 'sex-based discrimination' in legal, economic, and social spheres, primarily through collective action. Extending equality to women in the labour force was, then, a pivotal goal championed by Second Wave feminists.

Second Wave feminist activism from the 60s, 70s and 80s had an indirect but significant impact on the women of this study and, to a great extent, the development of Mumpreneurship. In line with Mumpreneurship broadly, most women in this study are in their 40s. As such, they did not

personally take part in Second Wave feminist activism. Rather, they are the daughters of those who took part in Second Wave feminist activism.

In the Australian legal context, protections from pregnancy-based discrimination in the workforce have been enforced since the early 1980s. Thanks largely to Second Wave protests and legal challenges (both domestic and international), the Australian government signed the United Nations 'Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women' (CEDAW) in July, 1980 and ratified in July, 1983 (Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women, 2003, p. 11). In the following year, the Sexual Discrimination Act (1984) was passed to help end workplace sex-based discrimination, including pregnancy discrimination (Commonwealth of Australia, 1996). These legal protections, combined later with parental leave entitlements, enabled women to return to work after pregnancy in considerable numbers.

Presently, Australia has a tiered system of Government-supported parental leave payments enacted under the Paid Parental Leave Act (2010) and the Fair Work Act (2009). The first tier of this payment system is the 'Paid Parental Leave Scheme'. This can be accessed by one adult member of the household who will be taking on the primary care duties of a new child<sup>12</sup>. The paid parental leave scheme entitles the primary carer up to 18 weeks of paid leave and 12 months unpaid leave that can be extended to a maximum of 24 months in total. Under the Fair Work Act, Employers are compelled to hold the primary carers job until their period of unpaid leave is finished. This period of unpaid leave can be shared with the registered partner of the primary carer. The amount calculated for the paid portion of this leave is based on the weekly

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<sup>12</sup> The 'primary carer' can access the Paid Parental Leave scheme regardless of whether the child joins the family through birth or adoption.



rate of the national minimum wage. Employers are encouraged but not required to develop their own paid parental leave policies that 'top up' and/or extend paid leave entitlements to primary caregivers. Primary carers are able to receive both the Australian Government's paid parental leave scheme and their employers paid parental leave simultaneously. Policies between companies differ significantly, with some offering wage-parity and significant extensions to the period of paid leave. Others may not offer anything more than the government-supported minimum wage. The government-funded paid parental leave scheme is not automatically applied so primary carers must apply to qualify for the leave and entitlements. To qualify, applicants must pass the work, residency, and income tests. Primary carers must be Australian citizens (or on a special category of visa), earn less than \$150,000 and have worked, on average, at least one day a week for 10 of the past 13 months and be the primary carer for the newborn or adopted child. As this particular subsidy is paid by the government rather than particular employers, a primary carer could be employed by a single employer, by multiple workplaces, or work for themselves, to qualify for this payment.

The second tier of Government-sponsored leave - first implemented in 2013 under the Paid Parental Leave Act 2010 - is the 'Dad and Partner Pay' scheme. Like the 'Paid Parental Leave Scheme', it is opt-in, with 'dads and partners' needing to apply and pass the income, residency, and work tests. To be eligible they must also be Australian citizens (or on a special category of visa), earn less than \$150,000 and have worked, on average, at least one day a week for 10 of the past 13 months. This payment, if approved, only entitles the recipient to two weeks of paid leave. Unlike Paid Parental Leave, 'Dad and Partner' leave is paid directly to the claimant, rather than the employer. There are no particular provisions for unpaid leave under the 'Dad and

Partner' leave schemes, but the primary carer is able to split their 'unpaid parental leave' period with their partner.

In an effort to, at once, be inclusive of Australian LGBTQ+ families and make it easier for fathers in heteronormative families to take up primary caring duties, the wording of these acts is mostly gender-neutral<sup>13</sup>. The primary carer's period of unpaid leave (up to 24 months in total) can be shared between parents with no provisos on gender identity or sexual orientation. However, as of 2019, only 5% Australian fathers take on primary parental leave, (ABS & website). Most Australian fathers access the fortnight of 'dad and partner pay' but "the right to request flexible work legislation (under the National Employment Standards) ... is still not seen (in practice) as an option for many fathers" (Rush, 2013), The majority of Australian fathers do not split the primary carer unpaid leave with their partners, returning to work after the two-week period of paid leave is over.

Though legal protections were ratified, general cultural attitudes to women's assumed position as the 'primary child carer' did not change. Giddens (2013) argues that Euro-American women are, at least discursively, equal to men. For example, the women of this study, are the first generation of Australian women to grow up in a social order where they were (ostensibly) equal to men. Indeed, legal frameworks preventing women from taking part in the formal workforce were largely removed through the concerted efforts of Second Wave of feminist scholarship and activism. However, following Giddens, this does not mean men and women have reached parity

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<sup>13</sup> Beyond the inclusion of the term 'Dad' in the 'Dad and Partner Pay' scheme. It must also be noted that the women in this study, when describing their own experiences with these governmental programs, used previous government terms such as 'maternity leave' for 'primary carer parental leave' and 'paternity leave' for 'dad and partner paid leave'.

in contemporary Australian society. Rather, I suggest that this is a cultural narrative of equality. Mumpreneurs have grown up with the discourse of equality but not the social changes necessary to embody it. This is not to downplay the significant changes since the 1980s, but to emphasise that, while legal frameworks preventing women from participating in the workforce were removed, questions regarding domestic and childcare arrangements with two parents working full time have not been resolved.

Unchanged cultural understandings of caring, all-consuming motherhood (explored further in Section 4.4) mean that working women take on most, if not all domestic tasks at home. This phenomenon, wherein women are doubly tasked with fulltime work and an unequal share of domestic and childcare responsibilities – commonly termed the ‘second shift’ (Hochschild and Machung, 1989) – remains a persistent issue in the lifeworld of participants. The understanding of fatherhood and men’s role in parenting has undergone some changes since the 1980s. There are even some men who take on the majority of domestic work and childcare as ‘stay-at-home dads’ in Australia (Baxter, 2017) and other anglophone countries (Smith, 2009). The numbers of men staying home to look after children, though, are small. As discussed in McInnes-Dean’s work with new parents in the UK, men and women in heterosexual couples tend to downplay gender divisions before the birth of children, ‘dwelling little on gender difference before they became parents’ (McInnes-Dean, 2020). However, once children are born, McInnes-Dean’s participants describe highly gendered reactions to parenthood. Motherhood is described as a profoundly embodied experience and used as a marker of inherent gendered difference between women and men (Bristow, 2008). This too is reflected by the women of this study.

After the birth of children, women are primarily defined as caregivers of children and take on the bulk of domestic duties in the stark majority of heterosexual, dual-income households. The latest Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report on gender inequality in OECD countries shows that from 1999-2010 men in Australia undertook 171.6 minutes of unpaid housework work per day. In contrast, women undertook 311.0 (OECD, 2012, p. 259). There has been a significant increase in the number of families with both parents working in Australia. However, the allocation of domestic and formal work is still split down highly gendered lines (Rush, 2013). This domestic arrangement is not unique to Australian heterosexual families - women do more unpaid work than men in all OECD countries, with the OECD noting that “many systems still implicitly regard childrearing as a mother’s responsibility: everywhere women are doing more unpaid work than men, regardless of whether they have full-time jobs or not” (OECD, 2016, p. 15).

Australia-based research has also concluded that there is an unequal distribution of unpaid work between men and women in the Australian context. While men do participate in childcare and domestic chores, women spend more time doing such housework than men (Ting et al., 2016, Chesters, 2012). The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), for instance, found that while women and men work similar hours per week (56.4 for women, 55. 5 for men) women’s share of unpaid domestic work accounts for 64.4% of these work hours (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2016, p. 4). For men, such unpaid care work only accounts for 36.1% of their total work hours (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2016, p. 4). Becoming a father is also associated with stronger career growth and higher pay compared to becoming a mother (Correll et al., 2007). WGEA note that such unequal distributions of unpaid domestic and care work can have a detrimental effect on women’s participation in the paid labour force, reinforcing “gender

stereotypes of the female ‘homemaker’ and male ‘breadwinner’ household model” (WGEA, 2016, p. 8).

There are also a number of structural barriers to women’s participation in the formal labour force and men’s access to paternity leave. Australian families, for instance, pay a higher percentage of their wages in childcare than the OECD average, with 18% of the average household income devoted entirely to childcare (OECD, 2020), despite government initiatives like the Child Care Subsidy, Family Tax benefits, and the availability of public healthcare infrastructure like Medicare, meaning families don’t have to take on additional costs associated with heavily privatized healthcare systems. Despite these benefits, the cost of childcare is still a significant motivating factor for many women to reduce their hours to part-time, take advantage of flexible working arrangements or temporarily give up work to care for young children. New fathers experience some difficulty in accessing long-term flexible working arrangements such as parental leave. As outlined above, paternity leave rarely accessed beyond the two week period of paid leave, with employers hesitant to enact policies that would allow for longer periods of paid or unpaid paternity leave (Rush, 2013). This presents a barrier to men taking on more childcare duties and unpaid domestic labour. When women become mothers, then, they tend to do more housework and more child-minding but spend less time in paid employment than men (Craig and Bittman, 2008). In direct contrast, after the birth of children, men are more likely to return to work full-time. As a result, in middle-class Australia, women remain responsible for navigating and managing childcare and domestic work – making dinner, scheduling family appointments, maintaining a clean house, being available to tackle any issues in regard to children and other such devalued invisible labour (Cox, 1997, Crabb, 2019). As there

are a number of cultural and structural barriers to mother's participation in the paid workforce, it is imperative to discuss the social and historical context surrounding such barriers.

Second Wave scholarship and activism encompassed a variety of competing critiques and ideologies centred around the concept of equality for women. While not a homogenous or uniform movement, through mainstream critiques of the nuclear family structure, they aimed to liberate women from the confines of domestic work and childbearing. Though some feminist activists working during the Second Wave tackled issues regarding childcare for working mothers, motherhood was "the problem that modern feminists cannot face" (Hewlett, 1987). Writing in a period of revaluation of the 60s- and 70s-women's movements, Hewlett argues that few strains of feminist activism tackled or acknowledged the particular pressures experienced by mothers trying to navigate labour at work and home – "very few [feminists] have attempted to integrate [mothers] into the fabric of a full and equal life" (Hewlett, 1987). While Hewlett's assertions were themselves critiqued (see (Umansky, 1996), the lack of embedded, consistent alternatives to traditional gendered divisions of labour, in part, gave rise to the 'second shift' phenomena. Rather than developing new forms of domestic arrangement, women were shouldered with the double responsibility of work in the labour force and work in the domestic sphere. This 'second shift', while unintended, was a direct consequence of the Second Wave's assertion that women could 'have it all' (Hallstein, 2008). The lack of embedded cultural critique of the barriers mothers face in their pursuit of jobs in the formal labour force, men's lack of push into the domestic sphere, and the unwillingness of state-sponsorship for alternative care arrangements, meant that women were dually tasked with work in the home and formal labour force.

## 4.2 Mumpreneurs' Experience of Third Wave Feminism

In part, the Second Wave's lack of a consistent alternative to traditional gendered divisions of labour gave rise to the Third Wave feminist movement. The Third Wave feminist movement is broadly categorised as both a critique of, and counter to, perceived shortfalls of the Second Wave (Mann and Huffman, 2005, Snyder, 2008, Schuster, 2017). The 1990s and 2000s saw an upswing in feminist literature discussing feminism as a "movement in flux and an identity in question" (Evans and Bodel, 2007p. 208). The origins of the term 'Third Wave' to describe this new iteration of feminist discourse is nebulous. Rebecca Walker's pivotal article in Ms. magazine '*Becoming the Third Wave*' (1992), is often cited as the catalyst that propelled the concept into the mainstream.

The theoretical underpinnings for this new 'Third Wave' feminist movement can be found in the post-structural critique of universalist categories the Second Wave relied upon, such as 'woman' as a category (see: Judith Butler's highly influential *Gender Trouble* (2002)). The Second Wave emphasised the commonality or even universality of female experience under patriarchy in an effort to prompt collective action (Mann and Huffman, 2005). The Third Wave, in contrast, resisted such universalist narratives. With the aim of creating a movement that "speaks to and represents the experience of all women" (Weiner-Mahfuz, 2002, p. 39), Third Wave feminist texts argued any labels (like 'woman') "that seek to categorise and define are historical constructs, often used as tools of oppression" (Walker, 2004, p. xiv). Evans and Bobel (2007) go so far as to argue that the crux of Third Wave feminism can be found in the outright rejection of

labelling of any kind. By definition, Third Wave feminist scholarship “precludes embracing a discrete identity ... how can a movement be at once truly inclusive and wedded to an identity that necessarily creates boundaries?” (Evans and Bobel, 2007, pp. 213-214). Without an assumed universality of experience, it was not possible for the Third Wave to prompt political and social action in the same way that the Second Wave mobilised around a presumed commonality of the experience of ‘womanhood’.

In its place, Third Wave feminist activism foregrounded “personal narratives that illustrate an intersectional and multiperspectival version of feminism” (Snyder, 2008, p. 175). Smith, for instance, states, “when I realised that [Second Wave] feminism largely liberated white women at the economic and social expense of women of color, I knew I was fundamentally unable to call myself a feminist” (Smith, 2002, 62). In the same volume, Lantigua expands on this point, suggesting that the “core failure of (North) American feminism [was] the alienation of women like my mother ... who have the demands of an extended family and the rigors of defining themselves in a place between two real and often contradictory worlds” (Lantigua, 2002, p. 52). Among many themes encoded in these personal reflections are two that merit highlighting: (1) a critique of previous women’s movements – particularly the Second Wave – for not addressing issues of intersectionality, and (2) a call to acknowledge and incorporate intersectionality from the outset in this new Third Wave. This Third Wave, then, is largely categorised by its goal to account for and incorporate women’s differing experiences at the intersections of gender, class, and ethnicity.

Despite these and similar calls to incorporate intersectionality at the Third Wave’s inception, this is not the most significant feature of Third Wave activism and scholarship. The most



relevant characteristics of Third Wave feminist scholarship and activism - pertinent to the life-worlds of Mumpreneurs - are individuation and the foregrounding of personal narrative. These two interwoven concepts helped collapse the category of 'woman' utilised by Second Wave feminists in their scholarship and activism. 'Woman' was far too broad a term to be politically or personally useful in the context of the early 1990s and 2000s. In its place, the individual and the body became the main site of political and social resistance. Fixmer and Wood's work sought to identify reoccurring themes in this new Third Wave literature. Their review indicated that embodied politics runs throughout Third Wave feminist writings; identifying three distinct, reoccurring themes: "(1) redefining identities; (2) enacting personal, everyday resistance; and (3) building coalitions" (Evans and Bobel 2007, p. 211). The second of these themes, 'enacting personal, everyday resistance' reflects not only the Third Wave's use of the body as the primary site for resistance but also the deeply individuated worldview that permeates Third Wave scholarship and activism in anglophone regions.

From its inception, the Third Wave has been a decidedly neoliberal response to socio-political and structural issues affecting women. Scholars suggest that neoliberal market logics have usurped traditional sources of activism and even identity. Dicker and Piepmeier (2016, p. 5), for instance, posit that Third Wave of feminist scholarship and activism "consists of those of us who have developed our sense of identity in a world shaped by technology, global capitalism, multiple models of sexuality, changing national demographics and declining economic vitality". On this theme, Harris argues that previous domains such as community and the polity – where girls could build civic belonging and identity "have become fragmented. In their place are individuated relationships to the market" (2004, p. 67). Going further than Dicker and Piepmeier or Harris' critiques, Iannello argues that the supposed benefit of increased 'choice' promoted by

neoliberally informed Third Wave scholarship; “does not empower women; it silences them and prevents feminism from becoming a political movement and addressing the real issues of distribution of resources” (Iannello, 1998). There is a great deal of scholarship supporting the notion that neoliberal market logics as well as choice narratives are becoming increasingly enmeshed with social movements, identity, and activism.

Third Wave activists and scholars embrace neoliberal logics, framing individual actions as legitimate affronts to structural issues. Walker also collated a number of essays in an edited work on “feminism and female empowerment in the nineties” (1995, p. xxxvi). More specifically, she asked the contributors to write essays “that explored female empowerment from the perspective of what in your life has been empowering for you”. In addition, rather than a call to collective action, Walker, in her previously mentioned *Ms.* magazine article closes with “I am the Third Wave” (1992). While not an intentional statement of neoliberal principles, this reflects a pearl of individuation present in the Third Wave since the beginning of the movement. This theme, of everyday, personal actions representing a new form of organised resistance is repeated openly and consistently in contemporaneous literature. As discussed by Evans and Bobel (2007), this Third Wave approach to feminism measures achievement in small, everyday sites of resistance: “a sister’s new job, a redecorated room, a clean credit report” (Ballí, 2002, p. 197). Being young adults during this period of Third Wave activism, participants largely describe a shared worldview of their place as a Mumpreneurs in contemporary Australia. Participants take great care in emphasising that motherhood and Mumpreneurship are born out of their own personal choice to leave traditional employment and build a home-based business. This is entirely consistent with Third Wave discourses; as Snyder-Hall writes: “inclusive, pluralistic, and non-judgmental, Third Wave feminism respects the right of women to decide for themselves

how to negotiate ... often contradictory desires” (Snyder-Hall, 2010, p. 255). Opposing structural issues with an activism based solely on economic empowerment does not adequately address the socio-cultural, structural issues that underpin the structural issues in the first place.

Third Wave feminism has addressed significant oversights and unintended consequences of Second Wave protest and scholarship. Particularly, Third Wave scholarship takes care to acknowledge, incorporate and analyse the differences in experience women can have at the intersections of gender, class, and ethnicity. However, the actions taken to achieve these goals – foregrounding the individual and centring the individual body as the main site of resistance – are highly individuated, neoliberal approaches to complex structural issues. Mumpreneurs aim to be dynamic and savvy, taking advantage of any opportunities to further their business goals. These techniques – the savviness with which they pivot and utilise time and resources – are fuelled by the increasingly unstable economic environment they inhabit. Such individuated world-views - fostered by Third Wave feminism - lend themselves well to the logics of neoliberalism.

### **4.3 Neoliberalism at Home**

The largest change in economic forces surrounding this study’s participants has been in the broad shift to neoliberal rationales in government, industry, and home-life. The neoliberal project has brought about major economic and social policy reforms (Hoffman et al., 2006). However, neoliberalism is a term in need of clarity as the history and definition of neoliberalism is multifarious. Ong states that “neoliberalism seems to mean many different things depending

on one's vantage point" (2006, p. 1). Hoffman et. al. goes so far as to suggest that "very little attention has been devoted to specifying what 'neoliberalism' means" (Hoffman et al., 2006, p. 9). Used to simultaneously describe economic reform policy, a hegemonic project, development models, an ideology of self-making, a mode of governance and the slow creep of economic logic into areas not traditionally conceptualised as economic domains, 'neoliberalism' is an ambiguous term.

The general narrative of neoliberalism – shared by most economic and social science scholars – suggests that the neoliberalism project was born out of conceptual shifts in the 1970s and 1980s resulting in broad-scale economic and social policy reforms (Hoffman et al., 2006). Harvey acknowledges the multiplicity with which neoliberalism is used and defined. He describes the concept as: a theory, a mode of discourse and a hegemonic project that seeks to "re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites" (Harvey, 2007, p. 15). He also defines the neoliberal project as being a series of policies that seek "to bring all human action into the domain of the market" (Harvey, 2007, p. 3). Engaging with deeper historical roots of the concept, Ortner (2011), in contrast, sees little distinction between 'neoliberalism' and 'late capitalism'. Both, she argues, can be used to describe the general conceptual shifts away from the Fordism and Keynesian economic thought and policy, central to 20<sup>th</sup> century economics. Similarly, Ganti (2014) argues that neoliberal thought emerged well before the 1970s economic policies most often associated with the term. However, Ganti defines neoliberalism as an ideological and philosophical movement that emerged from specific institutions and intellectual networks in post–World War I Europe and the United States.

Neoliberalism represents the underlying idea that the structure of the economy determines the basic frame of the larger society (Block, 2002, pp. 202). To elaborate, the neoliberal project is

one that asserts that human well-being can best be achieved through “liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2007, pp. 2)<sup>14</sup>. The concept of neoliberalism as used, discussed and debated remains fragmented - simultaneously an ideology, a hegemonic project, a discourse, a mode of governance, and the extension of economic logic into areas not traditionally thought of as economic domains (Harvey, 2007). However, neoliberalism remains an impactful economic and social force. The most pressing and egregious consequence of neoliberalism, to many, is the slow creep of market logics into traditionally separated fields. This also serves as its most intuitive definition. Following Harvey (2007) and Rudnyckyj (2014), this thesis uses neoliberalism to describe the force that supplant traditionally non-market driven domains with market logics as enacted through governmental policy and individual action.

Publishing in the 90s, Hochschild (2003, p. 35) writes of the commercialization of caring:

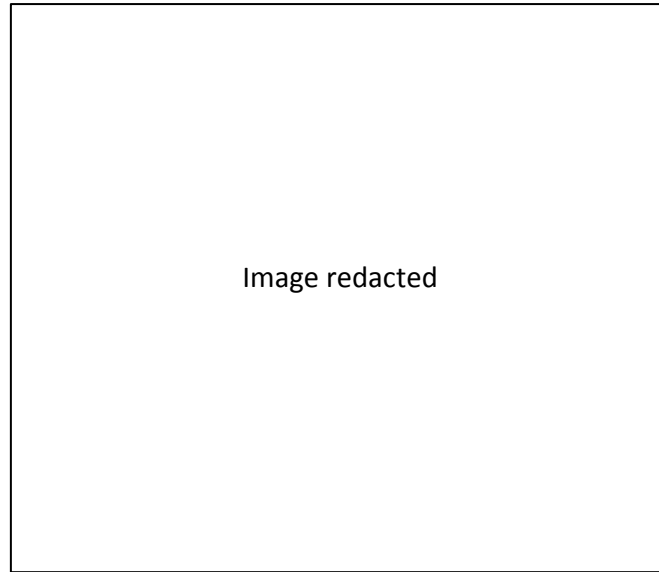
“The commodity frontier, Janus-faced, looks out on one side to the marketplace and on the other side to the family. On the market side it is a frontier for companies as they expand the number of market niches for goods and services covering activities that, in yesteryear, formed part of unpaid “family life.” On the other side it is a frontier for families that feel the need or desire to consume such goods and services ... in a sense, capitalism isn't competing with itself, one company against another, but with the family, and particularly with the role of the wife and mother.”

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<sup>14</sup> This style of governance categorized Howard era policies for small business, as explored in Chapters 3 and 5.4

This 'commodity frontier' also overtook contemporary Australian home-life, becoming normalized in the 00s and 10s. With the slow creep of neoliberal market logics into everyday life, the work of motherhood became commodified and alienated. Mumpreneurs simultaneously embrace and disavow this commodification of care. They ostensibly resist the pull of commodification by taking on care duties that have, since the 90s, been commodified (i.e., childcare, nannying, home cleaning etc). That they give up formal work as a means to 'be there' and look after their children' while other mothers 'rely' on childcare or babysitters is, to the Mumpreneur, an act of resistance. Yet, Mumpreneurs also embrace neoliberal logics, drawing economic gain from traditionally separate fields and looking to themselves as the sole arbiters of their families' and businesses' success.

Mumpreneurs typify this form of everyday neoliberalism. Being mothers who start up small, home-based businesses around the time they have children, they exemplify the 'imperative toward extending economic logic into areas not traditionally conceptualised as economic domains' (Ong, 2006, Rudnyckyj, 2014). Mumpreneurs' strategic use of technology and digital social spaces as a means to garner potential customers commodifies both social links and personality. Through short life-narratives and bios posted on social media and their business websites, Mumpreneurs emphasise that they 'started on the kitchen table' with little resources but 'lots of hustle'. In this context, early motherhood is framed not as a period of adjusting to new life circumstances and childcare but as 'downtime' wherein they were able to pursue business opportunities. They take great care to describe their business and life circumstances as being born from individual actions and personal choice. The ideology of self-making and individuation - central to the neoliberal concept - is replicated in Mumpreneurial spaces, be it on social media or websites dedicated to their own businesses.



*Figure 6: Meme shared on Mumpreneurial Facebook page, offering encouragement to viewers of the page. The meme consists of a photo of Jeff Bezos working in a small, cramped office space with a spraypainted banner reading 'amazon.com' on the wall. The text accompanying the image states 'This is Jeff Bezos in his Amazon office in 1999. He is now worth \$98.6 Billion. Don't be afraid of starting small'*

#### **4.4 Intensive Mothering under the Neoliberal Project**

The highly individuated, all-consuming, intensive motherhood practiced by participants is a relatively recent turn in the history of motherhood in Australia. Third Wave Ideas about good mothering in Australia have shifted significantly since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in response to both feminism and neoliberalism. While these shifts are broadly comparable to those that took place in similar Anglophone countries – that is, New Zealand, Canada, the UK, and the USA – their impact on Australian mothers cannot be understated. Discussing Australia specifically, Pascoe notes that

“...in the late 1940s and 1950s, motherhood was viewed as intuitive and natural, a role that the majority of women adopted instinctively. Seventy years later, motherhood is

viewed as a difficult occupation requiring training, specialist knowledge and expert advice” (Pascoe, 2015, p. 219).

This pattern of ‘intuitive mothering’ giving way to professionalised motherhood corresponds with the rise of ‘intensive mothering’ as described by Hays (1998), Hochschild (2003) and Pugh (2009).

According to Hays, intensive mothering is “a gendered model that advises mothers to expend a tremendous amount of time, energy, and money in raising their children”. This approach to motherhood assumes “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” (Douglas and Michaels, 2005). Hays first published these arguments at a time of rampant “neoliberal offloading of social and fiscal support for families, especially mothers, who took on the responsibility of childcare individually without choice but rather as a necessity” (Ennis, 2014). In response to this tightening pressure, rather than a loosening up of standards, Hays argues that a more intense form of motherhood emerged (Hays, 1998).

Lareau’s (2011) work on class and race in American schools, as discussed by Pugh (2009), elucidates on Hays’s theories. Lareau suggests that the ideals of intensive motherhood respond to changes in the conception of children in middle class American households “who went from being economic contributors to the household to priceless individuals defined as not-yet-adults, whose primary task was their own development”(Pugh, 2009). Mothers’ roles in this new



understanding of children and childhood was then “focused, dedicated, child-centred, self-sacrificing, and, not coincidentally, expensive” (Pugh, 2009, p. 21).

This pressure-cooker of all-consuming neoliberal motherhood – at once thrust upon and taken up by new mothers – is predicated on three main tenets:

(1) Children need constant care by their biological mother who is solely responsible for their needs.

(2) Mothers need to professionalise – to seek out and rely on experts to access and apply the best, most nurturing care practices; and

(3) Care requires an enormous expenditure of time and money. Mothers must lavish this time and money on children (Douglas and Michaels, 2005, Hays, 1998, Hochschild, 2003, Hallstein, 2008).

Even though no mother lives up to these ideals, these tenets have come to represent an idealised model of motherhood in Anglophone countries.

To many participants, this is the assumed ‘natural’ experience of motherhood. The interpretation and practice of motherhood has changed significantly in Australia (Pascoe, 2015) and other Anglophone countries (Pugh, 2009, Lareau, 2011). According to Ennis, “intensive mothering gives women powerless responsibility; it assigns mothers all the responsibility for mothering but denies them the power to define and determine their own experiences of mothering” (Ennis, 2014, p 107). That participants assume this ideal of intensive motherhood to be ‘natural’, then, reflects a complicated, contradictory approach to motherhood that they aim to ‘solve’ through Mumpreneurship and underpins why this theoretical framework of

motherhood became important to explore in this thesis. As implied by Ahmed (2017) through her concept of 'gender fatalism' for instance, when divisions between gendered practices are assumed to be 'natural', they cease to be means through which women can explain their lives. Rather, they become expectations that need to be fulfilled.

Mumpreneurs' attempts to embody and fulfil the contradictory demands of intensive motherhood and work in the formal labour force is a constant pressure on their interpretation (or, more accurately, judgement) of themselves as 'good' mothers. Indeed, many participants expressed how they could not justify 'leaving their kids', that they 'didn't want someone else raising my child' and felt that 'being there' for their children was the most important choice they could make. In this world- and self-conception, the traditional work force takes these women away from their 'more important' duties (childcare in the domestic sphere) because their children would 'suffer' without them. Fully consistent with the intensive motherhood ideal, in their life-worlds, Mumpreneurs are the *only* ones who can provide the best care for their children –more so than any au pair, kindergarten teacher or childcare worker.

Intensive self- and family- management is consistent not just with intensive mothering practices but also broadly in-line with the highly individuated Third Wave feminist approaches to gendered divisions of labour. In Rottenberg's (2018) critique of the movement, she argues that individualised responses to structural problems cannot adequately counter such problems. The women of this study are acutely aware of the social, cultural, and economic forces producing this inequality. However, in such a highly individualised, neoliberal context, an individual "accepts full responsibility of her own well-being and self-care, which is often predicated on crafting felicitous work-family balance based on cost-benefit calculus" (Rottenberg, 2018, p. 55).

Mumpreneurs emphasise that motherhood is ‘their choice’ and assume the sum total responsibility of care for their children. Mumpreneurship is not just a Third Wave response to the oversights of Second Wave feminism but also a compromise between the ideals of intensive motherhood and the economic sphere. Unlike work in the formal labour force, Mumpreneurs have more control and flexibility over work hours and, as such, can fulfil the basic tenets of intensive mothering by ‘being there’ for their children as often as they need. In sum, individual actions and ‘personal choice’ cannot effectively counter structural inequalities. Mumpreneurship is consistent with both neoliberal and Third Wave feminist discourses.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

Women’s – particularly mothers’ – relationship to the formal labour force has changed considerably over time. The Second Wave of feminist protest, activism and legal challenges enacted broad legal changes in Australian society. However, this type of feminist activism did not account for the complexities of intersectionality, did not address the particular challenges faced by mothers entering the formal labour force, nor did it offer a substantially different model of domestic arrangements for dual-income households. This facilitated the ‘double shift’ phenomena wherein women were expected to undertake full-time work and most (if not all) domestic chores while also being the primary caregivers to children.

Pressure-cooked by neoliberal rationalization and lack of government expenditure on social programs such as childcare, competing expectations intensified until ‘intensive mothering’ became the dominant lens through which Mumpreneurs interpreted and enacted motherhood.

In tandem, Third Wave feminism's foregrounding of 'personal experience' as feminist praxis foregrounded personal choice narratives. This allowed Mumpreneurs to adopt such 'personal choice' narratives as a means to resolve the tension between their highly gendered domestic arrangements and their efforts to enact and embody feminism.

As such, from its inception, Mumpreneurship has been a Third Wave and neoliberal endeavour. Mumpreneurs 'solve' the double shift phenomenon by adopting personal choice narratives. While fully aware of gender and economic inequalities, Mumpreneurship is underpinned by highly individuated life-narratives wherein they are the sole arbiter of their (and their children's) wellbeing. Procuring economic gains from the traditionally non-economic sphere of motherhood is a deeply neoliberal pursuit that the women of this study reframe as personal, rational choice. Though the logics and constraints of Mumpreneurship are rooted in social and economic structures, Mumpreneurs frame their choices as being born from wholly personal, individual life choices. Though most participants frame their experiences as the result of personal choice, Mumpreneurship is an imperfect compromise stretched over an uneasy cohesion of feminism, the ideology of intensive motherhood and neoliberalism.

## **5. Literature Review – Part 2: Changing Technology and the Digital Superwomen**

The preceding chapter established three major spheres of influence over Mumpreneurial lifeworlds: the ideology of intensive motherhood, feminism, and neoliberalism. Mumpreneurs often describe the competing societal and economic pressures that result from attempting to occupy these fields simultaneously – pressures to, at once, be ‘good mothers’, ‘good feminists’, remain economically productive, maintain a fulfilling (and lucrative) career and to do so as if the competing pressures of each demand were her sole occupation. This chapter explores how Mumpreneurs attempt to achieve this through the incorporation of technology and digital innovation in their work and home lives.

Technology and digital innovation have been positioned as solutions to the conflicting expectations placed on working mothers. Mumpreneurs in particular look to technology, digital media, and digital innovations as a means to manage domestic-, economic-, and mother- work. This is reminiscent of the concept of ‘the superwoman’ established in sociological literatures since the 80s (Newell, 1993, Nicolson, 2003, Shaevitz, 1988, Sumra and Schillaci, 2015). A term first coined in the 70s (Conran, 1975), the ‘superwoman’ does not just take on or manage the competing pressures of work home and motherhood, but, through her own savviness, hard work and self-management, excels in each venture. This chapter proposes that the superwoman concept is useful to our understanding of Mumpreneurial approaches to motherhood, work, and home life. However, in discussing the work and homelives of Mumpreneurs, the

superwoman concept needs expansion to accommodate working mothers' specific hopes that 'new and innovative technology' will help them manage these competing pressures. In essence, Mumpreneurs optimistically look to technological innovations as a means to overcome cultural expectations over the successful management of home, work, and motherhood.

This chapter, then, establishes the concept of the 'digital superwoman' as a means to describe Mumpreneurs' use and view of technology more accurately in domestic and economic work. I propose that this 'digital superwoman' concept is fundamentally intertwined with women's changing relationship to technology but caution against its efficacy in confronting broader social issues. Despite Mumpreneurs' hopes, technological innovation's impact on societal issues has been overstated, limiting participants' ability to become the 'digital superwomen' they aspire to be.

## **5.1 Women and Technology at Home**

Contemporary decisions around the adoption, use, and purchase of home-based technology are built on established understandings of technology in the home. To contextualise the specific lens through which Mumpreneurs view, discuss and use relatively new technologies – such as the Internet – it is necessary to explore historical narratives around the adoption of home-based technologies in Australia and other Anglophone countries. The continuities and changes in these narratives reflect broader changes in Australian attitudes to technology, labour, and domestic work. In tandem, the differences between Mumpreneurs narratives about technology, and how they use it in their everyday life highlights the particular ways Mumpreneurs integrate, use, and frame technology in their own lives.

To clarify, this chapter is historically linear in its discussion of technology in the home. It is necessary to discuss the use and adoption of technologies – such as domestic appliances, whitegoods, and other such ‘labour saving devices’ – as discussions around these older technologies continue to frame Mumpreneur’s understandings of new technologies in the home today. In many Anglophone countries, histories of women’s interactions with technology – particularly in the domestic sphere – follow similar popular narratives. Women, once tied to domestic duties, were freed from laborious chores through the adoption of these (once) new appliances, whitegoods, and domestic machines. As will be argued, this is neither a cohesive nor complete narrative. Nor does it reflect the broader social consequences of the widescale adoption of home-based technologies in the US, UK, Canada, New Zealand, or Australia.

A significant amount of literature from the United States and the United Kingdom addresses women’s acceptance and use of domestic appliances from historical and sociological perspectives. However, in the Australian context, there is a relatively small pool of grounded historical research from which to draw. The adoption and use of the Internet in the home by women for the purposes of managing their work and home lives is also comparatively under-researched in Australia. This section will therefore discuss the histories of these three countries as a means to illustrate women’s changing relationship to technology in the home.

## **5.2 Women, Housework and Domestic Technologies in the US, UK and Australia**

I begin with the adoption of technology in 19<sup>th</sup> century American homes as this period represents the first instance that the ‘technology as women’s liberator’ narrative comes into

play. Strasser (2000) argues that women's domestic labour was not alleviated by the adoption of new technology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. 'Labour saving' devices - such as washing machines and gas stoves - remained too expensive for most families to afford in this period and indoor wood-heat stoves and oil lamps increased domestic work. Scholarship concerning early adoptions of domestic technology in America posits that, rather than aiming to alleviate domestic labour, technologies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century American home were designed to: (1) raise the standard of living and (2) complete tasks more efficiently so, (3) women could devote more time to their children's upbringing (Hayden, 1982, Sklar et al., 1998, William and Andrews, 1974).

20<sup>th</sup> century America saw the introduction of wide-scale gas, electrical, and indoor plumbing infrastructure. Cowan (1976) suggests middle-class housewives benefitted from such infrastructures, enabling the adoption of gas and electricity for cooking, heating, and power. These, she suggests, reduced the workload of middle-class housewives by reducing household dirt and lessening the physical expenditure required for individual tasks. Rather than 'lightening the load' or alleviating women from time-consuming domestic tasks, standards of cleanliness increased in tandem with the adoption of new technologies. Instead of reducing domestic work, the adoption of technologies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century American home raised expectations of domestic cleanliness and hygiene placing greater expectations on women's devotion to their children's care, religious education and moral upbringing (Cowan, 1976).

In contrast to the United States, women in the United Kingdom did not take up 'domestic aids' – such as fridges, washing machines, and vacuum cleaners, for instance – with as much enthusiasm in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Nixon it took “growing popular affluence in the 1950s and 1960s, coupled with a drop in the price of domestic electricity, to stimulate the take-off of powered household technologies” (Nixon, 2017) in the UK. Washing machines, for



instance were owned by 25% of households in the UK in 1958, growing to 50% in 1964 (Bowden and Offer, 1994). Similarly, refrigerators were used in 25% of households in 1962 but, just six years later in 1968, that, too, doubled to 50% of households (Bowden and Offer, 1994). Such technologies' comparatively late adoption meant that British women's experience with and use of domestic technologies lagged behind that of America's by 10-15 years. However, like in the US, once new technologies were widely adopted in the home, higher levels of domestic cleanliness and greater expectations around women's child-rearing, followed suit.

To a great extent, Australian women's particular experiences of domestic technology in this period have been overlooked. Broad histories rarely incorporate research from Australia or assume that the Australian market broadly followed trends in Britain and America as discussed above. From the research that is available, there are some particularities in the Australian adoption of technologies in the home in the mid-20th century onwards worth noting.

The role of housewives' associations in Australia from the late-19<sup>th</sup> to mid- 20<sup>th</sup> centuries had a considerable impact on Australian middle-class women's conception of work, motherhood, and technology. Most significantly, in both the United States and Australia, widespread adoption of domestic technologies raised standards of living in tandem with expected levels of cleanliness rather than saving labour and time (Thomson, 2013, McGaw, 1982). Smart argues that these associations dominated public discourse in Australia surrounding women's relationship to the home and economy until the 1950s (2006, p. 32). Slum clearances relocated inner-city populations to suburbs (Cuffley, 1993, Greig, 1995) where the imagined middle-class home was imbued with a modernity "imagined in international, and particularly US rather than imperial and British, terms" (Lloyd and Johnson, 2004, p. 254.). From the 1950s onwards in Australia, Smart notes a substantial decline in public regard for 'the housewife'. The 'mother as centre of

the home' ideal previously espoused by Housewives' Associations was replaced in the 1960s by a turn towards material consumerism (Smart, 2006). This often took the form of middle-class women's desire for new, home-based technologies as "the allure of the housewife's calling weakened against the attractions of an expanded labour market and an additional source of income to pay for now readily available white goods" (Smart, 2006, p. 32).

This is echoed in Thomson's (2013) comparative study of British migrants to Australia. British women moving to Australia were shocked at Australian women's heavy use of domestic appliances in the home. British women of the '50s and '60s had not adopted as many domestic technologies into their home lives as American households. Australia, looking more to America than Britain in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, took to the incorporation of domestic appliances more readily than their British counterparts. British women's experiences and own reflections in letters sent 'back home to Britain' reveal the differing and changing attitudes to the home, femininity, and technology between the two nations. In this context, Australian women's participation in the formal labour force was framed positively by marketers and government as a way for average families to afford commercial domestic technologies (Thomson, 2013, Nixon, 2017). This is in contrast to the narrative generally understood by the Australian public now, which is that the adoption of new technology allowed women to enter the labour force.

### **5.3 Historical Narratives about Domestic Technology in Australia**

Scholarly analyses of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century foregrounded the position that technology drives social change. For instance, Lerner's (2005[1979], p. 27), highly influential assertion is that:

“...it was only after economic and technological advances made housework an obsolete occupation, only after technological and medical advances made all work physically easier and childbearing no longer an inevitable yearly burden on women that the emancipation of women could begin”.

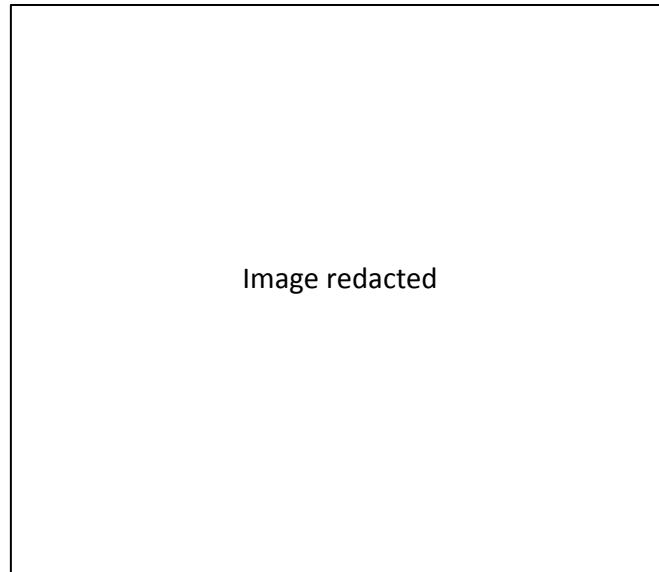
This idea that new technologies have in the past and will continue to emancipate women from domestic work remains a steadfast idea in the minds of Mumpreneurs. This particular reading of history suggests that *technology* was the defining feature that enabled women’s participation in the labour force, rather than the combination of factors outlined in the previous section. So goes the argument that the reduction in domestic work hours allowed women to dedicate more time to pursuits outside the home and catalysed women’s push into the labour force (Costa, 2000, Greenwood et al., 2005, Coen-Pirani et al., 2010, de V. Cavalcanti and Tavares, 2008). This historical narrative has not remained in the academy (Eckersley, 1988). Through Australian media as well as primary and secondary history curricula from the 1980s - 1990s (Gough, 1990), this particular reading of history has become a dominant cultural narrative around women and work in contemporary Australia. These theories formed the basis of their primary and secondary historical education and heavily frame popular historical documentaries and media (Gough, 1990, Smith and Marx, 1994). Despite their later revision, for the women of this study, this is the predominant way in which they frame the use of technology in the home.

## 5.4 Superwoman

As argued in the preceding section, the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries saw the widespread adoption of domestic technologies in middle class Australian homes in the context of growing neoliberal

fiscal and social policies. Women's increased participation in the labour force, prompted in part by widespread re-examination of gendered divisions of labour through the scholarship and activism of Second Wave feminism saw middle class women take to the labour force *en masse*. However, there was not an equal growth in men taking on domestic tasks, or an equal and opposite push from men to be able to leave the formal labour force. It is in this context of Second Wave activism and technological adoption that Shirley Conran first published her 1975 work 'Superwoman' (see: Conran, 1975, Conran, 1977).

To Conran, a 'superwoman' is a woman who successfully manages the competing pressures of multiple roles she must adopt in daily life as a wife, mother, and worker. A Superwoman takes on domestic duties, childcare, has a career, volunteers, consumes consciously and excels in each sphere (Newell, 1993, Newell, 1996, Nicolson, 2003). For Conran, being a 'superwoman' was the best way to manage the newly competing pressures women of the 70s were experiencing. Written as a self-help book, *Superwoman* (and *Superwoman 2*) are books of household management, subtitled as an 'everywoman's book of household management'. The front cover is styled as a glossy magazine - the dust jacket promises readers that this book will show them 'how to be a working wife and mother', 'how to run a home and a job' and provide a guide to 'jobs for mothers'. Even the end sheets of the book - usually left blank as 'filler' pages - are printed with a series of charts and conversion tables: weights, shoe sizes, oven temperatures, men's, women's, and children's clothing sizes, and even a small guide on how to rewire a British plug. Ostensibly a light-hearted guide to modern living (the famed philosophy of the book is that 'life is too short to stuff a mushroom') the book reflects women's growing mosaic of frustrations with the demands of the formal labour force, domestic work, feminist ideals, and motherhood.



*Figure 7: Cover of Shirley Conran's 'Superwoman' guidebook (Conran, 1975) showing a close-up image of a woman's face surrounded by text in the style of a magazine cover promising readers 'how to save time and money', and 'how to be a working wife and mother'*

In the introduction, Conran states: “Until women’s lib comes up with a mechanical Sarah Jane, *someone’s* got to do the dirty support systems work. The purpose of this book is to help you do the work you don’t like as fast as possible, leaving time for the work you enjoy” (Conran, 1975, p. 17 – emphasis original). In kind, the remainder of the book is dedicated to providing cost-, time- and labour-saving information to women attempting to manage work, home, and motherhood. Conran primarily advocates for efficiencies of process and emphasises the benefits of planning and lists as a means to manage oneself and, thus, the house, the garden, the children, the job, and the husband. Significantly, Conran suggests that mothers may be better suited to starting their own small businesses at home. She encourages her readers with secretarial experience to buy an electric typewriter “as soon as you can afford it” (1975, p. 163). She encourages those without formal work experience to think on what skills they do have that may be profitable:

“...sew cushion covers, do knitting ... or crochet. Or invisible mending for the dry-cleaners. Or, if you have a hairdryer, set hair ... or, like Laura Ashley, printing tea towels on the kitchen table is another possibility” (1975, p. 163).

Assumed in this advice is the idea that women are suited to primarily handle the responsibilities of home life and childcare, with career being a secondary occupation. The idea that women should predominantly shoulder the tasks of domestic labour is not questioned in Conran’s *Superwoman* (or *Superwoman 2*). Though, it is joked about as an inevitability or consequence of women’s push into formal labour throughout the books. To reiterate “*someone’s* got to do the dirty support systems work” (Conran, 1975, p. 17) and that ‘someone’ to Conran was, invariably, women.

While Conran’s work takes at face value the idea that women alone need to manage the pressures of work, home and in motherhood, Shaevitz’s *The Superwoman Syndrome* represents one of the first critiques of the concept of ‘having it all’. Like Conran’s work, *The Superwoman Syndrome* is not an academic work - the book is presented as a guide, with quizzes, advice, and self-management tips throughout. This text is significant in the fact that it is one of the earliest works to discuss the unintended impact of shifting labour patterns on everyday women. In this work, the feelings of inadequacy and stress felt by many women trying to balance what they regard as their economic, motherly, and domestic responsibilities are acknowledged and explored. Therein lies Shaevitz’s ‘superwoman syndrome’, which she defines as “a range of physical, psychological and interpersonal stress symptoms experienced by a woman as she attempts to perform *perfectly* such multiple and conflicting roles as worker or carer, volunteer, wife, mother and homemaker” (Shaevitz, 1988, p. 35 – emphasis original). Despite there being (at the time of publishing) more than half of mothers in the labour force, most societal notions

of motherhood were based on the assumption of a non-working mother at the time of publishing (Shaevitz, 1988, p. 111). To a great extent, such assumptions remain. Shaevitz supplies a brief summary of research on working mothers, and on the children of working mothers. The research cited presents a relatively positive picture of academic outcomes, aspirations, and familial relationships for children of working mothers (1984, pp. 119-120). However, for mothers themselves, the findings are mixed. For women with high-prestige jobs, the outcomes of working motherhood seem positive – high life satisfaction, for example. However, for women with low-prestige jobs, the outcomes are not so gleaming, with high stress and low life satisfaction a significant feature of responses. Shaevitz ends with general advice for women, in which she suggests that having a baby is no longer a given in a marriage and to talk about their own wants and needs with their partner. If both partners wish to have children, she emphasises that women who choose to work should not have children before they complete any apprenticeships, training, or study they may be doing<sup>15</sup>. In the context of the late 1980s, the reasoning behind this advice is that these markers of accomplishment allow women to establish themselves in a working environment, ‘climb the ladder’ and, thus, open up the possibility of more flexible work schedules and a better salary that can be used for childcare and other child-related expenses. Shaevitz’s text goes further than Conran’s original text, questioning why it is that women are disproportionately shouldered with the responsibilities of work and home. However, there is an implicit assumption that, while motherhood may need to undergo a series of conceptual revisions, it is the women’s responsibility to: (1) manage these tensions; (2) introduce and convince her husband to these ideas; and (3) convince him to shoulder some more of the responsibilities at home.

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<sup>15</sup> Such suggestions are, of course, predicated on safe, consistent and affordable access to reliable contraceptives such as the pill. The influence and impact of the pill on women’s ability to take part in the workforce and exert control over family size is outside the scope of this research, but is worthy of note.

Like Shaevitz's *Superwoman Syndrome*, Hochschild's 'second shift' responds to the tensions experienced by women in post- Second Wave labour markets. Again, like Shaevitz, Hochschild notes that women are "departing more from their mother's way of life, and men less from their father's" (Hochschild and Machung, 1989, p. 12). However, unlike Shaevitz, Hochschild does not see this as a situation that needs to be managed exclusively by women. Rather, Hochschild describes Shaevitz's approach to managing these tensions – wherein it is essentially the woman's responsibility to manage her time better at home and in the formal labour force with minimal additional effort from her husband - as an accommodation of a stalled revolution (Hochschild and Machung, 2012, p. 29). By 'stalled revolution', Hochschild is referring to the influx of women to the labour market that has not been met by a change in cultural understandings of marriage, work, motherhood, or corporate culture. She stresses that while women have changed "most workplaces have remained inflexible in the face of the family demands of their workers, and at home, most men have yet to really adapt to the changes in women" (Hochschild and Machung, 2012, p. 12). Hochschild sees this as being a wholly negative thing, wherein women are not freed or liberated through work, but caught, instead, in a double bind. She writes:

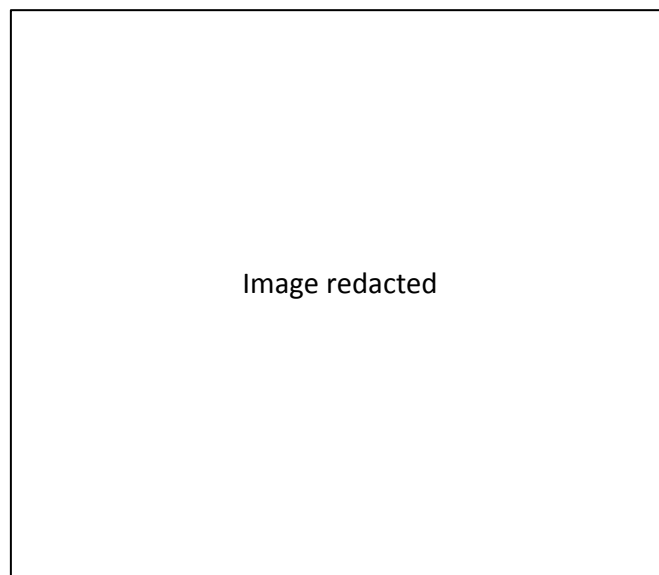
"...patriarchy has not disappeared, it's changed form ... In the old form, women were limited to the home but economically maintained there. In the new form, women can *earn the bacon and cook it too*" (Hochschild and Machung, 2012, p. 246).

Rather than bringing gender equality, as many Second Wave feminists had hoped, Hochschild suggests the move from domestic to economic labour has merely doubled women's workload. It is this specific triple-bind of work, home, and motherhood that the participants of this study aim to overcome through Mumpreneurship.



## 5.5 Australian Women Online in the Howard Era

The next technological revolution was just around the corner for the women of this study. The adoption and widespread use of the Internet represents the most significant technological change in the lifetimes of participants. As discussed in Chapter 3, the prospect of mothers utilising digital technology to work from home has been discussed in the Australian media since the early 1990s. 'Telecommuting', as it was then described, was approached with an enthusiastic optimism (1992, 1991, Anderson, 1993b), with government and many reports suggesting that such working arrangements could help women retain work after the birth of children (1993, Anderson, 1993a). By the late 1990s and early 2000s, focus had shifted to the impact of 'the Internet boom' and the same optimism permeated this reporting.



*Figure 8: A newspaper report from the early 90s, discussing 'Telecommuting' (Anderson, 1993a). Titled 'Achieving a flexible working life', the report is accompanied by a black and white photo of a women in a suit talking on a phone with a laptop computer in her lap and a small desktop computer on the desk in front of her nestled between piles of papers, lever arch files and a VHS tape.*

The prospect of women using home computers to connect to work via the Internet or to start businesses from home seemed revolutionary. At the same time, the Howard government took a stance of deregulation and extolled the prospects of small business ownership. Government policy and programs of the Howard era expanded the resources and training programs available to the public for small and home-based business ownership. This made starting up small and home-based businesses more accessible and, as a result, the rate of female business ownership steadily increased in Australia from 1990 - 2007 (ABS, 2015).

Academic research on the early adoption of digital technologies by Australian women in this time period is relatively small. Of the research available, there are some significant findings. Singh's early work found that Australian women first approached home-based Internet as a "tool for activities, rather than as play or a technology to be mastered" (Singh, 2001, p. 395). According to Holloway and Green, women incorporated the Internet into their everyday lives more readily than men when home-based Internet was becoming more accessible. And Hay and Pearce's retrospective work (2014) found that women who used digital technologies in agriculture "use most components of online technology three times more often than men". This research emphasises that women have been readily adopting digital technologies in the home for the purposes of work from the earliest instances of their adoption.

Governance underpinned by neoliberal reforms characterised late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century Australian fiscal and social policy. The Howard era (1996 – 2007) was particularly market-oriented and saw a marked increase in 'market populism'. This market populism used the semantic grammar of populism but shifted targets from business owners, CEOs and other such economic actors to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), unions, interest groups and "special interests responsible for maintaining a large welfare state at taxpayers' expense"

(Sawer and Laycock, 2009). This era in Australian governance is characterised by policy emphasising “economic liberalisation and welfare state downsizing” (Mudde 2007) where “institutions and policies that reduce the scope of the market are depicted as inherently undemocratic” (Sawer and Laycock, 2009). Policies that emphasised the primacy of the individual, downplayed the impact of union organising and demonised the ‘welfare state’ were characterised as the expansion of personal choice. Deregulation, competition, privatisation, and tax cuts formed the backdrop to most Mumpreneurs formative years. It is in this context that the majority of this study’s participants; finished high school, finished tertiary education, began working in their chosen careers, or, in the later Howard years, even started their own families.

Despite over a decade of social and fiscal policy that conflated market freedoms with personal freedoms, numerous structural factors bind women to the domestic sphere, inhibiting their full participation in the formal labour force. The gender pay gap between men and women in Australia is tenacious. Women, on average earn 14% less than men for equivalent full-time work (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016, 2020) and the rate at which this gap is closing has stagnated. This factors into decision making for heterosexual Australian families, with women being more likely to give up work as they earn less than their male partners. As will be explored in Chapter 7, this period of giving up work in the formal labour force has a significant impact on women’s lifetime earning potential.

The entanglement of low wages begetting women’s default undertaking of domestic tasks was discussed by Shaevitz in 1988. Beyond incremental changes in the wage gap and some support regarding parental leave, government, industry, or the public have done little to address this ‘nappy valley’ in the intervening years. Additionally, Australian families, pay a higher percentage of their wages in childcare than the OECD average, with 18% of the average household income

devoted entirely to childcare (OECD, 2020). This is a significant motivating factor for many women to reduce their hours to part-time, take advantage of flexible working arrangements or temporarily give up work to care for young children. Men experience some difficulty in accessing long-term flexible working arrangements such as parental or paternity leave. In the Australian context, 'dad and partner' leave is capped at only two weeks. This presents a structural barrier to men taking on more childcare duties and unpaid domestic labour. When women become mothers, then, they tend to do more housework and more child-minding but spend less time in paid employment than men (Craig and Bittman, 2008). In direct contrast, after the birth of children, men are more likely to return to work full-time.

It largely remains a women's responsibility to navigate and manage childcare and domestic work – making dinner, scheduling family appointments, maintaining a clean house, being available to tackle any issues in regard to children and other such devalued invisible labour (Cox, 1997, Crabb, 2019). There was also (and, to a great extent remains) an underlying cultural assumption that women are more suited to or are intrinsically 'better' at managing domestic duties (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016, Ting et al., 2016, Chesters, 2012). The development and adoption of new technologies to make such domestic tasks easier – vacuums, washing machines, dishwashers - does not counter or challenge the idea that women should be the ones using them.

“Domestic technology made housework less arduous but was not used to make it less time-consuming ... substantial changes in household technology left the sex, hours, efficiency, and status of the household worker essentially unaltered” (McGaw, 1982, pp. 813 - 814).

Rather, tying the history of women's participation in the workforce to technological innovation obscures structural inequalities and downplays the role of female-lead social movements that fought against cultural barriers to women's participation in the public sphere.

In adopting new telecommunications and digital technologies, Mumpreneurs applied the cultural framework with which they are most familiar to these new digital technologies. They assumed that the cultural framework they understood about technology and women would apply to digital technologies as much as (they believed) it applied to domestic whitegoods. However, as explored previously, the narrative they had was misplaced. Women were not liberated by the adoption of domestic technologies. Rather standards of cleanliness and hygiene were raised requiring more of women's time and planning to achieve. The adoption of 'labour saving' devices saw shifting cultural narratives about 'the housewife'. Increasingly of middle-class women found that their time was focused on their children's education and wellbeing. The lens through which Mumpreneurs understood women's relationship to technology was skewed. When they tried to use digital technologies to alleviate the burdens of work and childcare, they got tangled up with higher expectations of their children's care and wellbeing. As a result, they ended up reproducing the dynamics of traditional gender roles they ostensibly opposed. The situation Mumpreneurs faced was unresolvable – they were, at once, expected to manage home, work, and children as if each was her sole occupation. The expectation was fundamentally paradoxical.

## 5.6 Digital Superwoman

Underpinned by ideas of market freedom begetting personal freedom, Mumpreneurs look to digital technological innovations to manage and excel in the competing spheres of motherhood, work, and home. While the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century saw the widespread adoption of whitegoods, gas and electricity (Cowan, 1976, Greig, 1995), the most significant technological change to the home in the lifetimes of Mumpreneurs has been the wide scale adoption of the Internet.

Writing in the late 90s and early 00s about the adoption of (at the time novel) home computing, Laily (2002, p. 80) notes:

“New domestic technologies may perpetuate existing roles and values, or may provide a challenge to existing patterns. Particularly in households with children, the mother’s role as nurturer, supporter and household manager tends to be perpetuated around the home computer”.

As such, the discussion now moves to the use of contemporary technologies - such as the Internet - in the home.

A significant body of literature concerned with the use of digital technology in the home focuses on how parents and children respond to the introduction of new technologies (Laily, 2002) or how caregivers integrate, teach and use new technologies in their parenting practices (Clark, 2013, Livingstone and Blum-Ross, 2020). Primary caregivers – usually but not always mothers – and their use of technology is therefore often discussed in relation to their children’s use of technology. While this is an obviously important area of study, this section (and the work as a whole) does not concentrate on how primary caregivers incorporate new digital technologies

directly in relation to their children and parenting practices. The focus of this work is not on *parenting*, but it is on the *mother's* use of technology. While children are, of course, part of this narrative, in this particular thesis they are not the focus of it. Mumpreneurs use digital technology in the home for a plethora of reasons. Particularly, Mumpreneurs look to digital technological innovation such as e-commerce, digital social spaces and 'the Internet' to start-up their businesses, find customers, watch webinars, participate in Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and join exclusive-access websites to gain knowledge and experience in entrepreneurship. In a similar fashion to Conran's 'Superwoman' texts, Cobe and Parlapiano's 'Mompreneurs Online' texts (Cobe and Parlapiano, 2001, Cobe and Parlapiano, 1996) – the first to popularise the term 'Mumpreneur' – look to the Internet as a means for women to manage the competing pressures of childcare, domestic work and participation in the formal labour force. Conran's, Shaevitz's, and Cobe & Parlapiano's texts are all styled as self-help books for 'the modern woman', encouraging her to use the newest available technologies to help her manage household and work responsibilities. In this sense, though the specific technologies have changed, there is a direct continuity between 'Superwomen' and 'Mompreneurs'.

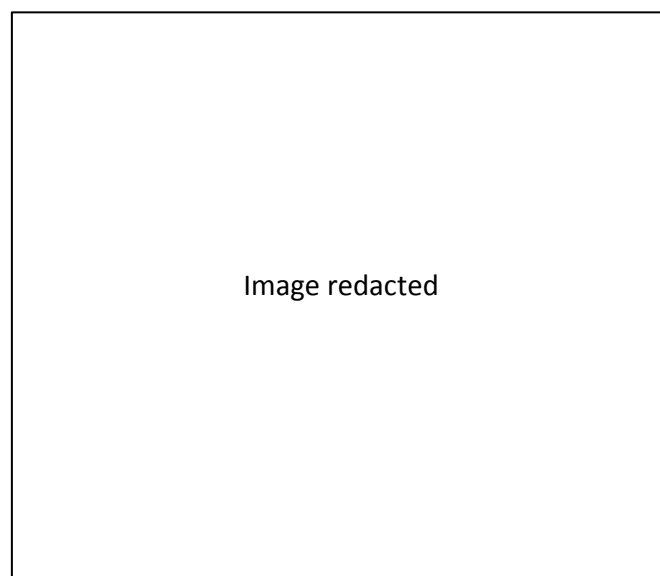
Mumpreneurs use digital technologies to be modern superwomen. Unlike Lailly's (2002) groundbreaking work documenting and contextualizing the 'home computer' in late 90s and early 2000s households, the women I study have grown up with or have fully integrated digital technologies into their everyday lives. All participants had at least a smartphone, personal laptop or desktop computer, and the necessary knowledge to skilfully operate them. The mothers of this study are not adjusting to new technologies in the home, they are using the tools with which they are most familiar to conduct their everyday lives. When prompted to reflect on their use of the Internet, many ponder openly about what they would do without an online connection, imagining either giving up formal work to stay at home with children or

juggling a career in the formal workforce with home and childcare duties. Beyond simply a resource or technological innovation, the Internet is a necessity to Mumpreneurs' sense of self. Digital technologies, however, are not a panacea. The use of technologies is a reflection of the society in which they are used (Horst and Miller, 2012). That is to say, technologies codify and reinforce structures already present in a society (Noble, 2018). Mumpreneurs contemporary use of digital technologies, like women's use of domestic whitegoods and (supposed) 'labour saving' devices in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, is an attempt to manage competing pressures of work, motherhood, and home as if each demand were her sole occupation. However, digital technologies, like the domestic technologies of the past, do not disrupt or counter the cultural assumptions that women must shoulder these responsibilities more than men.

There have been significant changes in the everyday lives of working mothers since Shaevitz's and Conran's texts were published but the concept of the superwoman is immediately understood by Mumpreneurs. Responses to the trope on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter feeds are mixed. That is not to say that some Mumpreneurs consistently perform as or present themselves as superwoman and others rally against such confining archetypes. Rather, in an attempt to embody the digital superwoman, Mumpreneurs ambiguously *aspire to be* – and commiserate with – those who *cannot manage being* a superwoman. At any one time in Mumpreneurial digital social spaces, there are posts encouraging members to: 'kickass', 'get shit done', 'be your child's role model', 'have a big, hairy audacious goal', 'be inspired by your kids', 'dream big or dream on', 'do it for them', etc. Played out in a digital landscape, such material supports the notion that, not only *can* one be the superwoman, but one has a duty to *be* a superwoman for the sake of one's children and one's business. However, interspersed between these social media posts are quotes, pictures and inspo acknowledging the opposite. The multifaceted public face of Mumpreneurship tries to encapsulate and broadcast the more



relatable aspects of Mumpreneurship. This juxtaposed, ambivalent approach - wherein one is at times a superwoman, 'kicking ass', 'getting stuff done' and 'doing it all for your kids' and, at other times, completely struggling to fulfil either one of these roles – is the most relatable feeling amongst Mumpreneurs. Both 'superwoman' and 'non-superwoman' posts are shared with equal enthusiasm, with comments under both relating personal stories that fit best with the posts' narrative.



*Figure 9: Quote by Annabel Crabb often shared or referenced by the women of this study. The text reads 'The obligation for working mothers is a very precise one: the feeling that one ought to work as if one did not have children, while raising one's children as if one did not have a job'. The black text of the quote is bordered by a patterned drawing of bright pink watermelons.*

Being largely public-facing content, the Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter feeds of Mumpreneurial groups represent only a partial account of all that is involved in 'Mumpreneurship', promoted by individuals and groups set up specifically to attract, encourage and monetise a digitally mediated audience. Missing in this account of Mumpreneurship is the inter-personal politics 'behind the scenes' – what Hochschild terms 'backstage support'. For Hochschild, this backstage support is clearly divided by gender. By tying his identity to his work

and doing less at home, a man can work longer hours, prove his loyalty to the company, expand his aspirations, get promoted faster and get higher pay. The implicit result is that he has earned exception from the 'second shift' of housework, childcare, and chores (Hochschild and Machung, 2012, p. 247). In inverse parallel, women are tasked with providing the 'backstage support' for men's careers, carrying out most of the second shift's responsibilities on her own.

Mumpreneurship, while touted as a woman's personal choice, is then a contemporary solution to old problems. Women are assumed to be the ones who need to shoulder the burden of domestic labour and childcare: women need to negotiate the line between mother and worker as there is no similarly scaled debate around father and worker. For Hochschild, the answer lies in spurring on the 'stalled revolution' and renegotiating the second shift. However, for members of Mumpreneurial online groups, the answer lies in tying one's identity to the categories of mum and worker equally. The public-facing content hosted on the Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter feeds of Mumpreneurial groups posit that this mother/worker dual identity can be a personal, revolutionary choice for a woman to make.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

Mumpreneurship a compromise between motherhood, work and career predicated on the premise that newer, better technologies liberated women in the past and can liberate women now from the burdens of domestic and economic labour. In the lifeworlds of Mumpreneurs,

newer technologies take the form of time- and labour- saving whitegoods and a secure connection to the Internet. Facilitated by the promises of digital technologies and innovation, Mumpreneurs try to become superwomen through savvy use of digital technologies. Post the Second Wave feminist push for women's participation in the paid workforce, Mumpreneurs, though frustrated, cannot reconcile working full time with domestic and familial work. Conscious of the limitations for mothers in traditional work environments, Mumpreneurs look to Internet-based businesses as a means to combine and excel in domestic and economic spheres. Mumpreneurs look towards technologies and innovation to remove cultural and economic barriers to their participation in the workforce. However, the narrative they rely on is not accurate and does not encompass the factors that have liberated Australian women in the past. In tandem, while new technologies, particularly digital technologies, have had major and broad-reaching impacts in industry, business, social relations, and the domestic setting, they do not inherently challenge social structures. Rather, new technology is subsumed and used in particular contexts. Technological solutions to complex structural inequalities do not address the issues that facilitate and maintain those inequalities. Ultimately, such complex cultural issues cannot be solved by technological solutions alone.

## **6. Discussion – Part 1: Intersections between Motherhood and Feminism**

The preceding chapters detailed social, historical, and economic shifts relevant to Mumpreneurship. These were necessary to accurately contextualise the movement. Notwithstanding, as outlined in the Chapter 2, it is also necessary to explore the grounded, everyday experience of Mumpreneurship. This chapter explores the interaction between women's movements and life narrative, particularly in regard to mothers' relationships to labour. As imagined, experienced, and practised, 'motherhood' and 'work' hold various meanings to the women of this study. Semi-structured interviews and guided discussions of participant's life-narrative reveal how the conception and practice of both 'motherhood' and 'work' impact Mumpreneurs' relationship to the self, motherhood, and labour. Their experiences with each inform their choices, desires, ambition, and worldview. As such, Chapters 6, 7 and 8 analyse these women's life experiences from a grounded, contextual perspective. Analysing participants' lived experiences in relation to relevant literature, this section ultimately aims to contextualise Mumpreneurship, elucidating the social influences that have facilitated the movement and situate Mumpreneurism as a multifaceted response to interwoven and particular historical, economic, political, and domestic circumstances.

The women of this study have lived through significant and broad social changes as young girls, students, employees, working mothers, and Mumpreneurs. From watching their mothers' shoulder fulltime work and fulltime childcare to the protest, scholarship, and practise of the Third Wave feminism in their student and early working lives, each stage has been a lattice of

economic change, salaried work and unsalaried domestic work. The women of this study were part of the first generation to watch mothers go to work *en masse*. They were the first generation to watch mothers try to manage the 'double shift'. And they were the first generation to grow up in a period of apparent equality between women and men (Giddens et. al., 1992). Watching their mothers go to work, then come home and undertake most – if not all – domestic tasks when women were ostensibly equal to men, had a substantial impact on these women's approach to work, home, and family labour. Reflecting on this in interviews and fieldwork reveals how Mumpreneurship serves as strategy for the women of this study to manage the tensions and contradictions inherent to these overlapping themes.

As a means to discuss these overlapping and interwoven concepts, this chapter will be split into four main sections. Each section will discuss and analyse participants' relationship to overlapping webs of meaning significant to Mumpreneurship. For clarity, each section will be outlined here. The first will discuss Mumpreneur's relationship to Second Wave feminist scholarship and activism. Predominantly, Mumpreneurs experienced Second Wave feminism as daughters, watching their mothers navigate a system of work in the labour force that was, at the time, new and unfamiliar territory. Such memories informed their understanding of women's relationship to labour in the formal workforce *before* they themselves took on work and motherhood. The second section will discuss Mumpreneur's relationship to the concept of the second shift. The third section will discuss Mumpreneurs relationship to Third Wave feminism. Predominantly, Mumpreneurs experienced Third Wave feminist scholarship and activism as mothers themselves. Informed but not bound by the earlier generation's practice of domestic and public work, Mumpreneurs foreground personal choice as a means to navigate the tensions of public and domestic labour. The fourth and final section will discuss

Mumpreneur's relationship to Hays's (Hays, 1998) concept of 'intensive mothering'. Through a discussion of relevant literature and ethnographic data, each section explores the narratives Mumpreneurs tell themselves about themselves, contextualising Mumpreneurship in the process.

## **6.1 Second Wave – Mumpreneurs Watching their Mothers**

Jessica is a 45-year-old woman, living in an affluent area of Melbourne's inner suburbs with her husband and three children. Originally from New South Wales, moved to Melbourne to complete a Bachelor of Education as she had always wanted to teach primary school. She met her husband (David, an engineer) through friends, and they married soon after she began teaching. She and her husband worked for a few years before deciding to start a family. After the birth of her first child, she took primary carer parental leave, returning to teach six months later 'because that's what you did' but found the experience 'excruciating'. Structural changes at work meant she was unable to take control of her classroom curriculum and working hours were inflexible. With her second child on the way, and after nearly a decade teaching in the public-school system, she decided to leave teaching to set up a network for mothers seeking different work/life arrangements. In 2011, Jessica first set up a website and Facebook page for the Australian Mothers' Business Network (AMBN). She saw a space for women like herself who could not leave their children in the care of others, but still wanted to maintain a career outside motherhood. From 2011, the Australian Mothers' Business Network has grown to be a significant networking association for mothers who own their own businesses in Australia. The AMBN annual conference is a sizeable event attended by many of this study's participants, with

local and international speakers, classes, networking opportunities and a glamorous awards night, sponsored by national and local brands, banks and businesses. On the back of this success, Jessica and her team launched the Australian Mothers' Business School (AMBS) – a venture she is still in the process of setting up. While discussing her engagement in Mumpreneurship, Jessica recollects the first time she came across the word 'Mumpreneur' and recalls that she was not quite sure how to pronounce it. She tells me she first saw it on a web forum similar to Mumsnet<sup>16</sup> in the late 2000's. The term has gained popularity ever since, in part due to the efforts of Jessica and other mothers in business groups around Australia and the Anglophone world.

The roots of Mumpreneurism are similarly grounded in the broad history of women's movements since the post-war period. As discussed in Chapter 4, female-led post-war labour movements set the groundwork for Second Wave feminist activism and scholarship, advocating for women's equal rights to work in public and economic spheres (Cobble, 2005). This activism and scholarship was predicated on an assumed universality of women's experiences and the supposition that there were 'no differences that could justify discrimination on the grounds of sex' (Evans, 1995, p. 16) termed 'adequate similarity' (Evans, 1995). This 'Second Wave' of feminism (alternatively styled Women's Liberation) countered 'sex-based discrimination' in legal, economic and social spheres based primarily on collective action premised on this assumed commonality of the experience of womanhood (Evans, 1995). Jessica's own mother took part in protests in 1970's Sydney, calling for equal pay for equal work. Extending equality to women in the formal workforce was a primary goal championed by Second Wave feminists.

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<sup>16</sup> Mumsnet is a UK-based web forum created in the early 2000s for parents, particularly mothers, to discuss parenthood, children, and related topics.

It is important to note here a caveat: Second Wave feminism was not a homogenous or uniform group that women took to as a whole. Some participant's mothers opposed Second Wave feminism, seeing it as an aberration of the natural order of the relationship between men and women. One such participant, Miranda, is a 43-year-old woman living in Melbourne's Eastern suburbs with her four children. The eastern suburbs of Melbourne are a middle-income area comprised of a number of tree-lined streets, parks, cafes, and schools. The eastern suburbs of Melbourne, in particular, are known for being incredibly leafy with minimal traffic near homes and large open fields broached by forested areas. There are numerous community gardening initiatives as well as smaller arts and community festivals with a general effort to support green initiatives which appealed to Miranda and her husband when they decided to live in Melbourne.

Originally from Norway, Miranda completed a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Oslo but took up work in finance immediately after graduating. Even though it was outside her degree, she was, in part, motivated to take this job as it offered a significant amount of paid travel time and she had wanted to get away from the 'traditional but calcifying' views of her family. Miranda reported that she was a successful associate for a large insurance company. After travelling extensively with her then husband and settling in Australia to have a family, she and her husband were encouraged to move between offices in Southeast Asia. Miranda knew it would be hard with two children in tow but was assured by both the company and her husband that the reduced cost of living in Southeast Asia and their high earnings would be enough to hire cleaners and nannies to compensate for the loss of familial support. However, her time in Southeast Asia brought into sharp relief the gap between the global rich and poor. This dissonance played on her mind, and she felt she had to do something to help the women she



saw living in poverty. She and another expat began a small community enterprise, teaching women how to knit and sew small toys, a venture now known as 'Cosy Toys'. After becoming increasingly unhappy at her job, Miranda quit to devote herself full-time to her new enterprise. Unfortunately, after quitting her job, she discovered that her husband had been having an affair with one of the nannies they had hired to take care of the children while she and her husband were working full time. Devastated, she quickly divorced her husband of 14 years and she 'poured herself into work'. She spent a substantial amount of time and money on Cosy Toys (using up most of her sizeable divorce settlement money) until the enterprise became profitable, some three years later. While Miranda is extremely proud of this achievement, Miranda's mother does not share her enthusiasm. To Miranda's mother, motherhood and domestic work brought her considerable joy. She could not – and still does not quite – understand her daughter's drive to work outside the home.

Miranda's story highlights tensions within feminism and the reality of women's experiences. While Second Wave critiques of the nuclear family structure focused largely on liberating women from the confines of domestic work and childbearing – and most Mumpreneurs acknowledge that there have been significant legal, social, and economic changes since their mothers entered the workforce - Mumpreneurs are quick to emphasise the unintended negative consequences of the second-wave assertion that women can 'have it all'. This reflects a tension between the practises and worldviews of self-described second and Third Wave feminists; a tension deeply familiar to many Mumpreneurs.

Centring the experience of predominantly white, middle-class women (Smart, 2006), it was not until the concerted push of Third Wave intersectional activism and scholarship that these barriers began to be dismantled (Fixmer and Wood, 2005, Mann and Huffman, 2005, Schuster, 2017, Walker, 1992). However, it is necessary to discuss the Second Wave as a whole as it remains a significant background in the life-worlds of participants. Second Wave scholarship and activism coalesce around a select number of concepts. Of particular relevance to the women of this study is women's ability and right to work in the public sphere. Rather than developing a radically new form of domestic arrangement, Second Wave women were shouldered with the responsibility of both traditional and domestic labour. This period saw an increased growth in women's participation in the labour force. Yet there was not an equal growth in men taking on domestic tasks, or an equal and opposite push from men to be able to leave the formal labour force. The lack of an embedded, consistent alternative to traditional gendered divisions of labour left questions over domestic tasks unanswered. The 'double shift' feared by working-class female trade unionists (Cobble, 2005) began to take root in the mid-70s. Invariably, the bulk of domestic work and childcare was left for women to pick up. This 'second shift' (Hochschild and Machung, 1989), while unintended, was also consequence of the Second Wave's assertion that women could 'have it all' (Hallstein, 2008). Conran's ground-breaking work 'Superwoman' exclaims "until women's lib comes up with a mechanical Sarah Jane, *someone's* got to do the dirty support systems work" (Conran, 1975, p. 17 – emphasis original).

This history is keenly felt by the women of this study like Jessica. She, like the other women of this study, was part of the first generation to watch mothers go to work as a population. They were also the first generation to watch mothers try to manage the 'double shift'. There is some variability in the age of women who take on the term 'Mumpreneur'. However,

Mumpreneurship in Australia comprises mostly of women aged 35-55 (at the time of fieldwork, women in this study were predominantly aged between 35 and 50). As such, they were not personally involved in Second Wave feminist activism, scholarship or the initial thrust of women into the workforce. However, their life narratives have been significantly impacted by it as they are predominantly the daughters of those who took to the public sphere due to Second Wave feminist activism. A minority are the daughters of women who resisted 'women's lib' and who stayed in the domestic sphere.

Whether their mothers took part in protests, like Jessica's mother, or rejected feminist activism, like Miranda's, their mothers' experiences had a meaningful impact on how the women of this study frame and reflect on their own lives as Mumpreneurs. When prompted to reflect on their mothers' experiences with work and family life, Mumpreneurs in this study recount the effect engagement in the formal labour force had on their mothers. Jessica's mother was an accountant; a demanding career, requiring a high level of training, attention, and skill. When talking about her mother, over several months of fieldwork, Jessica would switch between describing her mother's attitude to work as either a fantastic example of necessary work ethic or warning against giving too much of yourself away to a company. In this interview excerpt, she moves slowly, from glowing admiration to quiet worry, describing her mother's drive in her professional career:

Jo:                My mother never stops

Jessica:        My mum is like that. She's got four degrees and master's and all sorts of  
... she's just never stopped studying. She just never stopped working or

studying, she needs to chill \*laughs\* She's just ... I asked her the other day, 'are you ever going to retire?' and She's like, "No, I wouldn't"

Jo:               \*laugh\* yeah, yeah

Jessica:       Like, you've been working all your life? Are you ever going to stop? You don't have to prove yourself anymore

Jo:               Yeah!

Jessica:       But she likes what she does, why would she give up?

Jo:               Yeah. My mum is exactly the same, she will work until the day she dies and she won't see it as work.

Jessica:       That's the kicker! Yeah, that's when you love what you do.

Jo:               Exactly. And is that why you find that you love what you do?

Jessica:       Yeah. Otherwise, I would not get up ridiculously early. I think it's so important. I think when you fall out of love with something, it's time to go and stop because life's really short. I'm really ... If I don't ... I'm a very, very ... Nobody will outwork me. Nobody will outwork me. I get that from mum. But as soon as I don't enjoy something, if I have the choice ... If I can pay my bills, I make the jump, I will go because I don't believe in doing a thing that makes me miserable. Mum stayed at the same firm for her entire career... \*pauses to think for a few seconds\*

Jo:               You went from teaching to starting [Mumpreneurial group]

Jessica:       But I would do it if I couldn't pay my bills. Does that make sense?

Jo:               Yeah. No, it does.

Jessica: I don't want you to think that I would, you know, I'm stupid and [Jo crosstalk: Oh no, no not at all!] I'll just jump and think, "My, yeah, the bills will pay themselves?" No, nobody will outwork me, but if I'm miserable, I will be gone because I just don't believe that we should spend our lives doing something that makes us miserable. I'm sure [my mother's] drive inspired me to start [Mumpreneurial group] but... after all that pushing and fighting and clawing yourself up to the top... mum's tired now. She was always rushed off her feet - I just thought there must be a better way forward. Like, mum'll die on her feet but why? \*laughs\* she shouldn't have to, y'know?

Jessica, like many Mumpreneurs, make an effort to emphasise that they understand the hard work undertaken by their own Second-Wave mothers. They emphasise that the work of their mothers enabled their own participation in the workforce and, to a great extent, emulate their mother's drive. However, Mumpreneurs differentiate themselves and their choices from the Second Wave superwoman narrative. Indeed, in saying that there must be another way, Jessica encapsulates a particular ethos of Mumpreneurship wherein the women seek to arrange for themselves a life dedicated to something other than the demands of domestic and public labour.

This is a feeling shared by many women of this study. Dawn, for instance, is a 44-year-old woman living in the outer suburbs of Melbourne with her two children. The outer suburbs of Melbourne are not well supported by transport infrastructure like busses or trains. Shopping, supermarkets and entertainment complexes are accessible only by car (supermarkets may be a

20-minute drive, but an hour's walk away, for example). However, houses are larger and cheaper here than in more inner suburbs with houses occupying at least a half-acre plot of land. Before moving there and before starting her current business as a life coach and natural therapist, Dawn left school at 16, seeing no point to school and wanting to start work as soon as possible. She held a number of temporary jobs, working as a teller in a bank, in data entry and some secretarial positions but never found much satisfaction in the formal workforce. Reflecting on her own mother's approach to work and motherhood, Dawn says:

“Mum's been in the same job for nearly 40 years, and she's just really jaded. She hates it, but she's given her whole life over on a platter to a company. I never wanted to be that kind of a person.”

Meeting her first child's father (Aled, a labourer) through friends, she became pregnant at 19. The increased responsibilities of work and motherhood weighed heavily on her. She felt she could not cope with the care of a young child and the pressures of precarious work. She spent a lot of time away from home, leaving her son in the care of friends or her partner's family seeking an escape so she could 'be a stupid kid' again. By the time her son started primary school, she felt 'constantly stressed and completely hollow'. Hoping to find a solution, she took up yoga and meditation on the suggestion of a friend as a means to 'bring peace' to herself and her home. She suggests that these periods of reflection allowed her to see how unhappy and burdened she felt in her work and home life. Deciding to leave her partner, she set up a home for herself and her son while holding down a temporary job and completing a natural therapies certificate at a local college. She set up her business offering natural therapies to mothers experiencing stress and soon built up a pool of regular clients. Expanding her business, she soon met her husband (John, a mechanic) and had two more children. She draws a distinct line

between her life before and after starting her business, seeing it as the means through which she was able to live the life she wanted to, all along.

The guilt she describes feeling from not being able to provide properly for her eldest son as a young child motivates her now to give her two daughters 'all the time and money they need'.

Like Jessica, Mumpreneurs acknowledge that the activism and scholarship of the Second Wave enacted significant legal, social, and economic changes. However, much like Dawn, reflecting on their mother's workloads they are unsure how feasible 'having it all' may be.

## **6.2 The Second Shift**

Cultural understandings of caring, all-consuming motherhood meant that women who took on work in the formal labour force continued to shoulder most, if not all, domestic tasks at home.

This phenomenon now commonly termed the 'second shift' (Hochschild and Machung, 1989),

had a significant impact on the generation previous to Mumpreneurs and remains a persistent

issue in the lifeworld of participants. Maggie, for instance, is a 42-year-old woman living, like

Miranda, in the leafy eastern suburbs of Melbourne, VIC with her husband, George, and their 2

children. Describing herself as always being 'a bit of a geek', Maggie completed a Bachelor's in

Applied Science and landed her 'dream job' straight out of her final year internship. Working for

a decade at an international medical testing company, Maggie went on to complete diplomas in

Marketing and Business Management. This additional training and 'insane work ethic' meant by

the time she was in her late 20s, she was marketing manager for her company's Australian

team. At this point, she and her husband (whom she met in university) decided to start a family, assured that there would be ample provisions and support from the company. After falling pregnant, Maggie noticed small changes at work. Questions usually directed to her were sent to junior members of her staff. She recalls that she was not included in long-term (five year) planning meetings despite her proposed primary carer parental leave period being less than a year. Three weeks before she was supposed to go on leave, her email access was terminated. Brushing these aside as technical glitches and miscommunications, Maggie returned as planned after her primary carer parental leave but describes feeling that her colleagues' and bosses' attitudes to her had changed. She found navigating work and motherhood a deeply uncomfortable experience, with no flexibility in work hours, location or, indeed, any of the supports she was originally offered. To gain the structural support she needed while childrearing, she had to step down from being a manager to her previous position. Even though this entailed a pay cut and a hit to her self-confidence, she found the junior position more workable with childcare arrangements and stayed there for several years. Maggie recounts that her team had performed consistently well, but she felt her career stagnating after the birth of her children. Seeing her junior position as a temporary stop gap, she saw her male colleagues progress significantly quicker than she was able to. In an effort to level the playing field, she proposed a stay on non-emergency phone calls, emails, and messages after 7pm. She explained that if any non-emergency communications were received after 7pm she and her team would respond to them the next day. However, she was criticised for being 'uncontactable' and reprimanded for her lack of timely communication. For Maggie, this was the 'final straw' and she quit her job. She recognises that she was able to do so as her husband's wage (as an engineer) was enough to 'pay the mortgage and make sure the lights were on'. She said she was delighted in being able to spend so much time with her children but, simultaneously, she felt like her 'legs had been cut off'. It was then that she decided to start her own business 'New



Leaf'. New Leaf is an ecommerce app that sells upcycled items such as furniture, jewellery, upholstery, and clothing. Buying items through the app earns customers 'points' that they can use as currency in the app or swapped for discounts on purchases. Drawing on her 'geekiness' and 'savvy', Maggie has set up a home office to devote more time to developing and marketing her app and products while also managing childcare and domestic work. Reflecting on her business and motherhood in her first interview, she says:

Maggie: I haven't probably set the world on fire unfortunately, [New Leaf] needs a bit more energy than I've been putting to it for various different reasons so that I'm certainly trying to turn that around and do something a bit bigger with that.

Jo: Do you mind me asking what some of those reasons are?

Maggie: Oh, like, young children, trying to work part time, and some family issues so it just means that my energy for doing the business and for learning to then putting that into the business - like online marketing. It has been challenging to honestly have a headspace to really invest in working out how do this well. So yeah.

Jo: Wow, yeah that's a lot. How many little ones do you have again, sorry?

Maggie: They insist they're not so little anymore, two boys.

Jo: Oh, so sweet.

Maggie: Yeah, they are. They are very sweet but it is busy. Lots of stuff going on all the time. There's no downtime in my life and that's a real challenge because I'm tired. And I think that's a big challenge for most Mumpreneurs, women in business, 'insert label here' y'know. And I think

it's more...the women tend to carry more of the mental load of the household and so it's a bigger challenge for women in business as opposed to men in business. You can bet when Steve Jobs was starting out Apple and he was toiling away in his garage for many hours day and night, he wasn't having to run out and feed young people multiple times a day, changing nappies. You can bet that his partner was looking out, keeping the wheels going, wheels turning in the family and he was doing the good work of business and so as a result he gets to have that creative focus on the business though. I think it's harder for women, especially homebased women.

Jo: Yeah. Do you find that in your own household that you take on more of that responsibility of the running the household as well?

Maggie: Yeah, very much so. Very much so. In the family I have to be the consistent one which means I have to drop things to be able to juggle the family life more so that's a factor in my life and it impacts my business to my husband's frustration who wanted me to earn more money through the business but I'm like, "Mate, I'm handling you as well so you can help me help you if you just pull your shit together."

Jo: Oh dear, that's a lot on your plate. Why-

Maggie: -yeah, unfortunately and I'm tired, so.

Jo: Yeah, my goodness.

Maggie: But that's...everyone's got their challenges in life. I've got friends with kids with special needs but that's a huge thing so I've got to understand

that everyone has stuff going on in their life that feels bigger than them so that's a challenge and really in a lot of ways mine isn't as bad as all that.

Jo:                        So many women I've spoken to do that thing where they say, "Yes, my life is very, very hard but other people have it worse". Is it... sorry, like, do you find it dismissive?

Maggie:                I mean sure but I actually have close friends with kids with significant special needs issues and it's... if I just have a bad day it doesn't compare. It's bad, but...

Jo:                        Of course, of course. But do things... I mean, things don't have to be the worst of the worst for them to be, like, bad right?

Maggie:                Ture, true. There's a lot of stuff going on. Just, the physical caring but also the emotional caring for kids and being aware of the 65 different notes that come home from school and who needs this for that or who likes what for lunch and just keeping track of homework and everything else and that usually lands in a woman's lap.

Jo:                        Do you find in your family that it's basically your responsibility to look after the 65 notes that come home from school?

Maggie:                Yeah. I mean, my husband certainly contributes a lot in a lot of different ways and so I'm not saying I'm without any support whatsoever... he fills in... he manages a lot of the soccer responsibilities, gets the children from training and the games and all that kind of stuff for example... but just the mental load of remembering who eats what for lunch and the,

“Hang on a second, why aren’t you eating the food I gave you? My God, damn it, I have to find a new recipe to get veggies into him now. And who’s got what? Where’s that one’s hat gone? Did I wash the sport shorts this week? What day is homework going back? When is training for him for his school’s sport” or whatever, whatever. It’s *my* Google Calendar that’s got covered with 65 different colours to try and keep track of all that sort of stuff. Usually my husband just asks me so I have to know.

Jo: God, that mental load.

Maggie: Yeah. Yeah, it is genuine and you can’t ever...and when you drop it you end up feeling guilty. And nothing gets done. That’s another thing I think effects women in particular.

Jo: Yeah. Does your husband work as well?

Maggie: Yeah, he works full time and he’s an engineer by background and got a pretty heavy job so he comes home exhausted so sometimes he can go through it... have a bad week and be really off for hours.

Jo: I’m sorry to hear that. I-

Maggie: -he’s slowly, he’s finally taking a bit more responsibility for it all though and yeah, like more proactively trying to deal with other things so I’m hopeful that it’ll improve but it has been iffy for a long time. It’s a big issue. It’s a big issue unfortunately.

In the preceding excerpt, Maggie foregrounds the tensions surrounding work and childcare, emphasising in her responses the lack of spousal support she receives from her husband. While he may 'fill in' on occasion, or drive their two boys to football practice, Maggie presents herself as the central hub of her family. She highlights that it is *her* calendar that gets filled with the '65 notifications' and *her* responsibility to keep track of the children's dietary needs. In doing so, she frames herself as the primary carer for her children. This is highly consistent with themes discussed in Chapter 4, wherein women take on and are tasked with being primary carers of their children. While some change has occurred since the early 1980s, women still take on the bulk of domestic and childcare duties (2020, Co-operation and Development, 2012, OECD, 2020). Though some feminist activists in the Second Wave tackled issues regarding childcare, motherhood is "the problem that modern feminists cannot face" (Hewlett, 1987). The Second Wave feminist movement lacked an embedded, consistent alternative to traditional gendered divisions of labour. Rather than developing a radically new form of domestic arrangement, women were shouldered with the responsibility of both traditional and domestic labour - hence the 'second shift' (Hochschild and Machung, 2012). Maggie, relays in the excerpt that her husband is, at times, frustrated with her lack of profit in the business, but does not appear to significantly acknowledge or contribute equally to the care and management of children in the way Maggie does. The lack of embedded cultural critique of the barriers mothers face in their pursuit of jobs in formal labour force, men's lack of push into domestic labour and the unwillingness of state-sponsorship for alternative care arrangements meant that Second Wave women were dually responsible for childcare, domestic work and participation in the formal labour force. Though there has been some change, it appears as though their daughters are attempting to manage these same tensions through Mumpreneurship.

Through observation and experience, Mumpreneurs acknowledge the difficulties of the second shift. When chatting and reflecting on their own lives in interviews, they emphasise that the burden of domestic tasks and work on themselves and their mothers was crushing, tiring and unequal. Dot, for instance, is a 39-year-old mother of 2, living, Like Jessica, in Melbourne's affluent Inner suburbs. She completed a bachelor of physiotherapy with honours and, after the birth of her first child, practises part time. Her first child suffered from unexplained hives after moving on to solid foods. After many rounds of allergy testing returning no clear cause, she began him on an intense elimination diet. She jokes that he lived on pears, rice, and coconut milk for a month. She systematically introduced foods back into his diet and monitored his reaction with each new food. Ultimately, she did not discover what brought on her son's hives but did note he had a sensitivity to certain food groups, and he has not suffered from hives since going on the elimination diet. Her experience of trying to find recipes for children that did not include dairy, gluten and other common allergens was frustrating enough that she began to write up recipes she developed with allergen-friendly foods. Starting a blog, she consolidated these recipes into a cookbook and now offers counselling and guidance to parents in similar circumstances as herself. In animated terms, Dot reflects:

"Mum and Dad owned [business name] together but they get home and what? It's mum doing the dinner and everything. Dad took out the bins -

\*holding out her hands imitating a scale\*

the bins

\*she moves her right hand indicating the placement of 'the bins' on this scale\*

everything else

\*she moves her left hand indicating the placement of 'everything else' on this scale \*

\*her left hand drops to the table with a clunk and her right-hand shoots above her head  
as she makes noise like a rocket blasting off up to the stars\*

For her part, Jessica ‘never questioned’ that she would go to university and get a professional career – a trait she attributes to the example set by her mother’s own drive and professional qualifications. However, taking a moment to sip her coffee, Jessica’s brow furrows slightly:

“I’m not ungrateful, I was able to do what I wanted with my own life because she pushed so hard [at work]. But we all saw – I mean, I *knew* but it was only later I *realised* - but we all saw her come home and take on the home.”

Though crushing, tiring and unequal, the women of this study contend with the second shift. Their workloads doubled in the formal labour force, many take to Mumpreneurship as a means to manage ‘work’ and ‘home’. However, this tension remains unresolved. Their domestic workloads are unequal with their male counterparts, traditional workplaces are inflexible to the needs of childcare, and they are tasked with managing the expectations of both work and home for the sake of their children’s’ and partners’ wellbeing. Unable to justify returning to work full time, Mumpreneurs turn to personal choice narratives in an effort to enact change in their own lives. They hope that when their businesses are profitable, their children are older or their careers are stable, they will finally be able to successfully manage the competing tensions of their mosaic identities: mother, wife, worker, homemaker. When pressed to reflect on the motivations for their decision to enter into Mumpreneurship, many cite the pressures of balancing work and home duties. Yet, as shown in Maggie’s interview, Mumpreneurship doesn’t

subvert, but recreates the 'second shift' model of work and home wherein women as ultimately tasked with the management and care of children and home around their own full-time work. However, each participant insists that as it was their choice to take on Mumpreneurship, it is ultimately a 'better deal' as it affords a level of flexibility and choice not afforded by traditional working arrangements. This is particularly noteworthy as personal choice narratives dominate Mumpreneurial bios and discourse. Such narratives are used by Mumpreneurs to justify and emphasise their status as mothers 'doing it all for their kids' in an effort for them to enact and embody the intensive mother motherhood they aim to replicate. To fully expand on personal choice narratives, it is necessary to discuss the impact of the Third Wave feminist movement on Mumpreneurial life-worlds.

### **6.3 Third Wave – Mumpreneurs as Mothers Themselves**

As discussed in chapter 4, Third Wave feminism is broadly categorised as both a critique of and counter to perceived shortfalls of the Second Wave (Mann and Huffman, 2005, Snyder, 2008, Schuster, 2017). The 1990s and 2000s saw an upswing in feminist literature discussing feminism as a "movement in flux and an identity in question" (Evans and Bodel, 2007p. 208). It is in this social context that the women of this study went to university, began working and became mothers. While the Second Wave broadly utilised narratives such as the commonality or universality of female experience to prompt collective action (Mann and Huffman, 2005), postmodern critiques of these universalist narratives collapsed the universal category of 'woman'. The Third Wave – a movement built of and by these critiques – responded to the



collapse of such categories by foregrounding “personal narratives that illustrate an intersectional and multiperspectival version of feminism” (Snyder, 2008, p. 175). This was largely an effort to support multivocality and acknowledge the differences in experience women can have at the intersections of gender, class, and ethnicity. As adopted by Mumpreneurs, personal choice narratives came to dominate discussions of life circumstance. Maggie, for instance frames her business purely in terms of her own actions and has had to fund her ventures through her own savings. She explains,

‘I just keep wondering whether I need to put more effort in because I’m not getting the sales coming through, but you know, it’s just ... setting everything up correctly. Like, I’ve had to put my own savings into the whole start-up of the business and everything. I get no support ... I’ve got to fully fund it myself.’

My participant’s Mumpreneurship could be analysed as a Third Wave response. Participants take great care in emphasising that motherhood and Mumpreneurship are born out of their personal choice to leave traditional employment and build a home-based business to ‘be there’ for their kids. As Snyder-Hall writes: “inclusive, pluralistic, and non-judgmental, Third Wave feminism respects the right of women to decide for themselves how to negotiate ... often contradictory desires” (Snyder-Hall, 2010, p. 255). The Mumpreneurship enacted by my participants is, in this sense, a wholly Third Wave pursuit.

The Third Wave is a not as cohesive a movement as the second wave of feminist activism and scholarship – nor should it be. The Third Wave managed to address significant failings of the Second Wave – namely the Second Wave’s reliance on flattening narratives about the

commonality of women's experiences. The Third Wave, in contrast embraces intersectionality and acknowledges the particularities of various women's experiences, allowing for freer negotiation over the definition of 'woman'. However, a decentralised movement, the Third Wave does encompass some decidedly neoliberal responses to socio-political and structural issues affecting women (Schuster, 2017, Evans, 2015, Evans, 2016, Budgeon, 2011). Scholars suggest that neoliberal market logics have usurped traditional sources of activism and even identity. However, the supposed benefit of increased 'choice' promoted by neoliberally informed Third Wave scholarship; "does not empower women; it silences them and prevents feminism from becoming a political movement and addressing the real issues of distribution of resources" (Iannello, 1998). My participants have taken to neoliberally informed, Third Wave feminist narratives to articulate tensions in their own lives. They also rely on such narratives to solve or justify their recreation of traditional gendered divisions of labour. This is seen in the women's propensity towards personal choice narratives. Despite the replication and reinforcement of traditional gendered divisions of labour, the women of this study see their lives as wholly self-directed. The women tend to downplay structural factors (lack of cheap childcare, lack of domestic duties taken up by men, women's assumed propensity for caring duties, lack of support for mothers returning to the workforce) that influenced their decision to pursue Mumpreneurship in the first place. Personal choice, for these women, is the delineating factor between satisfactory and unsatisfactory pursuits.

## 6.4 Intensive Mothering

Motherhood is paramount to Mumpreneurship. As outlined in chapter 4, the rise of Third Wave feminism is concurrent with the rise in, what Hays termed 'intensive mothering' (Hays, 1998). This approach to motherhood assumes that mothers, above men or any other possible carer are the best caretakers of their children (even more so than the children's own father). To be a "remotely decent mother, a woman has to devote her entire physical, psychological, emotional, and intellectual being, 24/7, to her children" (Douglas and Michaels, 2005). To many participants, this remains a consistent pressure in their conception of themselves as mothers and their broader lifeworld. Publishing in the 1990s, Hochschild writes of the commercialization of caring. How the work of motherhood has become commodified and alienated. This commercialization of motherhood is, in part, what the Mumpreneurs are reacting too. It is, to a great extent, the delineating line between Mumpreneurs and other mothers. Unlike 'other mothers' who may send their children to nannies, au pairs, childcare or after school care, Mumpreneurs emphasize that Mumpreneurship allows them to 'be there for their children'.

Before setting up her networking website for Mumpreneurs, Jessica was a primary school teacher. She recounts that after the birth of her first child she:

"...just couldn't go back. Your priorities change after having kids. I thought I was going to take my year off and just go back to work, but I decided not to. I didn't want to leave my own baby with someone then go to school and give everything to look after other people's children. I just couldn't do it - I wanted my kids to grow up knowing I would be there for them".

In this narrative of all-encompassing motherhood, the traditional work force takes participants away from their 'more rewarding' and 'more important' duties: i.e., building up their children. This is premised on changing interpretations of motherhood in the middle-class Australian family. Though centred on American families, Lareau's (2011) work highlights the shifting of middleclass parenting strategies to those that favoured cultivation and nurturing of children's individual talents by primary caregivers – usually but not always mothers. Mumpreneurs typify this belief that they, as mothers, are the only ones who can provide the best care for their children; more so than any au pair, kindergarten teacher, childcare worker, or even father.

But this care work is costly in time, energy, and money. When asked about the expectations and experience of motherhood, Maggie, in a later interview, recounted to me that:

"There's a lot of stuff going on, just the physical caring but the emotional caring for kids and being aware of the 65 different notes that come home from school and who needs this for that or who likes what for lunch and just keeping track of homework and everything else and that usually lands in a woman's lap.

Jo: In your family whose responsibility is it to look after the 65 notes that come home from school?

Maggie: Me, mine \*laughs\* Yeah. I mean, my husband certainly contributes a lot in a lot of different ways and so I'm not saying I'm without any support whatsoever but just the mental load of remembering who eats what for lunch and then, "Hang on a second, why aren't you eating the food I gave you?". My God, damn it, I have to find some new recipes to get food into you now. And who's got what due, what day homework's going

to go back to school for our little guy, or when training is for him for his school's sport days or when he has to bring his kit to school or whatever. It's my Google Calendar that's got covered with 65 different colours to try and keep track of all that sort of stuff. Usually my husband, he just asks me, so I have to know.

Jo: Wow, that's sounds like a lot.

Maggie: Yeah. Yeah, it is genuine, and you can't ever stop because then the whole house falls down and nothing gets done and when you drop it you end up feeling guilty. Yeah, and that's another thing I think for mums in particular; it's a challenge to fit everything in especially when I've got the job plus the business. So, there's no downtime in my life and that's a real challenge because I'm tired. And I think that's a big challenge for most Mumpreneurs, women in business. And I think it's more...the women tend to carry more of the mental load of the household and so it's a bigger challenge for women in business as opposed to men in business.

In a similar vein, Dot reflects:

"It's a constant in sort of everyday life. It seems so, how would I put it – it's a devotion of so much time, energy, and emotional labour to do the Mumpreneur thing. People feel isolated in their role because they sometimes can't talk to their friends because their friends have their children in childcare, and they work part-time or manage their time that way. And we just can't talk to other mothers because we actually have another role as a businessperson and talking to stay-at-home mothers can make us feel a bit more guilty as stay at home mothers may have more time devoted to their children and activities and childcare and taking their kids to museums throughout the day."

The intensive self- and family- management expressed in the preceding excerpts is consistent not just with intensive mothering practices but also broadly in-line with some Third Wave feminist approaches to gendered divisions of labour. In Rottenberg's (2018) critique of the movement, she argues that individualised responses to structural problems cannot adequately counter such problems. The women of this study are acutely aware of the social, cultural and economic forces producing this inequality. However, in recounting life-narratives, the women of this study strategically foreground elements of their life narratives that emphasise things such as their devotion to their children or their personal choices as a reflection of autonomy and control in their own lives.

Unlike work in the formal labour force, Mumpreneurs have more control and flexibility over work hours and, as such, can fulfil the basic tenets of intensive mothering by 'being there' for their children as often as they need. Indeed, flexibility over working hours is, by far, the most commonly cited reason participants turned to Mumpreneurship:

Maggie: I can be flexible with my hours, it's great. Like when I was working fulltime in the corporate industries, I'd feel so guilty about asking to leave early to go and do something. Like my kids would have a sports day that afternoon or something and I was made to feel so guilty about asking to take any time off.

Miranda: I'm doing this because the benefit of it is I work from home so I can juggle my family as well as the business. And I have been very fortunate finding something else I can do largely from home that's going to be flexible.

Dot: I think especially as I have young children, having the flexibility around my work day makes a really big difference and also I guess because I'm the director of the business and I can work from home like of an evening if I need to.

In a highly individualised, neoliberal pursuit, such as Mumpreneurship, an individual “accepts full responsibility of her own well-being and self-care, which is often predicated on crafting felicitous work-family balance based on cost-benefit calculus” (Rottenberg, 2018, p. 55). To reiterate an earlier point, to the women of this study, the main delineating factor between a satisfactory and unsatisfactory life is personal choice. While individual actions and ‘personal choice’ cannot effectively counter structural inequalities, to my participants, their ‘personal choice’ to stay home and look after their children – to ‘be there’ when other mothers return to the formal workforce – is proof of their own good motherhood. In this sense, Mumpreneurship is not just a Third Wave response to the oversights of Second Wave feminism but also a compromise between the ideals of intensive motherhood and the contemporary demands of economic sphere.

## 6.5 Conclusion

Mumpreneurs took to 'personal choice' narratives as a way to navigate and justify their domestic arrangements. As such, from its inception, Mumpreneurship has been a Third Wave endeavour. While fully aware of structural inequalities, Mumpreneurship is underpinned by highly individuated life-narratives wherein they are the sole arbiter of their (and their family's) wellbeing. Women's – particularly mothers' – relationship to the formal labour force has changed considerably over time. The Second Wave feminist protest, activism and scholarship enacted broad legal changes from which many Mumpreneurs benefitted. However, Second Wave scholarship and activism left unanswered questions about everyday household dynamics, particularly around motherhood. Domestic chores and childcare in households where both parents worked were not split evenly. Rather, women were then tasked with the responsibilities of both full-time work and domestic care duties. While unintentional, the 'double shift' phenomenon remains a significant factor in participants' decision to take on Mumpreneurship. Concurrent with the rise of 'intensive mothering' and Third Wave feminist activism's foregrounding of personal experience, for the women of this study, Mumpreneurship is a compromise between the ideals of intensive motherhood and career.



## **7. Discussion – Part 2: The Entrepreneur in the Neoliberal Market and the ‘Nappy Valley’**

Mumpreneurs straddle the line between economic and feminist spheres. As discussed in previous chapters, the negative impact of motherhood on women’s full participation in the workforce has been acknowledged since female-led trade unionist movements of the post-war period (Cobble, 2005). Growing up in the Second Wave, Mumpreneurs were witness to their mothers’ dismantling of legal and economic barriers to women’s labour. Carrying on this activism in the Third Wave, Mumpreneurs are mostly informed, educated, and aware of societal structures broadly privileging men over women, such as the wage gap. Reflecting on their education and own lives as working mothers, Mumpreneurs like, Dot, Jessica and Maggie can articulate historical economic and social factors that have devalued women’s labour and put forward opinions as to why these discrepancies persist. However, what to do about motherhood – and potential solutions to the discrepancies between men and women in the workplace – are framed primarily through the lens of individual action. Being working professionals (most often) partnered with high wage-earning spouses, the women of this study occupy a privileged economic and social position. And, yet, even for these women, second and Third Wave feminist discourse, protest and scholarship has not provided a cohesive solution to the particular impact of motherhood on their full participation in the formal economic sphere. Unsatisfied, the women of this study aim to address these discrepancies through Mumpreneurship.

Mumpreneurship is seen as a means to manage competing pressures to be, all at once, ‘good mothers’, ‘good feminists’, economically productive and maintain a meaningful career. Though

Mumpreneurs do gain some level of control over their work and home lives (particularly regarding the flexibility of workhours), by individuating their solutions, Mumpreneurs: (1) maintain the structure of social and economic pressures that lead them to Mumpreneurship in the first place and they, perhaps ironically; (2) become more vulnerable to long-term economic losses over their lifetime. During fieldwork, I began calling this dip in earnings the 'Nappy Valley' and continue to do so here. The concept of the 'Nappy Valley' will be expanded upon below. The concept shows in clear terms how women are particularly and obviously disadvantaged by parenthood *and* how this disadvantage persists throughout their working lives.

As discussed in Chapter 4, Mumpreneurship has been facilitated by a broad shift to neoliberal rationales in economic and cultural spheres. As will be discussed below, early scholarship concerning entrepreneurship described it as a means to take advantage of turbulent and changing economic circumstances through 'creative destruction'. Highlighting their femininity, status as mothers and the pressures and responsibilities of parenthood, the women of this study strategically differentiate themselves from Schumpeter's traditional entrepreneurs and the cultural tropes surrounding the concept of 'the entrepreneur' yet thrive in turbulent neoliberal economic and social domains. The savviness with which they utilise time and resources reveal a neoliberal approach to work- and home-life; an approach not anticipated by early scholars such as Schumpeter. Underpinning Mumpreneurs' work ethic and neoliberal framing, however, are deeply structural precarities such as the life-time losses in earnings experienced by mothers (but not fathers) after the birth of children.

## 7.1 Mumpreneurship in the Neoliberal State

As discussed in Chapter 4, the largest change in economic forces surrounding business owners has been the broad shift of economic and cultural spheres to neoliberal rationales. Most humanities and social science scholars agree that the neoliberal project has brought about major economic and social policy reforms (Hoffman et al., 2006). However, neoliberalism is a nebulous term. Ong, for instance, states that “neoliberalism seems to mean many different things depending on one's vantage point” (2006, p. 1) and Hoffman et. al. goes so far as to suggest that “very little attention has been devoted to specifying what ‘neoliberalism’ means” (Hoffman et al., 2006, p. 9). Used to simultaneously describe economic reform policy, a hegemonic project, development models, an ideology of self-making, a mode of governance and the slow creep of rationalised, economic market logics to areas not previously assumed to be economic domains, ‘neoliberalism’ is an ambiguous term.

The history and definition of neoliberalism is multifarious. The general narrative of neoliberalism - shared by most economic and social science scholars – is that the neoliberalism project was born out of conceptual shifts in the 1970s and 1980s resulting in broad-scale economic and social policy reforms (Hoffman et al., 2006). Harvey acknowledges the multiplicity with which neoliberalism is used and defined, describing the concept as: a theory, a mode of discourse and a hegemonic project that seeks to “re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites” (Harvey, 2007, p. 15). He also defines the neoliberal project as being a series of policies that seek “to bring all human action into the domain of the market” (Harvey, 2007, p. 3). Engaging with deeper historical roots of the concept, Ortner (2011), in contrast, sees little distinction between ‘neoliberalism’ and ‘late capitalism’. Both, she

argues, can be used to describe the general conceptual shifts away from the Fordism and Keynesian economic thought and policy central to 20<sup>th</sup> century economics. Similarly, Ganti (2014) argues that neoliberal thought emerged well before the 1970s economic policies most often associated with the term. However, Ganti defines neoliberalism as an ideological and philosophical movement that emerged from specific institutions and intellectual networks in post-World War I Europe and the United States.

To broadly categorise what is meant by neoliberalism, then, is a matter of importance for this and other works engaging with contemporary economies. Neoliberalism represents the idea that the structure of the economy determines the basic frame of the larger society (Block, 2002, pp. 202). To elaborate, the neoliberal project is one that asserts that human well-being can best be achieved through “liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2007, pp. 2). While the concept of neoliberalism as used, discussed and debated remains fragmented – simultaneously an ideology, a hegemonic project, a discourse, a mode of governance, and the extension of economic logic into areas not traditionally thought of as economic domains (Harvey, 2007) – it remains a significant economic and social force. To many, the most pressing and egregious consequence of neoliberalism is the slow creep of market logics into traditionally separated fields. This also serves as its most intuitive definition. It is beyond the reach of this project to describe the totality of the neoliberal project. Rather it is necessary to practically define it for the purposes of this study. Following Harvey (2007) and Rudnyckyj (2014), neoliberalism is the force – as enacted through governmental policy and individual action – that supplants traditionally non-market driven domains with market logics.

Mumpreneurs typify this neoliberalism. Being mothers who start up small, home-based businesses around the time they have children, they exemplify the 'imperative toward extending economic logic into areas not traditionally conceptualised as economic domains' (Ong, 2006, Rudnyckyj, 2014). Mumpreneurs' strategic use of digital space and social media as a means to garner potential customers commodifies both social links and personality. Amy, for instance, is a 37-year-old woman living in rural Victoria with her husband, Darrin, and their 2 children. With an interest in design, fashion and textiles from a young age, Amy planned to move to either Sydney or Melbourne after high school. She applied for various art colleges to pursue her interests and accepted a place at a prestigious college in metropolitan Melbourne. Growing up in rural Victoria, she assumed she would stay in Melbourne after graduation in order to keep open as many opportunities as possible and maintain connections with old and new clients in the Australian design, fashion, and art industries. In Melbourne, she met her husband, Darrin – a mechanic who also grew up in rural Victoria. Though she enjoyed her time in Melbourne as a university student, and as part of a young, childless, couple, Amy and Darrin decided that when they wanted to start a family, they would move back to rural Victoria. Both wanted to give their children the type of childhood they enjoyed. After a decade of working in Melbourne for various design and manufacturing companies, Amy, six months pregnant, returned to her hometown with her partner. She stresses that this was not an easy decision, nor was it done without careful consideration of the impact on her job prospects as a designer. However, she and her husband believed that their children would have better childhoods surrounded by a close family network, away from, what she describes as the hustle, noise, and 'polluted air' of Australia's metropolises. During her pregnancy, Amy began searching for suitable properties for herself and Darren, aiming to purchase a home with enough land to build a design studio, office space, and small warehouse. Finding such a place, she spent the remainder of her pregnancy and first months as a new mum 'living on a building site in a camper van'. She

emphasises that her business would not be possible without the communicative affordances of the Internet: the first thing she did was set up a website with a streamlined ordering and payment process. This allowed her to start advertising her company, drawing on previous contacts and her Melbourne-based network for tips through Skype, text, phone calls, and, predominantly, Facebook. 'As soon as the builders left, I was in' – and she started accepting clients immediately. With family close by to draw on for childcare, Amy was able to devote most business hours to her new company Amy Ink Designs. Amy Ink Designs now designs and manufactures merchandise for various businesses across Australia. Amy has a particular interest in having a low environmental impact and sourcing materials from certified, socially responsible producers which allowed her to charge a premium for her products and, at the time, differentiated herself from other local manufacturers. To achieve this, Amy has, at times, had to rely on volunteer efforts from her friends and family as well as work through the night on multiple occasions:

Amy: My biggest week has been 105 hours

Jo: Oh My God!

Amy: Yeah, that was two all-nighters. One after the other. That was ridiculous. And that was my first big, big job ever.

Jo: How are you alive?

Amy: Haven't you pulled all-nighters to get assignments done and stuff?

Jo: I... uh... when I was in undergrad, there'd be a lot of late nights. Um... Maybe I was just a wimp? \*laughs\* Like, I'd usually... I'd try to get, one or two hours sleep. Mum always told me 'if you have a bit of sleep, in the morning the problems don't seem as bad'

Amy: Yeah but the problem's still there.

Jo: It is but -

Amy: That's what I find.

Jo: Oh okay. \*laughs\* that's unrelenting

Amy: Yeah I try really hard to get it done before I got to bed because I have all intentions – the times that I've gone 'no. I'm going to bed and I'm going to get up early' – I don't get up early. I know that so I'm best to keep persevering until the job's done

Jo: Wow – is the need to get stuff done-

Amy: [interrupting] Like deadlines?

Jo: Yeah, yeah – like deadlines - is it because the client's kind of expect that of you or is it something in yourself?

Amy: Nah, usually it's a client deadline that needs to be met.

Jo: Have you ever missed a deadline?

Amy: No. Renegotiated with the client if it's something *completely* out of my control but I'm much more on top of supply chains and deliveries now. I'm much stricter now so it was just a good lesson in my – cause, oh, that first December I remember clearly it was – they had a strict deadline and they changed the order

Jo: Oh no!

Amy: Yeah, so then, I was like 'yep, sure! I can still do it by that date!' with me and all my staff, I had-

Jo: [talking over Amy] What, why!?

Amy: -one staff member who was off sick for the whole of November and we needed to get stuff out for the Christmas retail period.

Jo: But then why did you say you could get it all out by then, Amy?

Amy: They had the strict deadline. You don't drop clients. I called in a casual and I had my cousin and my sister come help replace and repack 100 orders in a weekend. It doesn't seem like a lot but some orders were for big retail and like 500 pieces you know?

Jo: No, no - that that that sounds like a lot. That sounds like too much

\*laughs\*

Amy: Yeah it was a fairly big exercise and I only had the small office space and to have the products spread out it... you know, it just lead me to rethink my system. I still have kinks to work out - if I refine my system a bit more, I can function with minimal employees and still get out the big orders.

This work ethic is emulated throughout Mumpreneurial social spaces. Through short life-narratives and bios posted on social media and their business websites, Mumpreneurs emphasise that they 'started on the kitchen table' with little resources but 'lots of hustle'. In this context, early motherhood is framed not as a period of adjusting to new life circumstances and childcare but as 'downtime' wherein they were able to pursue business opportunities. They take great care to describe their business and life circumstances as being born from individual actions and personal choice. To illustrate, the life narrative of Lucia is outlined here. Lucia is a 45-year-old married mother of four children aged five, eight, 10, and 12. She and her partner had been living in a caravan while their home was being built in the outer suburbs of Adelaide. Before starting up her business, Lucia had worked as a paralegal, trained as a naturopath, and worked numerous temporary positions or short-term contracts. Making the conscious decision to cease formal work when she was "six months pregnant with child number two", Lucia told her husband that she did not want to return to formal work, finding the juggle of young children and formal work to be too draining and the cost of childcare too steep. She intended to return to



formal work when her children were all school-aged. However, during what she described as the 'downtime' away from formal work (as she was caring for three children under the age of five) she decided to start up a business. She bought the web domain 'Eco Home' after the birth of her third child and, with no formal training, decided to start up a business. Both she and her husband care deeply about the environment and are concerned with the impact of climate change on their children. She and her husband aim to live with as little environmental impact as possible. For instance, they have a large garden where they grow their own vegetables, herbs and fruits and only buy products made eco-friendly or compostable materials. To that end, Lucia's business is an online provider of sustainable and eco-friendly homewares and gifts. Lucia does not design, commission or manufacture these supplies. Rather she sources, re-labels, packages and sends them to customers in Australia. Lucia previously rented a small warehouse space to hold her business' stock but, to save costs, she currently stores stock in her in-law's garage and her own home. After five years of operation, Lucia has only recently managed to break even or make a modest profit each month through the business.

In her website's 'About' section, she writes that:

"As a busy mummy, [Lucia] found it difficult to find eco-friendly supplies for picnics, parties and everything in between. She tried in vain to find environmentally friendly alternatives to single-use plastics but then, an idea struck! Why not make a kit full of eco-friendly goodies so Mum's around Australia can throw their kids the most awesome, sustainable birthday parties?"

Similarly, Jessica insists in various interviews promoted on her websites that:

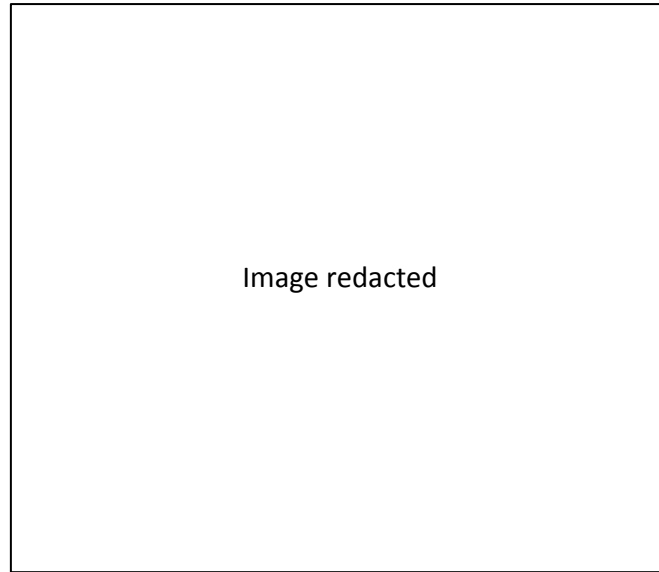
"...business and motherhood are actually quite compatible. When you're the boss you can set your own hours and create a business that's as big or small as

you want. It's completely up to you ... I have always loved being a Mumpreneur and being home with my children ... I am inspired by the women I work with every day and the flexibility, freedom and creativity that this lifestyle allows is something I am passionate about sharing with other mums who are looking to create their dream life too!"

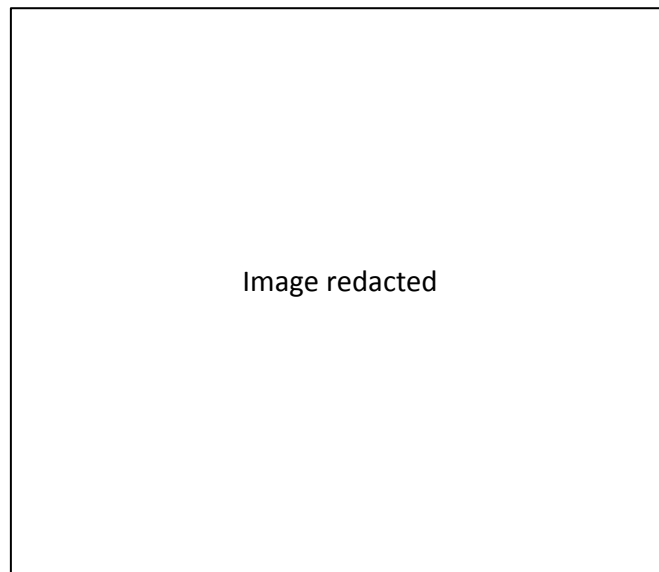
The examples herein typify the ideology of self-making and individuation central to the neoliberal concept.

## **7.2 The 'Nappy Valley'**

Not mentioned by name, but keenly felt, 'The Nappy Valley' describes the steep dive in earnings experienced by women after having children. Key to this concept is the comparative stability and, indeed, increase in earnings experienced by men after the birth of children. According to Kleven, Landais, and Sjøgaard (2019), the influence of children on women's lifetime earning potential could account for a 20% gap in long-term earnings between men and women.



*Figure 10: Graph showing the effect of the birth of children on women's estimated lifetime earnings. I term the 'dip' in women's projected earnings after the birth of children the 'Nappy Valley' effect. Graph adapted from Kleven, Landais, and Søgaaard (2019). The two lines of the graph compare women's earnings over their lifetime – one for those who have children and one for those who do not have children. The line for women who have children dramatically 'dips' after the birth of the first child and does not return to or ever reach the same level as the line for women who do not have children.*



*Figure 11: Graph showing the effect of the birth of children on men's estimated lifetime earnings. Note the significantly smaller 'dip' in lifetime earnings projected for men in Figure 11, as opposed to women in Figure 10. Graph adapted from Kleven, Landais, and Søgaaard (2019). The two lines of the graph compare men's earnings over their lifetime – one for those who have children and one for those who do not have children. The line for men who have children minimally deviates from the line representing earnings of men who do not have children, returning to the same level 2 years after the birth of the first child.*

The 'Nappy Valley' is visualised by the dip and comparatively low wage resulting from that initial dip that follows women throughout their careers seen in Figure 10. Numerous studies have documented the existence of a 'motherhood penalty' (Kahn et al., 2014, Budig and England, 2001, Waldfogel, 1995, Avellar and Smock, 2003). The term 'motherhood penalty', however, does not just refer to the dip in wages experienced by mothers (but not fathers) after the birth of children. The 'motherhood penalty' refers simultaneously to women's loss of wages, loss of job progress, social discrimination against mothers in the workplace and hiring bias against mothers. When I refer to the 'Nappy Valley' I am exclusively referring to the distinct drop in earnings experienced by women, after the birth of children and how this loss in earnings persists over their lifetime earnings. For the women of this study, the 'Nappy Valley' is an obvious and anticipated consequence of childbirth, but one that they – on some level – believe they are able to mitigate and overcome. This is not to suggest that the women of this study are unaware of the wage gap between men and women. Nor does this suggest that Mumpreneurs are oblivious of the difficulties of navigating motherhood and work in the formal labour force before becoming mothers. Rather, for Mumpreneurs who wished to return to the formal labour force, there is an assumption that the strategies and frameworks of primary carer parental leave and flexible working arrangements are enough to compensate for the impact of motherhood on their work-lives. The existence and persistence of the Nappy Valley would suggest otherwise.

In describing her own experience as a working mother, Maggie suggests that:

"Showing up to work with a baby bump was like a death knell everyone could hear but me. I was pushed off projects and looked over for younger hires. I had more experience and a greater understanding of our clients but because 'I'd be gone in a few months' actual work wound down almost immediately. There was no real talk of 'when I get back' or 'after

mat leave'. It was crushing. I struggled emotionally ... psychologically it was challenging for me. [When I went back] even though I was part time, I still felt guilty if I needed to take a day off any other day in that week.

Jo: I've heard a lot of that from the other women. It's... honestly... I'm 25 now, in the future I do want to have children but the actual... like... how would I manage? Especially in Academia, because they demand so much of your time... I'm sure it's exactly the same in the corporate world as well though. How do women manage it all?

Maggie: Um, you just do it, if you get it. I do know from an employment perspective, I've recruited people... and I know that even though there's not supposed to be discrimination... like, I was employing a lot of women for my team that were at an age where they could be starting a family and my boss was, well, you know \*deepens voice and mocks old boss\* "Oh we can't take her on keep she will be wandering and going off on maternity leave", and I'm like "Well, that's just something that we have to factor into all of this". That's one of the reasons I think why sometimes the women get paid less.

Jo: Because they think they're going to go off...

Maggie: Because they think they're going to have to subsidise as a twelve-month maternity leave payment in the future. So either you'll get slightly less now which will cover us paying you for twelve months while you're on maternity leave, because we're going to have to pay somebody else to do your job or you don't get the job. If there was more of maternity leave allowance through a Government plan, you're paying your taxes, you know, and that's covered. Even if it's more of a subsidy through

Centrelink or something. But for the employers to not actually be copping up the whole amount, I think that would balance the wage situation regardless. So I think that's where some of it comes from.

Jo: That makes me feel bad about the world but it does make sense.

Many Mumpreneurs feel 'pushed out' of the formal workforce or locked out of opportunities to advance in their career after they became mothers. They recount a lack of support for working mothers not limited to prohibitive costs of childcare, inflexible working schedules, and being stigmatised as "not committed enough" to the workplace. Over coffee one morning, Maggie also recounted that:

"I was working fulltime, at mid-management level and after coming back from maternity leave I actually burnt out. I got to the stage where I was like 'I need to go part time' and at that level everybody says "No". I tried to get another job that was similar sort of pay pro rata and I just couldn't do it. I had to actually step down a level and not be a team leader and just work as part of a team to actually get a part time role - it didn't sit well with me."

A combination of these experiences leads the women of this study to leave the formal workforce for Mumpreneurship, under the assumption that it would be easier to manage the competing pressures of entrepreneurship and motherhood given the supposed flexibility afforded by digital innovations. However, this leaves most Mumpreneurs in a relatively vulnerable financial position.

Deeply felt but not discussed openly with friends, family, or potential customers, Mumpreneurs rely on indirect financial support from their partners. After the financial support of primary carer parental leave ends, Mumpreneurs are most often in the early stages of setting up, developing or marketing their new businesses. Many do not turn a profit in the first year, and some never maintain a substantial profit margin. Maintaining the standard of living they and their family are accustomed to (and wish to continue) is predicated on the stability of income generated by Mumpreneurs' partners.

Dot: We thought of running a physical shop for a year - like have a central hub we could run things from - and I ran it for a year. I took a year lease on it, and it was a financial... not a strain or drain, but financially we paid – my husband, really – to keep it afloat. I'd definitely go back and do it again when we've got more members to make it work better. But it actually took up so much of my time. I had staff working there and everything, but it meant I couldn't spend as much time growing [Dots Spots] in general, because I was running the shop.

Jo: Wow, do you work outside of this? Or is [Dots Spots] your main project? Well, not project, but main business?

Dot: Yeah, no - I just run [Dots Spots]. I'm not really about the money at the moment, when you have a concept it's more about the growth and proving that it's a viable and valuable concept and then people will want to be part of it, but while you're almost trying to sell it to people, saying "everybody should be part of it", until there's enough people buying in saying "we love being part of it", like Uber or Gumtree or eBay or Airbnb. They've all started by having to try to get people across the line with "you should try this", and now everybody knows about it and it's the place to be and then that's a different ballgame. So, luckily my husband is

good at what he does, and our family doesn't rely on \*me\* earning to live, so it means that we can have an ordinary income and also put our money into [Dots Spots] as well. Other people do this but if they were financially dependent on having two wages and stuff like that... it'd be much, much harder to... I mean ... I am a fairly tenacious person, so I will see it through regardless of the money factor, or the ups and downs and all that sort of thing. There's plenty of times I've wanted to give up, and not just because of money, because as I say, I didn't do it for that, it's been hard regardless, I've had challenges, and I...

Jo: I'm so sorry this is really important stuff but, you're kind of...flitting in and out, there's some kind of – it's like you're getting quieter and then louder, it's...

Dot: Oh, OK, sorry, I've got the bairn<sup>17</sup> here. I'm not sure exactly what he wants now \*baby beginning to cry\* he went to bed earlier than normal today \*cooing and baby-talking to baby\* Sorry...

Jo: No, that's all right!

Dot: \*baby babbling but not crying anymore\* He's not going to let me put him down at the minute but yeah it's not a financially viable business at the moment, in the future I'm hoping it will be, for sure, and we're just lucky that we've been in the position that I could hang on and just keep going because of my husband's main income.

This Dot reflects a paradox of Mumpreneurship. Mumpreneurs present themselves to friends, family and potential customers as being informed, rebellious, feminist, bosses who start up

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<sup>17</sup> A term meaning baby or young child used in Scotland and Northern England.



small businesses in the face of traditional working environments hostile to the demands of motherhood. However, to be in a position to start up their businesses, Mumpreneurs largely rely on their partners for financial support. In doing so, they unintentionally recreate traditional gendered power, social and financial dynamics. They are almost fully dependent on their partner for financial support while they take care of the house and children. Maggie candidly describes the impact of her husband's income on her decision to start a small business:

Jo: Are many of your friends Mumpreneurs?

Maggie: Actually no, not a lot of them are. Most of them are still in the corporate world and their looking at me going, "Well you're happy". Yeah I'm happy, I'm not earning much money at the moment but I'm happy. So yeah, that's the big drawback, is taking a huge pay cut when you step into this world and as an entrepreneur that's the huge risk that you take. It's like you're getting on a horse. You put so much money and time into working out which one are you going to go with and everything and you just got to hope that you do all the right things to get the winning result at the end, yeah.

Jo: Was there a particular moment when you said okay I can't do corporate anymore, I have to start something or was it a gradual build-up of different moments where you were just like. "Okay this is for me to start my own business", like how did you come to that?

Maggie: I've had lots of ideas that I used to jot down, from twenty years ago, what if I did this, what if I did that? And I tried it with [a previous business venture] and thought yeah okay, I can do this. You know if I

want to go out and do my own thing I know I can. I did have to be the main income earner for the family for a while, so it wasn't an option to be running my own business and having too many risks involved with that then. But with my husband having a regular income to support us it has been a lot easier to make that decision and realising you know, I was burning out with fulltime work and just going, "You know what I'm done". Yeah, so, it was the seeds were in my head from years ago and so I had ideas that I could work with and go okay what if I get that idea or that idea, and we're doing the market research and seeing what the best options were for online retail, certainly seemed to be the best way to go for me at the time.

Jo: Wow, so like, why was that?

Maggie: So... I was actually seeing similar demand for upcycled products and everything at markets and in shops and there is definitely a trend, very retro thing happening here so let's do it online and yeah it...

Jo: just took off?

Maggie: just took off from there, yeah. Couldn't have done it without [husband]. With a regular paycheck ticking along in the background I didn't need to worry about the mortgage being paid and could focus on the business

Additionally, in an interview at a café in Melbourne's affluent inner-northern suburbs, some weeks after the interview quoted above, I asked Dot if she would have started up a business if she was a single parent. Dot replied:

“I think I would feel differently if I was single. I was working full time and then I was pregnant and took maternity leave and if I was then suddenly single and single parenting, Mumpreneurship wouldn’t have been an avenue I would have explored. I think I would have just thought out more traditional income work and then maybe kept my business going on the side. I would definitely still be doing it but I don’t think I would have taken the risk of trying to grow it myself or make it happen... try and build it to my sole source of income. I think it just helped having that knowledge that we’re both okay with just one income coming in for the time it takes to launch a business like mine. If I was single, I don’t think I would have made the same choices.”

And, in the course of one of her first interviews, Lucia revealed how she and her husband manage the finances of the business together:

Lucia: At the moment, it’s actually nice, financially.

Jo: Okay. Do you mind if I ask the potentially tricky question of, like, the actual numbers? How much have you earned through your business in the past financial year?

Lucia: I think the money-making side of the business has only been going for such a short amount of time that it makes it a little bit hard but yes I can give you exactly the amount. It’s not as bad as what I expect. I always have to sell myself but it’s you, so, at the moment, like at this point in

time exactly, I'm running it around about \$1,500 loss in the business for the year. So my income has been \$4,500 for the year and my expenses has been about the same, but some of that was my initial investment in the business as well. So if I were to take that out those initial costs, I'm running at a profit which I'm happy with so far but I still got a goal in mind that I'd like to be -- yeah. I sort of sat down with my financial planner a while ago and set a goal for myself so that yeah, I'd like to sort of look at a goal of sitting in a profit of around about \$800 per week that I can actually draw out of the business I guess and use for my daily living. I do have the advantage at the moment which is part of the reason why I have decided to set stuff now. I still get family tax benefits and [husband] works so I sort of figured that while my kids are still young enough, I may as well make the most of that time and try to set up a profitable business so that when that finishes, I can go right, I do have a successful business. If it doesn't work for whatever reason, I can say okay, now I've got to go find a 9 -5.

Jo: That's really interesting. So what are some of the factors that have helped you the most in setting up your business? You mentioned the family benefit and [husband's] income as somewhat of a buffer too. So is there any other factors?

Lucia: It's a massive -- yup.

Jo: Are there any other factors kind of like that that have helped you start up the business?

Lucia: Financial practice, no. I have done it all on my own. That buffer is definitely a massive help as you don't spend every single day stressing about money though

As seen in the Nappy Valley effect, men do not experience a loss of earnings after becoming fathers. The reasons for this are multifarious but the largest contributing factor is that they, largely, do not take on primary care of children (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016, Ting et al., 2016, Howcroft and Fitzgerald, 1998). Mumpreneurs suggest that this stable financial support ensures that 'the mortgage still gets paid', enabling them to pursue their business goals. However, this support is contingent on these women undertaking most if not all unpaid domestic labour and childcare. Though it must be noted that father's small boost in income in heteronormative households is not commensurate with the loss of their partner's income in a household's budget, in staying home to look after young children (and taking on most domestic duties), Mumpreneurs help households avoid the significant additional costs associated with children such as childcare. Mumpreneurs distinguish themselves from stay-at-home-mums, however by emphasising their status as entrepreneurs.

### **7.3 Schumpeter and 'The Entrepreneur'**

The theoretical underpinnings of entrepreneurship did not garner much scholarly attention until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Though entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial pursuits have played a significant role in most capitalist economies, scholarly research into entrepreneurship remains quite limited (Scott, 2006) and, oftentimes, neglects to define or distinguish between

‘entrepreneur’ and ‘small business owner’ (Carland et al., 1984, p. 357). Schumpeter’s *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1942) is often cited as the first academic work to explicitly describe and analyse entrepreneurship as an economic pursuit separate from capitalist owners and business managers (Carland et al., 1984). Drawing on metaphors of warriors from the Napoleonic wars and medieval knights, Schumpeter assumes that the typical entrepreneur is male with a propensity for “individual leadership acting by virtue of personal force and personal responsibility for success” (1942, p. 133). Being the first and most widely cited authority on entrepreneurship, this description of a typical entrepreneur remains a figure in scholarly and public interpretations (Carland et al., 1984, Scott, 2006, McCraw, 2006).

To Schumpeter, the entrepreneur held a central role in capitalist economies. He describes the entrepreneur as a figure of ‘supernormal ability and ambition’ (1942, pp. 124-5) who ‘reforms or revolutionise the pattern of production’ (1942, p. 132) through a process he termed ‘creative destruction’. In Schumpeter’s interpretation, all economic change starts with the actions of a ‘forceful individual’ (that is, the entrepreneur) and then spreads to the rest of the economy. This reform can comprise of inventions, innovations in technologies of production, new commodities (or producing old commodities in new ways), opening new material supply sources, new outlets for products or by reorganising an industry (Schumpeter, 1942). Paradoxically, these innovations necessitate the destruction of old ways of conducting business.

Underlying Schumpeter’s discussion of the entrepreneur is a Marxist critique of capitalist economies. Schumpeter’s model of the entrepreneur places the entrepreneur in a historical cycle of wealth creation and destruction. This model reflects the entrepreneur’s ability to create new wealth by destroying old ways of conducting business or taking advantage of new opportunities afforded by the destruction of old business models (most often after war or

economic crises). To Schumpeter, this 'creative destruction' is the key distinction between 'business owners' and 'entrepreneurs' (Carland et al., 1984, Schumpeter, 1942). Through technological innovation or innovative business models, entrepreneurs destroy the value of established companies, markets, labourers, and business models. However, with new markets, business models or technologies, Schumpeter's model of entrepreneurship remained steadfast. Grounding this work in the Marxist canon, Schumpeter predicted this would inevitably lead to the destruction of the capitalist system, assuming the cycle of devaluing and creation of wealth to be unsustainable (McCraw, 2006, Schumpeter, 1942). So far, this is unrealised.

## **7.4 The Mumpreneur and the Entrepreneur**

There are distinct contrasts between Schumpeter's entrepreneur, cultural narratives of the entrepreneur, and Mumpreneurship. Assumed male, money-oriented and childless, the culturally defined figure of 'the entrepreneur' is not applicable to the lifeworld or self-conception of many Mumpreneurs. Though there are many positive tropes associated with the entrepreneur (such as being determined, intelligent, talented, self-made, or gifted), this differentiation is as a means for Mumpreneurs to separate themselves from the negative cultural understanding of the entrepreneur being a 'profit-motivated, ruthless business mogul'. Mumpreneurism is not a homogenous group and feelings vary across the community. However, if strategically self-identifying as a 'Mumpreneur', the women of this study will contrast themselves to usual cultural understandings of 'the entrepreneur' by highlighting their own femininity, status as mothers and the pressures and responsibilities of parenthood.

My first interview with Dawn – the life coach and natural therapist - for instance, encapsulated a particular approach to entrepreneurship that appeared in most Mumpreneurs' reflections on their role as an entrepreneur:

Jo: How do you market yourself on Facebook?

Dawn: Through my page, through the groups, mainly. I don't tend to pay for Facebook advertising, it's largely word of mouth. That's the best kind –clients letting their friends know how you've helped them and how I can help them too– and I just share my events and everything through the different business groups that I'm part of.

Jo: What kind of business groups are you in?

Dawn: One's for coaches, one's for networking, small business, ladies' small business groups, what else? Buy, swap, sell groups, community noticeboards, Heart-centred, soul-driven entrepreneurs, all these funny little sounding groups aligned with what I do and the kind of clientele that I'd like to attract as well.

Jo: sorry - soul driven entrepreneurs?

Dawn: yeah; heart-centred, soul-driven, finding your why – entrepreneurship with purpose.

Jo: Oh, a purpose?

Dawn: A purpose beyond money, yeah.

Jo: Oh neat – what would be a purpose?



Dawn: Well there are different purposes. [Dawn's life coaching business] is all about bringing people peace, living authentically and allowing ourselves the space to rejuvenate. I take a holistic approach, so I'm not going to chop you up into bits, I'm not going to look at you as a whole and work through your history, what bothers you the most, who you want to be and what we can do to get you there. There's no point treating the symptoms if the underlying cause is still there.

Jo: How often would they come in for a package? Would it be once a week, or is it up them?

Dawn: Yeah, it's once a week generally, I like to keep the momentum going. Checking in on their journey, it's good to see how people are.

Jo: yeah, yeah. I can see how that would be good. Sorry, you were saying before about purpose – that there was lots of different ones – is that to mean, like, everybody has their own purpose or you can have multiple purposes or...?

Dawn: Oh, multiple. We're all very complicated – you should know \*laughs\*. I was just thinking the other day - my alarm clock, I used to hate. It's this black plastic that would \*imitates alarm\* and rip me out bed. But slowly, painfully, I realised I didn't hate the alarm, I hated my life. I had to bring myself back into alignment, well actually, for the first time as an adult. I'm not naturally a morning person but found that once I really started to

live authentically I was excited to wake up. I didn't have that weight on me. I've truly come to love my alarm and am so grateful that I was gifted it. It's sturdy and solid and a reminder of how far I've come that I don't need it so often now. On a personal level, that's purpose.

Jo: Oh okay. So for you purpose is a kind of self-actualization?

Dawn: Yes, well, more that I can show my daughters that whatever it is they want, they can do. They model themselves after their role models and the oldest is a few years off teenhood yet but I'm still their role model for a few years before then. I want to imprint on them that they can do whatever they set their mind to. As parents we lay their foundations and I want theirs to be solid.

Jo: Oh, of course. So – what you were saying before was very interesting, about the links between entrepreneurship and purpose... To get it straight in my head - being an entrepreneur with purpose, for you, is centred around doing something impactful with your work beyond profit and showing your daughters that they can achieve their dreams? Is that right?

Dawn: Mmmm - it's the peace that comes from living your life as you want it to be lived and knowing that what you do is having a positive impact. I want to show my daughters that it's possible.

Dawn's excerpt encapsulates the 'philosophy' or motivations behind starting up her business. She, like many Mumpreneurs interviewed over the course of this study, shies away from centring profit as a major motivation for starting her business, presenting her motivations for starting the business as being something more meaningful than money. 'Finding your why' means finding a reason for starting a business outside of monetary profit. Many Mumpreneurs have rehearsed elevator pitches in response to the question 'why did you start your business?'. Short, sharp and to the point, these 'reasons beyond money' can include: wanting to 'lighten other mum's loads' by sharing knowledge, formulas and recipes; 'bringing peace to the chaos of mum life' through meditation; helping the environment or providing charity through social enterprises., Miranda briefly describes her motivations behind running Cosy Toys on her ecommerce website's 'About' page:

Profit isn't a dirty word, but if [Cosy Toys] was *only* about profit, I would have given it up years ago. Helping more people make sustainable choices, empowering those in the most vulnerable positions and living a purposeful life: these are the things I want to do with my business.

This veneer of profit shunning took some time to break down but once it did, it enabled a more nuanced view of the ways Mumpreneurs use social media to find and amass a following of potential customers.

As barked at me by Miranda in the vignette that started this thesis – *of course* these women want to turn a profit. They want to start up and maintain businesses that can be profitable and self-sustaining. However, when with strangers, amongst acquaintances, potential customers, or any public-facing social media, they shy away from mentioning profit motivations. Maggie

revealed that her reasons for doing so were part of a deliberate strategy she termed 'see me, know me, buy from me' to amass as large a following as possible so as to always have a pool of potential customers available to her. To Maggie, this strategy encapsulated her approach to social media. She, like many Mumpreneurs, assumed the best way to amass a following was to present a likable, meaningful, or helpful image of herself. The first step, 'see me' encapsulated this polished framing. Maggie describes this as 'you+' or 'your highest self' – the best, idealised version of oneself and one's business. Posts emphasising this element of herself and her business made up 40%-60% of her posts on Instagram, for instance. In these posts she would talk about her ideals and 'business goals' framed around her sustainable environmentalism.

The next element of Maggie's strategy – 'know me' – encapsulated moments wherein Maggie was 'unceremoniously human' or 'failing at life'. These often take the form of admissions of 'mum guilt' – pictures and posts of a less than pristine house or the aftermath of a kid's party hosted in her home. When at Maggie's house one day, I observed her tidy a mess in her kitchen to an 'acceptable level' she then took a photo. She later posted this photo on her Facebook page in which she decried the chaos of her kitchen. Talking to her about this later, she disclosed that such 'curated messes' serve as a means to humanise her brand, but in a way that she felt comfortable with and controlled. This allowed her to be 'relatable' and 'not a total stick in the mud'. Again, for the purpose of amassing followers. These posts made up 20-30% of her social media feed. Savvy and dynamic, Maggie aimed to turn commonly experienced tensions and hardships into sources of relatable content. When framed and presented well on social media, such tensions can be leveraged to build a follower count and, thus, amass a larger number of engaged potential customers.

The remaining posts on her feed consisted of her 'buy from me' strategy. These were direct advertisements for her app, or offers, discounts or specials on things potential customers could purchase through the app. Keeping these posts to a minimum, 10%-20%, Maggie hoped would encourage more people to click through and purchase the advertised item. Maggie's reasoning to me was that the build-up of brand loyalty was predicated on her being 'like a friend' to her followers so 'bombarding them with advertisements wouldn't make sense'.

This dynamic is repeated across all the Mumpreneurs interviewed. Many have elaborate or particular social media strategies; some informed by government funded or Mumpreneurial shared classes. However, the social media strategies they employ are additions to, rather than constituents of new forms of business. For clarity, I reiterate here the business-types Mumpreneurs most often use as described in Chapter 3:

- (1) The import, export, and direct selling of goods such as: clothes, fashion accessories, makeup, jewellery, tea, homewares, sweets. Most Mumpreneurial businesses of this sort focus on these products being boutique, organic, hypoallergenic or eco-friendly.
- (2) The development and selling of new tangible products. Such new products are often centred around babies', toddlers', or children's needs. For example, cutlery designed for toddlers to grip or diaper bags designed to look like handbags.
- (3) 'Lifestyle enhancement' and life coaching services such as: interior design, diet planning, and lifestyle blogging as well as an array of Mumpreneur-run classes such as yoga, meditation or baby music and social activities.
- (4) Social enterprise models. These can be broken down further into:

- a) 'Buy one, donate one' business models (e.g., make-at-home meal kits that donate a 'hot meal to a needy family' with every purchase of a meal kit)
- b) purchase-donation business models where a percentage of a product's profit is sent back directly to the people who made it.

To reiterate, Mumpreneurs contrast the imagined cultural figure of 'the entrepreneur' to themselves in social media posts, blog bios, comment sections and private messages. For instance, women of this study may post 'selfies' or photographs of their workspaces with their laptop perched on the kitchen table in the middle of a jumble of spoons, cups, plates and food scraps from that morning's breakfast, a visible pile of dirty laundry in the background, children's toys strewn around the floor or with other messes understood by the women of this study to indicate domestic motherhood. These posts can be accompanied by confessional text, such as Dot's:

"Busy night with [child]. Busy day with [business]. Laundry not done.  
Something's gotta give".

However, some also contain reflections on their position as Mumpreneurs, such as this post from Miranda's personal Facebook account to the Australian Mothers' Business Network:

"I had a mini epiphany as I was wiping hummus out of my kids [sic.] lunchboxes, I struggle to see myself as a businesswoman as I had this Photoshopped image of a girl with a briefcase and slimline laptop in my head. Meeting so many other women from [Mother's Business Network] helped me see that even if the house

is a mess and my desk is the kitchen table it doesn't mean I'm not a businesswomen [sic.]. Kick ass, ladies!"

Posts like these are common enough to be considered a trope in Mumpreneur circles.

If strategically self-identifying as a 'Mumpreneur', when contrasting themselves against 'the entrepreneur', Mumpreneurs will highlight their own femininity, status as mothers and the pressures and responsibilities of parenthood not associated with the typical idea of the entrepreneur. Dawn, for instance, strategically identifies as a Mumpreneur on her business website. Being a mother to two primary school-aged children and owner of a meditation and life-coaching business, she prominently features a picture of herself and her two boys on her webpage, reflecting on common stressors experienced by mothers in a series of blogposts.

Reflecting on her role as a parent and businesswoman, she writes:

"You can bet when Steve Jobs was starting out Apple and he was toiling away in his garage for many hours' day and night, he didn't have to run out and feed young people multiple times a day. You can bet that his partner was looking out, changing nappies, keeping the wheels turning. As a result, Steve gets to have that creative focus on the business. It's harder for women, especially homebased women. Like, kids emotional state can go up or down considerably, so I ended up managing my children's physical and emotional needs alone. In the family I had to be the consistent one which meant I had to drop things to be able to juggle family life while [her ex-husband] could just concentrate on work."

However, Mumpreneurship is not a homogenous whole and feelings vary across the community. When asked to reflect on their use of 'Mumpreneur' in personal branding, websites, Facebook groups and self-descriptions, many take a nuanced approach to the term. Amy, for instance, prominently advertises her design and manufacturing business as a 'Mumpreneurial enterprise'. Her business website is coded in pastels, pinks, and floral framing. She has linked her business and personal Instagram pages to the bottom of her business webpage enabling an automatically updated stream of pictures ranging from technical drafts of new clothing designs to (ostensibly) candid family photographs featuring herself and her children. However, over a mid-morning coffee I asked her how she felt about the term 'Mumpreneur' to which she mused:

"I'm a mother and I'm an entrepreneur but I don't know. You never hear of a dadpreneur. I think people think that it's just a catchy topic but, I mean, there have been studies - a mum still does the majority of the work at home even though she does the same amount of work a man does. You have to acknowledge that somehow."

Similarly, Maggie states in her first interview that:

"...just walking around with a badge that says Mumpreneur isn't for me."

Miranda, however, takes, perhaps, a more sceptical approach to the 'Mumpreneur' label. We were sitting at her kitchen table, adding price tags to new stock she had received when I asked whether she liked calling herself a Mumpreneur. She thought for a brief moment, and without putting down her pricing gun or slowing down the speed at which she was repricing her stock, she replied:



“I’m not sold on the whole ‘Mumpreneur’ thing, but you have to be savvy. I’ll take the award that [Australian Mothers’ Business Network Event] gave, I’ll put it on my website because a potential customer sees an award - almost any award - and thinks ‘oh okay, this place is legit’. It doesn’t matter what I think about the *nuances* and *politics* around Mumpreneurs to them [as Miranda said the word ‘Mumpreneur’, she gestured using air quotes/scare quotes]. I mean, I don’t think we should be sectioning ourselves off as ‘women entrepreneurs’ but that’s the conversation around women in business at the moment and you have to do what you can – if calling myself a Mumpreneur here and there helps then [she exaggeratedly shrugs her shoulders] *comme ci comme ça*.”

Miranda’s ambivalence reflects a general attitude to the semantics of the term ‘Mumpreneur’ in digital Mumpreneurial social spaces. Depending on the intended audience of a website, post, advertisement, or pitch to potential investors, Mumpreneurs like Miranda will dynamically emphasise or obscure their status as ‘Mumpreneurs’.

Mumpreneurial social media strategies represent a particular use of the affordances of social media platforms. In their pursuit of their personal and business’ goals, Mumpreneurs discerningly use, navigate, strategize on and benefit from e-commerce technologies and the underpinning economic, legal, social, and technological changes brought about by social media sites like Facebook. However, it is not possible to classify them as entrepreneurs in the usual sense of the term. Rather, in a classic reading of Schumpeter, Mumpreneurs operate within existing business structures rather than creatively destroy underpinning economic traditions. Though benefitting from e-commerce and largely home-based, most Mumpreneurial businesses

are in fact traditionally structured small business. Maggie and the other Mumpreneurs' elaborate social media strategies are an addendum to a typical small business, rather than a creative destruction of old ways of doing business.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

'The Entrepreneur' has undergone a series of conceptual shifts since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mumpreneurs – related to, but strategically differentiated from, entrepreneurs – thrive in neoliberal economic and social domains. Though ambiguous to the term itself, Mumpreneurs highlight their femininity, status as mothers and the pressures and responsibilities of parenthood not associated with the typical idea of the entrepreneur, as a means to connect with and draw customers to their predominantly online businesses. The savviness with which they pivot and utilise time and resources belies a neoliberal approach to work- and home-life fuelled by an increasingly unstable economic context. Underlying this approach are concerns over the life-time loss in earnings experienced by mothers (but not fathers) after the birth of children described in this chapter through the concept of the 'Nappy Valley'. Though most women frame their experiences of being mothers, workers, business owners, and Mumpreneurs as being born solely from personal choice, it is clear that these are rooted in deeply structural elements.



## **8. Discussion – Part 3: Innovation and Mumpreneurs' Everyday Technology**

As discussed in previous chapters, Mumpreneurs sit between economic and feminist spheres, taking to Mumpreneurship as a means to manage competing pressures to simultaneously be 'good mothers', 'good feminists', economically productive members of their households, maintain a fulfilling career and 'be a good role model' to their children – particularly their daughters. This chapter explores how Mumpreneurs use digital and domestic technologies in their home- and working lives in an attempt to manage these competing pressures. This also means that this chapter discusses Mumpreneurs' complicated incorporation of technology and digital innovation narratives in their work- and home- lives as well as the unmet promises of technological and digital innovation. As explored in Chapter 5, intertwined with the history of women's changing relationship to technology is the concept of the superwoman and, as such, this chapter briefly discusses the concept. The 'superwoman' does not just take on or manage the competing pressures of work home and motherhood, but, through her own hard work and self-management, navigates the conflicting expectations of motherhood and career, excelling in each.

Mumpreneurs have largely taken to digital technologies to become 'superwomen' who manage work, home, career, and family through mastery of domestic and digital technologies. In this sense, Mumpreneurship is an identity project as much as it is a practical response to domestic

and economic pressures. As a means to achieve equilibrium between identity, 'home' and 'work', Mumpreneurs look to technology:

- in the *home* to manage domestic and childcare tasks,
- in *work* to bolster and grow their businesses, and
- as tools of self-management between this suite of social, economic, and identity-project pressures.

This chapter also suggests that this inclination is culturally informed. When applied to the life-worlds of Mumpreneurs, the dominant narrative around technology in post-industrial societies is twofold; (1) that domestic technologies (whitegoods, washing machines, etc) 'freed women' from time-consuming domestic tasks, emboldening them to move into the public sphere, and (2) that such technological innovations are the main driving force behind social change. On the premise that technological innovation liberated women in the past (see Chapter 5), Mumpreneurs look to, technological innovation in the digital sphere as a means to liberate them now. As such, Mumpreneurs look to digital technology to overcome structural inequalities they face in their own lifetime. I describe this as Mumpreneur's everyday techno-progressivism. Though hopeful, Mumpreneur's everyday techno-progressivism is ultimately detrimental as technological innovation's efficacy in confronting societal issues is overstated, limiting participants' ability to overcome the social and economic barriers they hope to overcome.

## 8.1 Mumpreneurs Online

The most notable change to the home in the lifetimes of most Mumpreneurs has been the popularisation and widescale adoption of the Internet. Mumpreneurs look to technological innovation such as e-commerce, digital social spaces and ‘the Internet’ to start-up their businesses, find customers, watch webinars, participate in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS) and join exclusive-access websites to gain knowledge and experience in entrepreneurship. Miranda, for instance, describes herself as a ‘workshop junkie’:

‘It’s funny when I look back, like, twelve months, ago and then look at where I am now. I talk the jargon now and I’ll be talking about SEO and some people will be going, “What?”. And other people will be going, “Oh yeah, I totally get that”. So, I’ve really noticed that progression. I was a workshop junky and an apprentice in my business twelve months ago but now I’m implementing a lot of that knowledge. A lot has changed very quickly. The Internet has been a major influence, particularly in small businesses and yeah, I’ve had to learn a lot, over a short period of time. For somebody like the [Australian Mothers’ Business Network] who are actually providing business school now, where people can actually learn how to set up their business the right way in a small business course, it’s great because it’s completely different type of course to a typical business course that you do in Swinburne or wherever. It’s definitely focused more on the small entrepreneurial mums and sole traders with lots of resources online.

Miranda relies heavily on digital technologies in her social, business and family life. Socially, she primarily uses Facebook and Instagram to connect with family in Norway as well as siblings and friends scattered around the world. She also uses Facebook to connect with local friends in

Australia, joining suburb-level local area groups as well as single parent support networks and mothers' groups. Motherhood, particularly the care of young, dependent children, is an isolating experience for most Mumpreneurs, where one is limited in the time available to interact with other adults in daily life. Miranda, when newly single with younger children, relied heavily on such social media as a means of emotional support and friendship as her primary support network was not in Australia. Contemporaneously, she also founded her business and began seeing the digital domain as – not just as a source of social comfort and support – but also a means to host, grow and promote her business.

At this time, Miranda began to attend many online classes. Though digitally literate, Miranda did not feel confident in using social media for her business. With a digital storefront functioning as the main site of her new business, she felt it necessary to study e-commerce and gain as much formalised knowledge about running an online business as it was possible for her to access and attend. She felt out of her depth when she started her online business. She would see other women in the Australian Mothers' Business Network (the AMBN) posting, arguing about, and conferring over strategies using words and abbreviations that she didn't understand. Invariably, she found many classes offered by fellow business-owning mothers, promising to teach her the lingo and set up successful strategies for her business. She found the classes offered by her peers to be supportive and encouraging. She relayed to me how she looked to many of the women running these informal classes as friends and mentors. However, such classes lacked the formalised testing structures and core business essentials she had wanted to cover. In her efforts to understand and implement effective business plans in the online market, she looked to other sources of knowledge, such as local government programs, university-run online MOOCs. However, these workshops often did not consider the practical considerations and time constraints related to raising children. For instance, she was often not able to attend classes in-

person during the day if she was not able to find a suitable babysitter. Classes and workshops would be scheduled at inconvenient times or were hostile to the idea of her bringing her young children with her to class.

As described in the excerpt above, she then attended the Australian Mothers' Business Network's new intensive course. The advertising for this course relied heavily on the metaphors of 'community', 'tribes', and 'clans' with advertisements on the AMBN website calling readers to 'find their clan' through the course of the workshops. This spoke to Miranda and indeed many Mumpreneurs, as they often find it hard to access more formalised business courses (such as MBAs) or find that such courses have limitations in their accommodation of student mothers for reasons outlined above. Miranda found the AMBN's course to be a comfortable compromise between formalised knowledge of business essentials and community support offered by, and to, women with children. Being an online course, with regular workshops she scheduled with a mentor, she found this course to be more easily accessible around her work and home schedule. She found her teachers to be sympathetic to the struggles of balancing motherhood with a business venture, in contrast to many of the other courses she had previously pursued.

This acceptance of sympathy for and support through the challenges of motherhood and owning a business is highly sought after by Mumpreneurs. Dot, for instance, describes her memberships of various Mumpreneurial online groups and outlines several benefits she sees as a direct consequence of her membership:

Dot: for me personally, I'm having to juggle, I've too many things going on it's just made it hard to really engage with all the networks at once – I've had to pick and choose. I've kind of become part of another sort of smaller group through someone who's providing training services to [The Mother's Business Network].



And then, she's kind of developed a bit of a community around that and that's a bit good. And in fact, within that community I was already thinking I really need to get accountable to someone to kind of get myself back on track in focusing on this business and things like that and then somebody else within that community reached out looking for the same and we have joined up to meet on Skype once a week and have our own accountability list of what we want to work on but just being accountable to each other and kind of give a bit of your support. I'm actually finding that really helpful. So, I think for women in business in particular, it's vital to support each other. And we understand each other's craziness. We're actually meeting up this afternoon and someone's just send a message a little while ago because we missed a couple of weeks lessons – we've been a bit busy and people have been getting sick and "Oh, my kid's sick I can't come to the session today and I've got a kid at home vomiting," and we get it. One person's quite exceptional at time outsourcing and so she shared her approach to outsourcing but also the agency she uses for outsourcing. So it's been a great opportunity to kind of as a little micro group and I don't think we've had yet a session that everyone could turn up but that's okay.

Jo: Do you mind if I ask what that group's called or if there's...

Dot: Yeah. Well, the group...I guess the larger group is called [Website Caster] by a woman called [Anna Turner]. She was actually...I met Anna years ago as part of [The Mother's Business Network] and she was actually there at the event the other week. She was sponsoring it as a productpreneur - I think it was because she got a couple of brands nominated in the productpreneur category - I think she was marketing it since she gave out awards and things. So [Anna Turner]'s

now at Adelaide she was here in Sydney until she moved to there a while ago. Yeah. So her online training is for product-based businesses because a lot of training and marketing services are around service-based businesses and so hers was about if you got products to sell and she developed...because she used a product-based business and she developed some training resources and sort of her formula for it and she's been teaching it selling that as a course. I was very fortunate because I knew her from the beginning and was chatting to her way back then, she gave free access to that, so I've been part of [Website Caster] for a while. The whole group there, there's only a small group, they've done a good job of largely helping me trying roll my brain through business plans and digital marketing and a million and one other things that I wouldn't have known if not for that group.

With university and TAFE level courses inaccessible, impractical, or significantly harder to navigate implement when taking care of young children, many Mumpreneurs turned to less formalised sources of knowledge and mentorship. Highly accessible in the digital domain, these courses and the communities built around them offered comfort, support and guidance suited to Mumpreneurs as mothers and e-commerce business owners.

Many Mumpreneurs suggest that they would not have been able to start businesses 'on the kitchen table' without the large-scale infrastructure of the Internet. In this conversational excerpt, Miranda, for instance, reflects on the impact and influence of the Internet on her business:

Miranda: I don't physically answer my phone and answer questions. I try my best to make it after 3:30 in the afternoon and certainly not after 5:00, and I don't

answer questions over the weekend, but I don't ever switch off from it. Whereas if I was off working for some random job, you're sort of in a lot of circumstances. I think you don't care enough at all taking your work home with you. Lots of people do physically take their work home with them but they might not take home the emotion that came with the work kind of. So you're sort of I guess when you're an entrepreneur or business side, you're living and breathing it every minute of the day and that's probably that's the biggest difference between managing a typical job and Mumpreneurship.

Jo: It sounds a bit like doing your PhD. I can never actually switch off. It's always here because everything is online.

Miranda: Yes, exactly! Look, it's a bit of a problem when running an online business. I sit down at nine and chill out and whatever but I'm on Facebook and I'm looking if somebody posted something like that they're looking for somebody to do marketing. I'm not responding... I'm definitely not responding this time... I'm responding at 9:00 at night. Most mums are on their phone at night. The kids go to bed then I operate during that time. So, you either communicate with them when they're available or you don't have clients.

Jo: That's really interesting. I've never heard someone say like moms operate at night, but it's been a suspicion of mine for a very, very long time. It's a nice-

Miranda:[looking over at another table] Ooh, isn't that the mum who made [New Leaf]? I don't respond to her but she sends me these e-mails me at 1:00 in the morning. Just go to sleep, woman. Obviously I was in bed and I didn't respond till the next day but oh my god, no wonder you think you're failing because you're up until now and this is ridiculous.

Jo: Oh no.

Miranda: Sometimes it can be taken a little bit too far but that's people as well. Some people will overdo everything.

Jo: Don't all entrepreneurs have to be a little driven and intense?

Miranda: Mm... For me, the main reason why I decided to do it this way was because of being a single parent and not having a strong network around me – like, my family were two hours away. So there was never anybody else around to go pick up the kids from school if I was sick. All of the jobs that I looked up, when we moved here, were a good hour drive away. I just didn't want to be that far away from my kids, right now, in their lives and with everything I've gone through - I just can't be that far away from them every day. NBN is shit but at least I can work from home – I can be there for them more than other ... well, sometimes they don't get as much attention from me as the other kids would because working from home means home is work, but at least I know that if they've got a school excursion, I can go on it with them. So I'm not missing out. For me, it's really just about not missing out and them knowing that they have the right sort of support around them.

Beyond simply a resource or technological innovation, the Internet is a necessity to Mumpreneurs. However, digital technologies are not a panacea. To put it another way, the Internet is a necessity, but not sufficient Mumpreneur's goals. The use of technologies is a reflection of the society in which they are used (Horst and Miller, 2012). That is to say, technologies codify and reinforce structures already present in a society (Noble, 2018). Mumpreneurs use of digital technologies does not confront or undermine the structural webs of meanings Mumpreneurs find themselves caught in, though many Mumpreneurs themselves may wish to frame them as such. Rather, using these technologies to craft an identity in relation

to their work- and home-life results in Mumpreneurs reinforcing and maintaining the gendered frameworks they hope to circumvent. Digital technologies themselves, like the domestic technologies of the past, do not disrupt or counter the assumption that women must shoulder the 'home' responsibilities of childcare and other domestic work. Nor were they the catalyst for women's push into the economic sphere. So too are digital technologies neither the panacea nor salvation for the women of this study.

## **8.2 Mumpreneur's Everyday Techno-progressivism**

Mumpreneurs look to technological innovations to manage and excel in the competing spheres of motherhood, childcare, domestic work, and participation in the formal labour force. As outlined in Chapter 5, while there was significant change in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the affordability, accessibility and accommodativeness of home-based technology, the "sex, hours, efficiency, and status of the household worker [were] essentially unaltered" (McGaw, 1982, p. 814). In the US, Britain and Australia, there remained a significant continuity in the relational position of woman to men in the household. "A woman's place as service worker for her husband and children remained unquestioned" (McGaw, 1982, p. 820) until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Cockburn (1992), it was not until mid-20<sup>th</sup> century feminist critiques of the sexual division of labour that women's assumed propensity or 'natural' inclination to the domestic sphere was questioned on a large scale.

To Mumpreneurs, technologies are complicated phenomena occupying multiple functions and narratives in their daily lives. When prompted to discussing technologies in the home, Mumpreneurs often fall back on the dominant cultural narrative that technological innovations liberate women from the domestic sphere. When prompted to reflect on their use of

technologies in the home - such as whitegoods, fridges, washing machines, stoves, dishwashers and Internet connections - many were taken aback, assuming the purchase and use of these whitegoods to be an inevitability of domestic arrangements. With the exception of Amy, the women of this study assumed a constant and stable Internet connection was also an inevitability of contemporary home life. Amy, living in rural Victoria, often had issues with her Internet connection and spent much time 'on the phone to Telstra', the only telecommunications network available to her. Having spent most of her professional life in Australia's metropolises, she feared it made her look 'unprofessional' to potential clients when she could not reply to email immediately. This resulted in her spending a significant amount of time working online when she had a stable Internet connection.

Most other women of this study did not face these pressures when it came to their connection to the Internet. Some women joked in horror at an imagined life without such goods and services, calling attention to the amount of additional domestic work they would have to do and how hard, if not impossible, it would be to run a business from home as mother of young children without easily accessible Internet. Rather than explicitly drawing a line between the adoption of new technologies and women's liberation, Mumpreneurs assume this is settled narrative of history. Though Amy struggles with her Internet connection, she jokes that she would not be able to cope without a dishwasher and balks at the idea of not owning a washing machine:

Jo: In an average week how many hours would you spend on unpaid work in the sense of childcare, laundry, cleaning, all that wonderful stuff?

Amy: So apart from sleeping hours ... yeah, quite a lot and because I'm heavily involved in the school and other aspects so yeah...how many hours in a week when not sleeping? \*laughs\* Yeah, it's probably a lot.

Jo: Okay, I'll put down 'a lot' \*laughs\*

Amy: \*laughs\* Couldn't live without a dishwasher

Jo: Yeah, I'd be pretty lost without mine. I don't have a washing machine or a dryer-

Amy: [interjecting] You don't have a washing machine!? How does that work?

Jo: Oh, um, I usually round up stuff and take it to the launderette

Amy: The-

Jo: The laundromat, like a coin laundry?

Amy: \*laughing\* WOW. Next big purchase is a washing machine, save yourself!

Jo: I like that that's not 'save time', just save myself?

Amy: [pause, incredulous] I mean, yeah? Get a washing machine, girlie!

When pulled apart, Amy's incredulous insistence that a washing machine could 'save me' is a multilayered insistence of a few interrelated ideas. First, it shows how much value Amy and, indeed, most Mumpreneurs place on labour saving devices. This is built from several normative assumptions. First, this assumes that such duties are the domain of women in the domestic setting. Amy was aware that I had a partner but, in the course of a casual conversation, repeated dominant cultural narratives that women are tasked with the organization and carrying out of domestic labour. The second assumption built into this exchange is that technology is what saved her (and could save me!) from this type of work. Rather than confronting the underlying idea that it is natural that women should be uniquely tasked with domestic labour, built into Amy's joke is a second dominant cultural narrative; that technology was and remains the only thing to have lightened women's domestic workloads. In this sense, me getting a washing machine 'saves me' from my assumed position as the person in my relationship tasked with more domestic duties. Highlighting these assumptions show how Amy can see that, rather than this just 'saving time', the purchase of a washing machine 'saves me'.

Amy's assumption that new technologies can 'save' women from domestic tasks is not unfounded or unique. This technological deterministic approach downplays women's social movements and positions technological innovation as the main catalyst for societal change. On the basis of this particular reading of history, it is often then suggested that *technology* was the defining feature that liberated women. So goes the argument that the reduction in domestic work hours allowed women to dedicate more time to pursuits outside the home and catalysed women's push into the formal labour force. It would appear that this academic position has become the dominant cultural narrative about women, technology and work that is shared by many Mumpreneurs.

Later scholarship, however, has called into question this narrative of history. Assuming that technological innovation underpins women's ability to participate in the workforce (1) obscures the underlying cultural assumptions and structural barriers that various female-led movements fought against and (2) does not acknowledge that working class women had been working outside the home before the widespread adoption of domestic technologies (Evans, 1995, Fixmer and Wood, 2005, Umansky, 1996).

### **8.3 The Gender Pay Gap**

Beyond limiting historical narratives, many structural factors still bind women to the domestic sphere, inhibiting their full participation in the formal labour force. For instance, the gender pay gap between men and women in Australia remains significant. Women, on average earn 14%



less than men for equivalent full-time work (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016, 2020). This factors into decision making for many heterosexual Australian families, with women being more likely to give up work than their male partners as they earn less. This is uneasily acknowledged by Dot in the following interview excerpt. Here, she imagines what life as a single parent and Mumpreneur could be like for her:

“I think I would feel differently if I was single. When I was working full time and my business was on the side I was making a little bit of money and then I was pregnant and took maternity leave. If I was then suddenly single and single parenting, it possibly wouldn’t have been an avenue I would have explored. I think I would have just sought out more traditional income work and then maybe kept my business going on the side. I don’t think I would have taken the risk of trying to grow it myself or try and build it to my sole source of income. I think it just helped having that knowledge that we’re both okay with just one income coming in. My husband was earning enough to support us. It may not be the most feminist decision, but if I was single I don’t think I would have made the same choices.”

In this excerpt, Dot acknowledges the often ‘unsaid’ detail that Mumpreneurs’ male partners/husbands often earn enough money to support the family unit and the Mumpreneur herself. Dot’s acknowledgement that she would have made significantly different choices if her life circumstances were altered – to the extent that she would not have pursued Mumpreneurship if she was single – is, at once, obvious and revealing. This arrangement underpins most interviewees’ family structures. So too Mumpreneurs often factor in their partners income into their decision to pursue Mumpreneurship at all. Without a steady, stable source of income for herself and her family, it is unlikely that a potential Mumpreneur would pursue a risky venture of starting up a business with young, dependent children. The

entanglement of low wages begetting women's default undertaking of domestic tasks was discussed by Shaevitz (1988). Beyond incremental changes in the wage gap and some support regarding parental leave, government, industry, and the public have done little to address this 'nappy valley' in the intervening years. Women are primarily tasked with managing the competing pressures of public, economically rewarded work, and domestic, unrewarded work.

This belies a deeper complexity. Mumpreneurship is, ostensibly, a movement of independent women taking on career, family, and work. However, the *successful* pursuit of Mumpreneurship is predicated on an income brought in by Mumpreneurs partners/husbands. The image of the Mumpreneur as a fully realised, independent, career-driven, mum, wife and woman is in direct contrast with the lived experience of being one. In practice, Mumpreneurship necessitates another income stream, most often from a male partner/husband. In this uncomfortable revelation, Dot's excerpt also reflects an overlapping and, often, juxtaposed attitude towards Mumpreneurial feminism. On the one hand, Mumpreneurs broadcast an image of feminist success – they are the women succeeding at raising a family without compromising their career. On the other hand, the pursuit of Mumpreneurship is predicated on traditional, heteronormative gendered divisions of labour, leaving Mumpreneurs largely dependent on their husband's income.

Dot's acknowledgement that she would have made different choices if she were single is tinged with discomfort in the interview. So too, the interplay of imagined success and life choices predicated on gendered divisions of labour and childcare is an uncomfortable tension for many Mumpreneurs. There appears to be three broad ways Mumpreneurs account for these tensions. Some will strategically self-identify as feminists and Mumpreneurs on social media or public

networking events in an acknowledged and blatant strategy as they believe it's a quality their customers or their peers' value. For others, there is an unacknowledged gulf between the 'fully realised feminist self' and the structural realities of their highly gendered domestic and childcare arrangements. Rather than a strategic endeavour, these women rely heavily on personal choice narratives to argue that their domestic arrangements are a feminist pursuit. Despite their traditional division of labour and childcare at home, these women will suggest to friends, on social media and to me over the course of many months of fieldwork that their personal choice to pursue Mumpreneurship supersedes any pre-existing gendered division of labour that may have influenced them in making that decision. The final third approach, the largest of these three broad categories, sits somewhere between these two extremes. The women in this category are simultaneously: (1) savvy in their navigation of public self-identification as feminists and Mumpreneurs, and (2) are aware of the structural factors that have influenced their decision to pursue Mumpreneurship. Not able to fully reconcile the image and lived experience of Mumpreneurship, these women oscillate between self-images of themselves: as strategic navigators, fully realised Mumpreneurs, and rational outcomes of circumstance.

## **8.4 Cost of Childcare**

The cost of childcare is another factor contributing to my participants pursuit of Mumpreneurship. Australian families pay a higher percentage of their wages in childcare than the OECD average, with 18% of the average household income devoted entirely to childcare (OECD, 2020). This is a significant motivating factor for many Mumpreneurs to reduce their hours to part-time, take advantage of flexible working arrangements or temporarily give up

work to care for young children. Discussing these statistics with Jessica, she enthusiastically confirms, not only that this is acknowledged and deeply felt by Mumpreneurs, but that it is also the main reason many mothers turn to Mumpreneurship during primary carer parental leave:

Jo: I'm finding a lot of people rely almost entirely on childcare as opposed to mother-in-law's or stuff like that but it's always kind of like a cobbling together of different things, if you know what I mean.

Jessica: Yeah.

Jo: Does that track?

Jessica: I know a lot of people struggle for childcare. If you pay for kindergarten, those bills can be someone's full wage.

Jo: Really?

Jessica: It is insane. People are going to work just to pay for childcare. It's crazy. That's why people are becoming self-employed. That's why mums are wanting to work themselves because nobody wants to go to work 40 hours a week just to pay somebody else to look after a child. It's just ridiculous.

Jo: Yeah.

Jessica: You're paying somebody to bring up your own child.

Jo: Basically, yeah. I've heard a lot of women talk about how they ... after they got pregnant or when they started talking about how they wanted to have children, that they felt kind of pushed out of nine to five jobs. Is that something that you've heard about or something you've even experienced yourself?

Jessica: Yeah. I think lots of women have that issue. It's difficult because of some really basic stuff like who can ... breastfeed. If you want to breastfeed, employers don't make it easy to have women take their babies in to breastfeed or whatever. But childcare-wise, if they're working nine to five, typically, they need to drop off at eight and pick up at six, so that's difficult. I think it's hard. It is hard for women to work nine to five, but if you want to do it, you'll make it work, but it's difficult.

Jo: Yeah, that seems to be the trigger point for a lot of women.

Jessica: It's not like childcare doesn't happen when you're a Mumpreneur. You are going to have somebody looking after your children at some point, whether that's your partner, or whether that's childcare sometimes. It's something that you have to sacrifice if you're going to be a Mumpreneur. We're seeing this trend of women working for themselves because, actually, lots of women don't want to work themselves to the bone just so someone else can raise their child.

As reflected in this excerpt, Mumpreneurs' view of motherhood mirror Hays' (1998) 'intensive mothering' wherein women are assumed to be the best primary caregivers to their children. To some Mumpreneurs, other people, even children's own fathers, are no substitute for their care for their children. In this sense, it is possible to argue that Mumpreneurs who choose to start home-based businesses do so in service of a self-actualising project. While this is a significant factor in a Mumpreneur's decision to stay home and look after their children, in tandem, practical considerations over the cost of childcare also factor into women's decisions to pursue Mumpreneurship. The high amount of time required by the formal labour force and sizable

percentage of household income required by childcare *as well as* Mumpreneurship as an identity project are significant factors that influence a new mother's decision to become a Mumpreneur.

## 8.5 The Persistent Gendered Division of Labour

There is also (and, to a great extent, remains) an underlying cultural assumption that women are more suited to or are intrinsically 'better' at managing domestic duties (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016, Ting et al., 2016, Chesters, 2012). It largely remains a women's responsibility to navigate and manage childcare and domestic work – making dinner, scheduling family appointments, maintaining a clean house, being available to tackle any issues in regards to children and other such devalued invisible labour (Cox, 1997, Crabb, 2019). This is reflected in Lucia's descriptions of the division of labour in her household:

Lucia: It's the joy and pain of it, yeah, trying to juggle a busy life between business and family and stuff.

Jo: I'm hearing from so many women that trying to maintain everything at once is the main reason why they're stressed.

Lucia: Yeah! Yeah – it is. It is. Really truly. I'm having to...yeah, I'm just feeling fatigued all the time. I see after this week my husband is also away overseas for work and so that just means there's no downtime at all. I mean, there isn't much downtime in a busy life with kids running around doing things and I'm just a bit tired regularly.

Jo: Oh no.

Lucia: It's just when you've got things... I mean, that's the trouble. I have the business, and the kids and I do volunteering as well for our school and things like that so it just means that it's very easy to get overloaded. Yeah, but anyway that's life.

Jo: You've said your husband does a lot at home, does that help?

Lucia: Sort of. It defaults to me, though. He makes them breakfast and brings them to school but I've set out their uniforms the night before, packed their lunches, checked to see what classes they have, made the food chart so they don't have to argue about breakfast, bought the apples they like y'know?

Jo: That sounds frustrating

Lucia: Yeah, it is. I do feel frustrated. You can plan not to load yourself up but then, like, suppliers let you down or the dishwasher packs up and that can add to your workload so much. I can manage but all sort of falls on you.

Similarly, Maggie's reflection draws attention to the expectations of cleanliness in her household:

'Motherhood is being incredibly bored but incredibly exhausted at the same time because you can't stop. And yet there's a large part of your brain that's not being touched all day long. And yeah, it's really...it's a very strange experience at first and just to have that contrast of utter boredom but at the same time you'd

never say that because you do love your kid and you're enjoying watching them doing all these things but it's just very tedious. And it's very hard to achieve anything so your sense of achievement is lost. And especially when your partner comes home at the end of the day and they kind of look around and sighs and you think, "Well, I haven't stopped moving all day long doing stuff for small people and yet this house looks like a tip and it's because there are small people in this house and they break stuff." So there's a tension in the relationship now and you're trying to feel worthwhile and productive as a contributor to the household but "sigh" [she says the word 'sigh' literally, drawing attention to her husbands 'sigh'].'

Though disheartened to acknowledge it, as shown in this and previous vignettes, Mumpreneurs do recognise that most domestic tasks are assumed to be their responsibility.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the development and adoption of new technologies to make domestic tasks easier – vacuums, washing machines, dishwashers - do not counter or challenge the idea that women should be the ones using them. Taking a historical perspective, McGraw (1982) writes:

"Domestic technology made housework less arduous but was not used to make it less time-consuming ... substantial changes in household technology left the sex, hours, efficiency, and status of the household worker essentially unaltered" (pp. 813 - 814)

Some 40 years later, this observation stays relevant as the operation and management of domestic technologies continues to be the domain of women. Dawn, for instance, categorises such work under the umbrella-term of 'mum stuff':



Jo: Before, you were talking about 'mum stuff', what kind of 'mum stuff' do you have to do in the morning?

Dawn: Yeah, well, it's making sure that the kids have everything packed for school. They're old enough now, you know they're pretty much responsible for own stuff but I still get, "Mum where's this or what is that", and I'm saying, "Don't you have sport today, don't you need to be wearing your sport uniform?" and they go, "Oh yeah", and then they go back out to grab their washed, dried and folded uniform sitting in their room. You're just constantly looking at a little calendar, a reminder system to keep track of it all. They have their school diaries, they can keep track of their homework and everything but I'm showing them that the diary is for other things as well, like how you have to schedule and set up reminders and maybe washing? Maybe? That's the next stage. Managing the machines. They do make their own lunches now but we're all in the kitchen at the same time, doing the same sort of thing. As I said before, you know, there'll be the dishwasher, and the clothes washing and all that sort of stuff that I still do. And I have to actually be ready myself to actually head out the door, drop the kids off to school, you know, quarter past eight in the morning.

Jo: Wow! So what time do you get up usually? Is it still 6:00 or is it like sevenish or..

Dawn: No, we've got everything set up quite well now - everything hums away in the background - so I can actually sleep in to about half past seven now, and that's great.

Jo: Nice!

Dawn: Yeah, no later than half past seven. I'm kind of rushing a bit for that, but yeah, clean clothes, dishes done, diaries checked and we're off! We can start the day!

Though the tasks and the whitegoods may be different, Dawn's 'mum stuff' is a continuation of the gendered division of labour rallied against by various women's groups since the post-war period. Tying the history of women's participation in the workforce to technological innovation obscures structural inequalities and downplays the role of female-lead social movements that fought against cultural barriers to women's participation in the public sphere. However, this supposed history of technological innovation begetting women more freedom remains a popular narrative with Mumpreneurs, supporting wider Australian cultural norms. Rather than empowering women to take up work in the public sphere, home-based domestic technologies help women justify taking on the bulk of domestic and childcare tasks on top of building a business.

## **8.6 Conclusion**

Mumpreneurship is largely a compromise between motherhood, work and career predicated on access to stable Internet infrastructure and domestic technologies. These take the form of time- and labour-saving whitegoods and a secure connection to the Internet. Facilitated by the promises of digital technologies and innovation, Mumpreneurs straddle the line between domestic and formal labour. Post the Second Wave feminist push for women's participation in

the paid workforce, Mumpreneurs, though frustrated, cannot reconcile working full time with domestic and familial work. Conscious of the limitations for mothers in traditional work environments, Mumpreneurs look to Internet-based businesses to combine and excel in domestic and economic spheres, forging for themselves an identity predicated on their break from women's traditional domestic roles. The tendency to look towards technologies and innovation to solve deeply cultural issues is not unfounded and, indeed was embraced as a narrative in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century scholarship. In tandem, new technologies, particularly digital technologies, have had major and broad-reaching impacts in industry, business, social relations, and the domestic setting. Such technologies' emphasis on disruption and creative destruction of earlier ways of doing business seems like an exploitable opportunity for those willing to take advantage of changing conventions. However, technologies alone do not inherently challenge social structures. Rather, they are subsumed and used in context. Technological solutions to complex structural inequalities do not address the issues that facilitated those inequalities in the first place. In the case of Mumpreneurship, this results in women upholding traditional domestic arrangements. Ultimately, though Mumpreneurs look to digital technologies as a means to manage the competing pressures of economic and domestic spheres, longstanding cultural assumptions about women's responsibilities in the domestic sphere cannot be and have never been solved by technological innovation alone.

## 9. Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore the Mumpreneur movement – the factors facilitating the movement and what Mumpreneurship reflects about contemporary motherhood, work, and the use of technology. To tackle these questions thoroughly, this was a thesis of many parts. Methodologically ethnographic, this research bridges a gap between digital and traditional ethnographic fieldwork, gathering qualitative as well as quantitative data from digital- and physical fields. Contextualising the findings from this fieldwork, I also reviewed a range of relevant technological, feminist, economic, entrepreneurial, neoliberal, and digital bodies of literature. The discussion of these literatures in context with 18+ months of digital and physical ethnographic fieldwork, meant I was able to ascertain: (1) how digital social spaces facilitate Mumpreneurship, as well as (2) gain an understanding of the cultural, technological and economic structures that maintain it as a movement. To that end: primarily underpinned by neoliberal logics, Mumpreneurship is facilitated by widescale interconnected digital spaces and sustained in women's attempts to manage competing pressures of motherhood and work on the (unmet) promise that technological innovation will make their attempts manageable. The identities of 'worker' and 'mother' combine in Mumpreneurship, offering a subjectively consistent but uneasy cohesion between the two. This concluding chapter reflects upon the research process, discusses key themes in the thesis and presents ideas for future research.

When I first set out to study Mumpreneurship, I did not anticipate the full breadth of literature to which I would have to become accustomed. Mumpreneurship belies a complex compromise

between contemporary economies, cultural understandings of motherhood, technological infrastructure and digital innovation wrapped up in an identity underpinned by neoliberal logics. As explored in Chapter 4, there are also significant cultural pressures to 'be a good mother' that are not equally applied to men to 'be a good father'. There has been a drive for women's participation in the formal labour force and wider participation in the public sphere initially championed by Second Wave feminist discourses. There has not yet been an equal drive for men's participation in the domestic sphere. Women face months, potentially years of lost income affecting their lifetime earning potential and, in the Australian context, retirement security. In this thesis I have termed the cumulation of these factors the 'Nappy Valley'. I reiterate here for emphasis and clarity that women's participation in the public sphere is an economic and social positive but that mothers are unequally penalised in the economic sphere compared to fathers.

The question of why we do not see more collective action from mothers against visible discrepancies was consistently countered by research participants describing the importance of 'personal choice' in their lives. They assured me that they had chosen to have a child and bear the consequences of that decision as it was their choice to make. This consistent response led me to 'choice feminism' discourse, discussed in chapters 4 and 6. 'Choice feminism' like broader Third Wave feminist movements foregrounds the importance of personal narrative and experiences. The women of this study framed their decision to have children in the face of social and economic consequences as brave, empowering and unavoidable rather than unjust, unequal and in need of change. In doing so, they were unable to conceive of themselves as part of a larger social injustice. Though highly educated and familiar with academic feminist discourses, the women of this study were not able to publicly counter the dominant 'choice'

narrative around motherhood and work, seeing it as an extension of their feminist principles.

However, I suggest that adopting the language of empowerment to describe the unequal economic consequences of childbirth disempowers women.

Many of those who practise Mumpreneurship, do not see this tension. This is where the neoliberalist 'ideology of self-making' became a significant factor in the research. Rather than seeing their unequal position as an injustice in need of collective action and protest, Mumpreneurs frame this inequality as a consequence of their or others' individual decisions. As described in Chapter 7, Mumpreneurs can view such hardships as a source of potential revenue. Savvy and dynamic Mumpreneurs aim to turn commonly experienced tensions and hardships into sources of relatable content. When framed and presented well on social media, such tensions can be leveraged to build a follower count and, thus, amass a larger number of engaged potential customers. For example, a Mumpreneur feeling stressed about her house being untidy could aim to clear away clutter before taking pictures to be posted on Instagram. However, in careful disclosure of certain types of household messiness, there is an opportunity to project a relatable image of themselves to other mothers and potential customers. Taking people 'behind the veneer' of usually highly polished content is a deliberate strategy - recall Maggies refrain of 'see me, know me, buy from me'. The more familiar a customer is with a Mumpreneur, the more likely they are to view them as a familiar and trusted friend. This means they are far more likely to buy something from the Mumpreneur's business. Not only does this illustrate neoliberalism's slow creep of market logics into everyday life but it also serves as an example as to how such individualist principles disempower many using the language of empowerment.

Few Mumpreneurs successfully managed to earn as much as they were previously earning in traditional employment. I found that those who were most successful in starting up and maintaining a business were able to invest a significant amount of capital at the start of their endeavour or that their partners were in a stable enough position that they could cover periods of economic loss. However, profit is not the only goal for women starting up small businesses. Many persist with Mumpreneurship to manage competing pressures between their understanding of 'being a good mother' and 'being an economically productive member of the household' as they, for instance, cannot imagine a relationship dynamic in which their partners take on the bulk of the work in the domestic sphere. They balk at the idea of 'just' being a mother and 'giving up' one's career and identity outside of motherhood. However, the idea of giving up care of their children for their career is similarly unthinkable. This represents a significant tension in their sense of self, affecting the arrangement of their everyday lives.

Considering these tensions, it was necessary to take a holistic approach to the analysis of these women's lives. Some social analysis necessitates paring down their objects of study to one or two key threads of analysis. However, in this discussion, paring down such analysis would flatten the complexity of these women's lives. Taking a holistic approach allowed for a far more nuanced understanding of how these complex, competing, oftentimes contradictory, ideas play out in everyday life. Ethnographic work – with its focus on qualitative data - naturally fit with these research goals.

The goal of this ethnographic work was to accurately and deeply explore, contextualise and represent these women's lives. This elicited several challenges as there exists significant contradictions between the ideals of Mumpreneurship and life as actually lived. This is not

unique to Mumpreneurship and, indeed, is present within many groups. The ironies, unmet ideals, and contradictions in which the women conducted their lives had to be teased out, questioned, explored and contextualised. This was, at times, an awkward process, with some women viewing questions over their participation in Mumpreneurship as judgements over personal choices, responding with incredulity, jokes, or swift topic changes in conversation. Others, however, viewed them as moments to reflect, points at which they could 'educate' me, or an opportunity to quietly voice secret dissatisfactions. In combination, these myriad responses contributed unique and fascinating insights until a mosaic face of the movement began to form. This deep, rich, qualitative example of a movement leads to new ways of thinking about:

- Historical Second- and contemporaneous Third- wave feminist approaches to Motherhood;
- The influence of neoliberalism on Third Wave feminist discourses;
- The shortcomings of individuation as 'empowerment'; and
- The unmet promises of digital or technological innovation in the face of societal and cultural frameworks.

'Mumpreneur' could just be a term that describes a woman, with children who runs a business. As this thesis has argued, far from a flat term, 'Mumpreneur' belies deeply held cultural beliefs about women, work, and motherhood. This thesis aimed, primarily, to identify and discuss the tapestry of influences and personal motivations that constitute Mumpreneurs' digitally mediated, everyday lives. This complicated interplay of personal and cultural narratives, broadcast on various digital media platforms reflect significant continuities and changes in social



attitudes to women, work, and domestic arrangements. What follows is now a summary of some of the central themes of the thesis.

## **9.1 Motherhood**

To the women of this study, motherhood is a significant facet of their identity. Rather than an all-encompassing label, Motherhood is called upon strategically and utilised in different contexts. *Mumpreneurs* practise a form of intensive motherhood wherein they, above other possible carers, are the primary and best carer for their children. However, this intensive form of contemporary motherhood can clash with other identities these women have built up over time – career woman, artist, teacher, traveller, wife and/or businesswoman, among many others. Unable to reconcile motherhood and these identities, the women of this study found a compromise in Mumpreneurship. In short, Mumpreneurship is, to a great extent, a concession between ‘being there’ for their children and contemporary expectations that, despite taking on most childcare and domestic labour, they should also monetarily contribute to the household.

## **9.2 Mothers’ Participation in the Formal Labour Force**

The findings from this study suggest that participants’ relationship to the formal labour force has changed over time. The Second Wave of feminist protest, activism and legal challenges encouraged women’s widescale participation in the labour force. Jessica recalls with pride her mother’s trailblazing work in an accountancy firm as a victory and template for herself and other women. However, my participants live and work in a post-Second-Wave landscape. Their

relationship to the formal labour force is not one that sees participation in it as a revolutionary act. Rather, following Giddens (1992) parity between men and women is, discursively, unnoteworthy - participation in the labour force is assumed and the choice to leave it must be carefully considered and justified after the birth of children. Over countless mum-and-bub café meet-ups, mothers relayed to me (in warnings, secret confessions and, occasionally, open, cathartic discussions) that they experienced enormous social and economic pressure to return to work. However, when they returned, they are only begrudgingly accepted back into the formal labour force. They recount not being put on long-term projects, a devaluing of their skills, and feeling that the competing needs of a young family and the formal labour environment was not acknowledged, accounted for, or addressed. This amassed in a sinkhole of doubts that was further deepened, when they compared their experiences to that of their (male) partners'. In the formal labour force, these women's husbands simply do not face the same level of scrutiny after becoming fathers. In my participants' experience, motherhood is antithetical to the formal labour market but the pressure to prove that they can 'do it all' permeates friendships, relationships and working environments.

Mumpreneurs are, broadly, the second generation of women able to take part in the formal labour force. Being the second generation of women to go to work *en masse*, they saw the complications and pitfalls of managing full time work and domestic chores taken on by their own mothers, particularly the 'double shift'. On reflection as adults, Mumpreneurs acknowledge that participation in both the domestic sphere and labour force is untenable, unequal, and unfair.

### 9.3 Motherhood Overlooked by Second and Third Wave Feminism

For this study's participants, feminism forms a bedrock of personal morality and provides a template for their lifegoals. However, second and Third Wave feminism has not addressed the issues described above, nor has it provided a model of household dynamics in dual-income households. In women's everyday lifeworlds, domestic chores and childcare are not split evenly, even when both parents work. Women are uniquely tasked with the responsibilities of both full-time work and domestic care duties. Participants feel immense pressure from friends, media, and themselves to become kickass career women and ever-present, benevolent mothers. Trying to achieve both simultaneously has led them to try to 'do it all' or face giving up career for motherhood (or vice versa). The women of this study know it is an unequal pressure on women but have not been able to adequately counter the structures they navigate. Third Wave feminism offers the language of empowerment but, in the everyday lives of Mumpreneurs, offers little beyond that to address the social, economic, and political inequalities experienced by women trying to navigate motherhood and career.

Straddling the line between imagined ideals of 'career' and 'motherhood' the Third Wave's foregrounding of personal narrative and experience provide a means for Mumpreneurs to interpret their lifeworlds through 'personal choice' narratives. This justification and reframing of domestic arrangements as a result of personal choice (as opposed to structural inequalities, inadequate industry accommodations and (broadly) men's lack of push into the domestic sphere) ultimately depowers women while using the affect and language of empowerment. Mumpreneur's awareness of structural inequalities is ostensibly incongruous with their hesitancy to frame their own lives as being a product of inequalities. While fully aware of

broader structural inequalities, Mumpreneurs have not been able to meaningfully apply this understanding to their own lives. Instead, they have taken on highly individuated life-narratives wherein they are the sole arbiter of their (and their family's) wellbeing. Mumpreneurship is a compromise between imagined ideals fuelled, in part, by these women's desires to enact and model their interpretation of feminist principles.

## **9.4 Neoliberalism**

Third Wave feminism is a movement deeply suffused with neoliberalism. So too, Mumpreneurship is underpinned by highly individuated life-narratives influenced by neoliberal rationales. Procuring economic gains from the traditionally non-economic sphere of motherhood, for instance, is a deeply neoliberal pursuit. Though the logics, constraints, and rationalization of Mumpreneurship is rooted in social and economic inequalities, Mumpreneurs frame their choices as being born from wholly personal, individual life choices. This pursuit is altogether consistent with Third Wave feminist approaches to motherhood and labour where complicated structural issues are tackled primarily through individual action. However, the construction and constraints of Mumpreneurship are rooted in deeply structural dynamics of the relationship between female labour and neoliberalism.

## **9.5 Entrepreneurship**

Though ambiguous to the term itself, Mumpreneurs highlight their femininity, status as mothers and the pressures and responsibilities of parenthood not associated with the typical idea of the

entrepreneur to connect with and draw customers to their predominantly online businesses. Underlying these savvy negotiations are concerns over the life-time loss in earnings experienced by mothers (but not fathers) after the birth of children as well as cultural and legal frameworks defining women as primary caregivers to children. The savviness with which they pivot and utilise time and resources reveals a neoliberal approach to work- and home-life fuelled by an increasingly unstable economic context. 'The Entrepreneur' has undergone a series of conceptual shifts since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mumpreneurs are related to but strategically differentiated from entrepreneurs, thriving in neoliberal economic and social domains. Framing primary carer parental leave as a time for economic productivity, they capitalise on social links and personality to draw customers to their new businesses.

## **9.6 Unmet Promises of Digital Innovation**

Facilitated by the promises of digital technologies and innovation, Mumpreneurs straddle the line between domestic and formal labour. Mumpreneurship is a compromise between motherhood, work and career predicated on access to stable Internet infrastructure and domestic technologies. These take the form of time- and labour- saving whitegoods and secure connections to the Internet. Facilitated by the promises of digital technologies and innovation, Mumpreneurs hope to manage the competing pressure of domestic and economic work through digital and technological innovations. After experiencing or seeing the limitations for mothers in traditional work environments, Mumpreneurs look to Internet-based businesses to combine and excel in both domestic and economic spheres.

The tendency to look towards technologies and innovation to solve deeply cultural issues is not unfounded and, indeed was embraced as a narrative in modernist scholarship. In tandem digital technologies, have had major and broad-reaching impacts in industry, business, social relations, and the domestic setting. Such technologies' emphasis on disruption and creative destruction of earlier ways of doing business seems like an exploitable opportunity for those willing to take advantage of changing conventions. However, technologies alone do not inherently challenge social structures. Rather, they are subsumed and used in context. Technological solutions to complex structural inequalities do not address the issues that facilitate and maintain those inequalities. In the case of Mumpreneurship, women undertaking Mumpreneurial businesses end up upholding traditional domestic arrangements.

## **9.7 Research Implications**

This thesis aimed to explore what Mumpreneurship reflects about contemporary motherhood, work, and the use of technology. In approaching this question holistically, it uncovered the interwoven threads that made up the tapestry of the women's everyday lives. This helped challenge many of the assumptions inherent in research about motherhood, women's labour, entrepreneurship, and digital technologies. In contemporary Australia, motherhood is an experience that is becoming deeply suffused with neoliberal logics. There needs to be widening of the definition of 'Entrepreneur' to accommodate the rise in women's entrepreneurship. While digital technologies are used to connect to communities, they are built environments structured around the individual emphasising self-expression and competitive growth. The women of this study are aware of and take on the goals of differing waves of feminist activism and discourse, but much remains to be addressed, especially regarding the difficulties mothers

face working in the formal labour force. However, Mumpreneurs may not be able to adequately address the tensions and inequalities of their everyday lives due to the neoliberal 'ideology of self-making' becoming the dominant frame through which they view their life narratives.

## **9.8 Strengths and Limitations**

Being an ethnographic project, this thesis was able to garner significant qualitative insights into the life-worlds of participants. Tackling this data employed the use of novel and replicable techniques in the processing, review, and incorporation of 'big data' tools in qualitative and ethnographic projects. As such, this research represents a significant step forward in digital ethnographic research as well as studies into contemporary motherhood and labour.

Although care was taken to incorporate women from various ethnicities, sexualities and socioeconomic backgrounds, participants in this project are largely European-Australian, heterosexual, and middle-class. Future research should explore the narratives and lifeworlds of a broader range of people to ascertain how the key themes discussed throughout the thesis play out in different contexts.

Unfortunately, the survey is also a particular weak point in this thesis. The intended aim of the survey was to capture a broader picture of members of Mumpreneurial Facebook groups. However, the response rate was minimal. A second recruitment drive was planned whereby the survey would once again be posted to the Mumpreneurial Facebook groups at times that, through increasing familiarity with the groups, more people were likely to see and respond to such posts. Participants would also be asked to pass the survey on to other Mumpreneurial

acquaintances and friends. However, this did not eventuate as the second recruitment period coincided with a period of disruption in my fieldwork due to the death of my father and loss of my home. Returning to fieldwork after this period, the survey was dropped in favour of reconnecting with participants and fieldwork.

A significant limitation outside the scope of this thesis is the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on attitudes to traditional divisions between work and home. Future research should consider how this massive shift from external workplaces to home offices and the growing acceptability of working from home and flexible hours impacts women's ability to continue in the formal workforce after the birth of children.



## 9.9 Final Comments

Ultimately, Mumpreneurship is a compromise between family and career. The overlapping cultural, economic, and domestic webs of motherhood, entrepreneurship, and digital media constitute Mumpreneur's lifeworld's, defining their relationship to their families, work, and sense of self. The women of this study employ an 'everyday techno-progressivism' to overcome the cultural and economic inequalities they experience because of these entangled webs. The paradoxical expectations placed on contemporary Australian mothers are underpinned by neoliberal and Third Wave feminist 'personal choice' narratives. For the women of this study, this frames inequality as a consequence of individual choices rather than traditional gendered divisions of labour or inadequate industry acceptance of accommodations for women's and men's primary care leave. In this context, looking to digital media and technological innovations to navigate these inequalities is a misnomer. Technological innovation does not counter cultural or economic factors that brought about these inequalities in the first place. Mumpreneurs hope digital technologies will help them manage competing societal and economic pressures to be 'good mothers', 'good feminists', remain economically productive, maintain a fulfilling (and lucrative) career and to do so as if each of these competing pressures were her sole occupation. However, longstanding cultural dynamics cannot be - and have never been - solved by technological innovation alone.



# List of Appendices

## Appendix A: Business.gov.au Screenshot

Appendix A.i: Earliest sitemap for <business.gov.au> captured 3rd February, 1999



Links to topics and resources include:

- Intending to Start in Business
- Business Planning • Establishing a Business • Purchasing a Business • Relocating a Business • Employing Staff • Accessing Finance • Taxation Accounting Compliance • Business Operations • Imports/Exports • Protecting Business Interests • Expanding and Diversifying a Business • Exiting from a Business

#### Business Topics

- Business Assistance • Education and Training • Employment • Environment • International Trade • Investment • Legal Issues • Licences and registrations • Management • Occupational Health and Safety • Product Development • Record keeping and reporting • Statistical Information • Taxation

- Search

- Transactions

- Feedback

- Resources

- Government Links • Industry Associations and Chambers of Commerce • Download

Bizlink

About BEP

- History of BEP • Future Developments • Benefits to a Business • Site Optimisation

## Appendix A.ii: Expanded sitemap for <business.gov.au> captured 11 May

2000.



For clarity, links to topics and resources include:

- Start & Run a Business

- Business Startup Kits • Pre Business Checklist • Ten tips for a successful business •

- Business Planning • Researching a Business Plan • Drafting a Business Plan • Choosing a

- Business Structure • Strategic Planning • Financial Planning • Model Business Plan •

- Establishing a Business • Registering a Business • Obtaining Licences • Business Premises

- and Zoning • Plant, Equipment, Electricity, Gas and Water • Purchasing a Business • What

- type of Business to Buy? • Transfer of Ownership • Valuing the Business • Relocating a

- Business • Finding the Right Site • Notifying Government Agencies • Locating Overseas •

- Relocating Plant and Equipment • Incentives to Relocate • Accessing Finance • Identify

- Your Financing Options • Taxation, Accounting, Compliance • Company Reporting

- Requirements • Financial Management • Supply Chain Partnerships • Information •

- Success Stories • Conference Presentations • Resources

- Self Help Manual 1 • Self Help Manual 2 • Self Help Manual 3 • Self Help Manual 4 • Self

- Help Manual 5 • Self Help Manual 6 • Self Help Manual 7 • Self Help Manual 8 • Online

- Self Help Manual

- Facilitators • Bulletin Board • Business Operations • Marketing • Selling to Government

- International Trade • Imports / Exports • Customs • Quarantine Requirements • Import

Replacement • Protecting Business Interests • Intellectual Property Protection •  
 Contracting • Legal Disputes • Expanding and Diversifying a Business • Business Success -  
 The Business Review Guide • Change Management • Product Development Including R&D;  
 • Exiting from a Business • Valuation • Selling your Business • Taxes on Selling a Business  
 • Insolvency • Who to Contact • Value Chain Management • Program Overview • Program  
 Objectives • Action Agenda Items • Value Chain Management • Value Chain Models •  
 Contact VCM • Employing Staff • Recruitment • Wages and Conditions • Workplace  
 Relations • Superannuation • Managing Employees • Training • Employment Taxes •  
 Occupational Health and Safety • Employing Contractors and Consultants • Taxation •  
 Commonwealth Taxation • A Tax Guide for New Small Business • Tax Reform • Taxation  
 Registration • Australian Capital Territory • New South Wales • Western Australia •  
 Queensland • South Australia • Tasmania • Victoria • Northern Territory • Business  
 Assistance • Other Business Topics • Education and Training • Employment • Environment  
 • Indigenous Business • Investment • Overseas Investors • ISONET Limited • Legal Issues  
 • Legal Issues Guide • Trade Practices • Legal Resources • Company Information and  
 Transactions • Licences • Management • Occupational Health and Safety • Product  
 Development and Innovation • Record keeping and reporting • Regional and Rural  
 Business • Statistical Information • Australian Quality Council (AQC) • Codes Of Practice •  
 Online Transactions • IP Australia Transactions • QuickFind



- General Search • Feedback • Products

- Links

- About BEP

## **Appendix B: Sample Ethnographic Interview Questions**

### **Sample Ethnographic Interview Questions**

Being an ethnographic project, interviews were approached qualitatively in an attempt to elicit information on the motivations behind and interpretations of participant's entrepreneurship. This phenomenological approach illuminates how an experience (the phenomenon) is understood by a particular group of people (the participants) in a particular context. Using expansive, open-ended, semi-structured questions enables participants' narratives to emerge as completely as possible and allows for new themes to emerge that may not have been foreseen by existing theories in this area.

The following sample questions, therefore, represent the 'starting point' for formal and semi-formal interviews.

**Demographics:**

- Age
- Gender
- Marital status/committed relationship status
- Employment status before entrepreneurship
- Current Employment status
- Highest level of education
- Family size
- Languages spoken
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Urban/suburban/rural

**Business:**

- Tell me about yourself?
- Tell me about your business?
- What lead you to start a business in ... ?
- What Job experience do you have?
  - Has this job experience prepared you for entrepreneurship?
- What does a day in your life look like?
- How do you manage your time?
- How do you evaluate success in your business (profit, making a difference etc.)?
- What are some of the difficulties associated with entrepreneurship as opposed to a 9-5 job?
- What are some of the benefits associated with entrepreneurship as opposed to a 9-5 job?
- What factors have helped or hindered you the most in starting up a small business?
- Have your feelings re your business changed over time?
  - What were you expecting?
  - What was a surprise?

- What is the highest level of education you've achieved?
  - If High school: What subjects did you take?
  - If University: What was your major/minor?
- Do you attend any classes re entrepreneurship?
- Are you part of any networks for female entrepreneurs?
  - Are any of your friends entrepreneurs?
- What do you use to promote your business?

**Internet:**

- Do you use Social media personally?
  - What services to you use?
  - Why?
- How often do you use the Internet?
- What websites do you use frequently?
- What do you use to access the Internet?
  - tablet, phone, desktop, laptop
- What OS do you use?
- Do you use a MAC or a PC?

- What software do you use frequently?
- How would you describe your technical computer knowledge?
- Do you use any social media accounts to promote your business?
  - What services do you use?
  - Why?
- How do you engage with your customers through the Internet?
- Do you shop online?
  - What websites do you use?
  - Is it mostly business or personal shopping?

**Other Themes Discussed:**

- Entrepreneurship
- Gender
- Time-management
- Use of Social Media
- Internet use
- Motherhood
- Australia

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## Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire text

### Background about you

Alright, let's get this survey started! This section is a quick rundown of your demographic info - age, job, marital status, etc - the basics, really. If a question doesn't apply to you and/or your situation or you would prefer not to answer, feel free to skip to the next one.

### Age range

18 – 24

25 – 34

35 – 44

45 – 54

55 – 64

65+

### Marital history - tick all that apply

Never married

Married

Separated

Divorced

Widowed

Defacto

Other:

Current marital status

Never married

Married

Separated

Divorced

Widowed

Defacto

Other:

Do you identify as LGBTQIA+? If so, please describe:

In which state or territory do you live?

ACT

NSW



NT

QLD

SA

TAS

VIC

WA

Do you live in an urban, suburban or rural area?

Urban

Suburban

Rural

What language(s) do you speak at home?

What is your ancestry?

English

Chinese

Greek

Indian

Italian

Vietnamese

Other:

What is your partner's (or ex-partner's) ancestry?

English

Chinese

Greek

Indian

Italian

Vietnamese

Other:

Do you or your family hold any religious or spiritual beliefs? If so,  
please describe.

Highest level of education completed

Less than Highschool certificate

Highschool certificate

Some university, no degree

Diploma or certificate (that is, TAFE)

Bachelors

Honours

Graduate Diploma or Graduate certificates

Masters

Doctoral degree or higher

How much money did you personally earn in the last Financial year (before tax)?

\$0 - \$9,999

\$10,00 - \$24,999

\$25,000 - \$49,999

\$50,000 - \$74,999

\$75,000 - \$99,999

\$100,000 - \$124,999

\$125,000 - \$149,999

\$150,000 - \$174,999

\$175,000 – \$199,999

Above \$200,000

What was your household's total income in the last Financial year (before tax)?

\$0 - \$9,999

\$10,00 - \$24,999

\$25,000 - \$49,999

\$50,000 - \$74,999

\$75,000 - \$99,999

\$100,000 - \$124,999

\$125,000 - \$149,999

\$150,000 - \$174,999

\$175,000 – \$199,999

Above \$200,000

How many children do have?

How old are your children?

Do your children attend childcare?

Yes/No

If your children attend childcare, how many hours per week do they attend? e.g.

"Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 - 2" / "my four year old attends Mon - Wed from 10 - 3  
but my 3 month old does not attend"

How often would your children be cared for by relatives or babysitters?

Do you or have you ever employed a nanny or au pair?

If you have hired a nanny or au pair, for how long have you/did you employed them?

Do you own, rent or are in the process of buying your home?

### **Let's talk Business**

Now to the business side of things. Lets talk entrepreneurship!

Tell me about your business. What do you do? What is your 'elevator pitch'?

Why did you start your business?

What do you feel are some of the unique aspects of being both a mother and an entrepreneur?

What are some of the challenges you've faced being a mother and a business owner?

Before starting your business, what did you do?

What is your current business strategy?

How do you attract customers to your business?

Is your Business

Product-based?

Service-based?

Other:

How do you define success in your business?

Is it important to you that your business is 'socially responsible' as well as profitable? How so and why?

How do you feel about the term 'mumpreneur'?

Do you employ others in your business? If so, please describe their position and status eg: social media manager, part-time (15 hours per week)

In an average week, how many hours would you spend on your business?

In an average week, how many hours would you spend on paid work outside of your business?

In an average week, how many hours would you spend on unpaid, domestic work?  
(childcare, laundry, cleaning etc)

What is your business' turnover?

What is your business' net profit?

What does an average Wednesday look like for you? (be as specific or as general as you like)

What does an average Saturday look like for you? (again, be as specific or as general as you like)

What are some of the difficulties and benefits associated with entrepreneurship as opposed to a 9-5 job?

What factors have helped or hindered you the most in starting up a small business?

Have your feelings regarding your business changed over time? How so?

Have you attended any classes regarding entrepreneurship? If so, please list:



Are you part of any networks for female entrepreneurs? If so, please list:

### **Social Media and the Internet**

Distraction or core marketing strategy? I'd love to know how you use the Internet!

Does your business have a website? Why/why not?

Do you have a digital marketing strategy? Please describe

What websites, apps or social media platforms do you use? eg Facebook, Xero, Instagram, Shopify, WhatsApp, MailChimp etc...

How do you use the sites/apps you listed above?

Which of these sites/apps are most important for your business? Why?

How do you access your them? (Check all that apply)

PC

Mac Desktop

Laptop

Macbook

Android Tablet

iPad

Android Smartphone

iPhone

Other smartphone (Windows, Nokia, Blackberry etc)

Other:

What web browser do you use? (Check all that apply)

Chrome

Firefox

Internet Explorer/Edge

Safari

Other:

Do you have both 'personal' and 'business' profiles on social media?

I have a combination of personal and professional profiles

No, I only have personal profiles

No, I only have professional profiles

Other:

On which social media sites do you have a personal profile?

Facebook

Instagram

Twitter

Pinterest

LinkedIn

YouTube

Google+

Other:

On which social media sites do you have a professional profile?

Facebook

Instagram

Twitter

Pinterest

LinkedIn

YouTube

Google+

Other:

How do you use social media in your business?

On average, how many hours per day would you use social media professionally?

On average, how many hours per day would you use social media for personal matters?

If you have both personal and professional profiles on social media, what are some of the main differences between your personal and professional profiles?

If you have Facebook, how many 'likes' does your professional profile have?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

If you indicated at the start of this survey that you would like to be interviewed, the researcher (Joanne Byrne) will be in touch soon.

We deeply appreciate the time and effort you put in to answering the questions and thank you again for your participation.

#### RESEARCHERS

##### Researcher

Joanne Byrne | PhD Candidate | College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce,  
Humanities and Social Sciences | Department of Anthropology |  
[byrne.j2@students.latrobe.edu.au](mailto:byrne.j2@students.latrobe.edu.au)

##### Supervisor

Dr. Nicholas Herriman | Senior Lecturer | College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce,  
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##### Co-Supervisor

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Co-Supervisor

Dr. Ray Madden | Lecturer | College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce | Humanities  
and Social Sciences | Department of Anthropology | R.Madden@latrobe.edu.au

If you have any complaints or concerns about your participation in the study that the  
researcher has not been able to answer to your satisfaction, you may contact the Senior  
Human Ethics Officer, Ethics and Integrity, Research Office, La Trobe University, Victoria,  
3086 (P: 03 9479 1443, E: humanethics@latrobe.edu.au). Please quote the application  
reference number E15/144

## **Appendix D: Participant Information Statement**

**Project Title: “Female Entrepreneurship and the Internet: a Digital Ethnography of Mumpreneurs”**

**Please read this participant information statement prior to making a decision to participate.**

**Thank you.**

### **Project Description**

The purpose of this study is to discuss the use of digital social spaces by ‘Mumpreneurs’. You have been chosen for this study as you are a member of a group that identifies itself as being part of Mumpreneurship. In order to participate you must be aged 18 years or older.

### **Procedures**

The study primarily consists of participant-observation. The study may also include semiformal, one-on-one interviews. These will only take place if you agree to be interviewed and you don’t need to be interviewed in order to participate in the project.

By their nature, semiformal, one-on-one interviews do not have a strict time limit. On average, they take between 30 minutes to an hour. However, it is not uncommon for them to be shorter or longer. These interviews will touch on various themes such as Identity, Entrepreneurship, Modernity, Gender, Online/Digital communication, Motherhood and the Online vs Offline world.

### **Risk**

There are no expected adverse consequences as a result of this study. However, to ensure all potential risks are minimised, you are assured a number of rights as a participant of the study (See 'Participation').

### **Use of data**

Documentation (ethnographic notes, interview transcriptions etc) will be stored securely by the researcher. This data will be hardware-encrypted and stored on a password-protected hard disk.

The data collected in this study may be used as a basis for book chapters, journal articles, conference presentations, etc.



## **Participation**

You have the right to withdraw from active participation in this project at any time. You may also request that data arising from your participation are not used in the research project provided that this right is exercised within 30 days of the completion of your participation in the project. You are asked to complete the “Withdrawal of Consent Form” or to notify the researcher by email that you wish to withdraw your consent for your data to be used in this research project.

In interviews, you may skip any questions you don’t want to answer and end the interview at any time.

If you wish to be informed of any presentations or publications that may result from your participation in this project, email the primary researcher with a forwarding email address indicating so. Any questions regarding this project may be directed to the Researcher.

**By clicking ‘I agree’ on the digital consent form at <address will be available after ethics clearance>, you are consenting to be part of this study.**

## **Researchers**

Joanne Byrne

PhD Candidate

College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce

Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Anthropology

byrne.j2@students.latrobe.edu.au

**Researcher Supervisor**

Dr. Nicholas Herriman

Senior Lecturer

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**Co-Supervisor**

Dr. Paulina Billett

Lecturer

College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce

Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Sociology

P.Billett@latrobe.edu.au

If you have a complaint about any part of this study, please contact:

Ethics Reference Number Position Telephone Email

E15-144 Senior Research Ethics Officer +61 3 9479 1443 humanethics@latrobe.edu.au

**Co-Supervisor**

Dr. Ray Madden

Lecturer

College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce

Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Anthropology

R.Madden@latrobe.edu.au

**Project Title: “Female Entrepreneurship and the Internet: a Digital**

**Ethnography of Mumpreneurs”**

I (the participant) have read (or, where appropriate, have had read to me) and understood

the participant information statement and consent form, and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in the project, realising that I may withdraw at any time and can withdraw my data up to 4 weeks (30 days) following the completion of my participation in the project. I agree that research data provided by me or with my permission during the project may be included in a thesis, presented at conferences or published in journals on the condition that neither my name nor any other identifying information is used.

Name of Participant:

I agree to be part of this project ☐

I am willing to be formally interviewed ☐

## **Appendix E: Withdrawal of Consent and Withdrawal of Consent for Use of Data Form**

I, (the participant), wish to WITHDRAW my consent to participate in this project. I

understand that this notification will be retained together with my consent form

as evidence of the withdrawal of my consent to participate in this project.

Participant's name:

Date:

I, (the participant), wish to WITHDRAW my consent to the use of data arising from my participation in this project. I understand that this can be done up to 4 weeks (30 days)

following the completion of my participation in the project. Data arising from my

participation must NOT be used in this research project as described in the Information and

Consent Form. I understand that data arising from my participation will be destroyed. I

understand that this notification will be retained together with my consent form as

evidence of the withdrawal of my consent to use the data I have provided specifically for this research project.

Participant's name:

Date:

Please send this completed form to:

[j.byrne@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:j.byrne@latrobe.edu.au)

Alternatively, mail to:

Nicholas Herriman

Sociology and Anthropology

Social Sciences

LaTrobe University

Bundoora VIC 3086

Australia

# **Appendix F: Survey Participant Information Statement and Consent**

## **Form**

Female Entrepreneurship and the Internet: A Digital Ethnography of Mumpreneurs

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT**

Please read this participant information statement prior to making a decision to participate.

Thank you.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of this study is to discuss the use of digital social spaces by 'Mumpreneurs'. You have been chosen for this study as you are a member of a group that identifies itself as being part of Mumpreneurship. In order to participate you must be aged 18 years or older.

### **PROCEDURES**

The study primarily consists of participant-observation. The study may also include semiformal, one-on-one interviews and/or a survey. Interviews will only take place if you

agree to be interviewed and you don't need to be interviewed in order to participate in the project.

By their nature, semiformal, one-on-one interviews do not have a strict time limit. On average, they take between 30 minutes to an hour. However, it is not uncommon for them to be shorter or longer. These interviews will touch on various themes such as Identity, Entrepreneurship, Modernity, Gender, Online/Digital communication, Motherhood and the Online vs Offline world.

Similarly, the survey may take 30 - 60 minutes to complete and touch on the themes listed above.

## RISK

There are no expected adverse consequences as a result of this study. However, to ensure all potential risks are minimised, you are assured a number of rights as a participant of the study (See 'Participation').

## USE OF DATA

Documentation (ethnographic notes, interview transcriptions etc) will be stored securely by the researcher. This data will be hardware-encrypted and stored on a password-protected



hard disk. The data collected in this study may be used as a basis for book chapters, journal articles, conference presentations, etc.

## PARTICIPATION

You have the right to withdraw from active participation in this project at any time. You may also request that data arising from your participation are not used in the research project provided that this right is exercised within 30 days of the completion of your participation in the project. You are asked to complete the “Withdrawal of Consent Form” or to notify the researcher by email that you wish to withdraw your consent for your data to be used in this research project.

In interviews, you may skip any questions you don’t want to answer and end the interview at any time.

If you wish to be informed of any presentations or publications that may result from your participation in this project, email the primary researcher with a forwarding email address indicating so. Any questions regarding this project may be directed to the Researcher.

## RESEARCHERS

Researcher

Joanne Byrne | PhD Candidate | College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce, Humanities  
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Sciences | Department of Anthropology | [byrne.j2@students.latrobe.edu.au](mailto:byrne.j2@students.latrobe.edu.au)

#### Supervisor

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#### Co-Supervisor

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#### Co-Supervisor

Dr. Ray Madden | Lecturer | College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce | Humanities  
and Social Sciences | Department of Anthropology | [R.Madden@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:R.Madden@latrobe.edu.au)

If you have a complaint about any part of this study, please contact:

Ethics Reference Number: E15-144 | Position: Senior Research Ethics Officer | Telephone:

+61 3 9479 1443 | Email: [humanethics@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@latrobe.edu.au)

In addition to the survey, we will be conducting interviews in more detail. If you would also like to be interviewed, tick the checkbox below

☐ I am willing to be interviewed

Name: \*

Your answer

Email: \*

Your answer

Questions/comments (if any):

Your answer

Completing and submitting a survey will mean that you have given consent to participate in this research. This will indicate to us that you understand the nature of the research and that you have freely and willingly agreed to participate.

Please [click here](#) to start survey.

## Appendix G: Character Profiles

### Appendix G.i: Character Profile Summary

Name	Age	Ethnicity	Education	Location	Marital status	No# kids	Business	Previous job	Previous Salary	Current Earnings
Jessica	45	Anglo / Australian	Bachelor of Education	Originally QLD, now Inner suburbs, Melbourne, VIC	Married  (husb David)	3	Founded and  runs the  “Mother's Business Network (MBN)” and	Primary  school teacher	\$68,000	\$50,000 -  \$70,000

							the associated “Mother's Business School (MBS)”			
Miranda	43	Norwegian	Bachelor of  Arts	Eastern suburbs, Melbourne,  VIC	Divorced,  Single (ex husb Richard)	4	Cosy Toys  A social enterprise  selling handmade toys from	Global Quality  Director at an international insurance company	\$127,000	\$25,000

							India and SE  Asia			
Amy	37	Anglo /  Australian	Technical  college  (fashion),  Studied an  uncredited  diploma with  “Jessica’s”  business  school	Regional  VIC	Married  (husb Darrin)	2	Amy Ink  Designs,  makes and  sells branded  clothing +  merchandise  business-to-  business	Worked in  Fashion  industry for 14  years	\$45,000  - \$70,00	\$40,000

Lucia	45	Italian / Australian	Diploma, technical college (naturopathy)	Outer suburbs of Adelaide, SA	Previous Divorce now Married (husb John)	3	Eco Home Environment ally friendly homewares, party supplies, and giftboxes	Receptionist, Paralegal, Temp work	\$35,000 - \$45,000	\$0
Maggie	42	Anglo / Australian	Bachelors in Marketing, Diplomas in Applied Science	Eastern suburbs of Melbourne, VIC	Married with children (husb George)	2	New Leaf Upcycled products and associated	Marketing manager for international scientific	\$110,000	\$15,000



							app (+in-app currency)	testing company		
Dot	39	Mixed heritage: Chinese and English	Bachelor of Physiotherapy with Honours	Eastern suburbs, Melbourne, VIC	Married with children (husb William)	2	Dots Spots  natural therapies for children with allergies, diet plan/allergen advice + essential oils	Physiotherapis  t (now part- time)	\$75,000	\$35,000  (part time work)  \$0  (business )

Dawn	44	Anglo / Australian	Didn't finish Bachelors	Outer suburbs, Melbourne, VIC	Married, one child from previous relationship and 2 children with new partner (husb John)	3	Dawn  Campbell  Coaching  Meditation, life coaching  and natural therapies		\$25,000 - \$45,000	\$50,000
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## **Appendix G.ii: Expanded Character Profiles**

### **Appendix G.ii.a: Jessica**

Jessica is a 45-year-old woman, living in Melbourne's eastern suburbs with her husband and three children. Originally from NSW, she moved to Melbourne to complete her Bachelor's degree in Education. She met her husband (David, a business owner) through friends and they married soon after she began teaching. She and her husband worked for a few years before deciding to start a family. After the birth of her first child, she took primary carer parental leave, returning to teach six months later 'because that's what you did' but found the experience 'excruciating'. With her second child on the way, and after nearly a decade teaching in the public school system, she decided to leave teaching to set up a network for mothers seeking different work/life arrangements. In 2011, Jessica first set up a website and Facebook page for the Australian Mother's Business Network (AMBN). She saw a space for women like herself who could not leave their children in the care of others but wanted to maintain a career outside motherhood. From 2011, the Australian Mother's Business Network has grown to be the largest networking association for mothers who own their own businesses in Australia. The AMBN annual conference is a huge event attended by most participants, with local and international speakers, classes, networking opportunities and a

glamorous awards night, sponsored by a number of national and local banks. On the back of this success, Jessica and her team launched the Australian Mother's Business School (AMBS).

## **Appendix G.ii.b: Miranda**

Miranda is a 43-year-old woman living in Melbourne's Northern suburbs with her four children. Originally from Norway, she completed a Bachelor of Arts but took up work in finance immediately after graduating. Moving up the ranks, she travelled extensively for her job at a company that provided insurance for international businesses' shipping, systems and personnel. She met her Australian ex-husband (Richard) through work, and they travelled together extensively for a few years before deciding to have children. Wanting to be near family, Miranda's husband suggested they both move to the company's Australian office. This allowed them to retain their jobs and settle near his family so there would be help, support and childcare close by. Five years and two children later, this arrangement was working well until she and her husband were encouraged to move between offices in South East Asia. Miranda knew it would be hard with two children in tow but was assured by both the company and her ex-husband that the reduced cost of living in South East Asia and their high earnings would be enough to hire cleaners and nannies to compensate for the loss of familial support. Somewhat comforted, once there, Miranda became disillusioned. Her time in South East Asia brought into sharp relief the gap between the global rich and poor. She, being an educated, western woman with a stable career was in a state of immense privilege over the women she encountered. This dissonance played on her mind, and she felt she had to do something to help these women living in poverty. She and another expat began small

community enterprise, teaching women how to knit and sew small toys. Their time in South East Asia coming to an end, Miranda and her ex-husband returned to Australia where Miranda began selling the toys under the name 'Cosy toys' at markets and online. Miranda quit her job to devote herself full time to the enterprise. At this point, her ex-husband revealed that he had been having an affair with one of their nannies. Miranda and her ex-husband divorced. The money she received in the divorce settlement and her own saving supported Cosy Toys until the enterprise became profitable, some three years later.

### **Appendix G.ii.c: Amy**

Amy is a 37-year-old woman living in rural Victoria with her husband, Darrin, and their 2 children. With an interest in design, fashion and textiles from a young age, Amy planned to move to either Sydney or Melbourne after high school. She applied for various TAFE and art colleges to pursue her interests and accepted a place at an art college in metropolitan Melbourne. Growing up in rural Victoria, she assumed she would stay in Melbourne after graduation in order to keep open as many opportunities as possible, and maintain connections with old and new clients in the Australian fashion industry. In Melbourne, she met her husband, Darrin – a mechanic who also grew up in rural Victoria. Though she enjoyed her time in Melbourne as a university student, and as a young, childless, couple, Amy and Darrin decided that when they wanted to start a family, they would move back home. Both wanted to give their children the type of childhood they enjoyed. After a decade of working in Melbourne for various design and manufacturing companies, Amy, six months pregnant, returned to her hometown with her partner. She stresses that this was not an easy decision, nor was it done without careful consideration of the impact on her job prospects as a designer. However, she and her husband believed that their children would have better childhoods surrounded by a close family network, away from the hustle, noise, and ‘polluted air’ of Australia’s metropolises. During her pregnancy, Amy began searching for suitable properties for herself and Darren, aiming to purchase a home with enough land to

build a design studio, office space and small warehouse. Finding such a place, she spent the remainder of her pregnancy and first months as a new mum 'living on a building site in a camper van'. She emphasises that her business would not be possible without the communicative affordances of the Internet - the first thing she did was set up a website with a streamlined ordering and payment process. This allowed her to start advertising her company, drawing on previous contacts and her Melbourne-based network for tips through skype, text, phone calls and, predominantly, Facebook. 'As soon as the builders left, I was in' and she started accepting clients immediately. With family close by to draw on for childcare, Amy was able to devote most business hours to her new company Amy Ink Designs. Amy Ink Designs now designs and manufactures merchandise for various businesses across Australia. Amy has a particular interest in having a low environmental impact and sourcing materials from certified, socially responsible producers which allowed her to charge a premium for her products and, at the time, differentiated herself from other local manufacturers.



## **Appendix G.ii.d: Lucia**

Lucia is a 45-year-old married mother of four children aged five, eight, 10 and 12. She and her partner had been living in a caravan while their home was being built in the outer suburbs of Adelaide. Before starting up her business, Lucia had a variety of jobs worked as a paralegal, trained as a naturopath and worked numerous temp jobs. Making the conscious decision to cease formal work when she was “six months pregnant with child number two”, Lucia told her husband that she did not want to return to formal work, finding the juggle of young children and formal work to be too draining and the cost of childcare too steep. She intended to return to formal work when her children were all school-aged. However, during what she described as the ‘downtime’ away from formal work (as she was caring for three children under the age of five) she decided to start up a business. She bought the web domain ‘Eco Home’ after the birth of her third child and, with no formal training, decided to start up a business. Both she and her husband care deeply about the environment and are concerned with the impact of climate change on their children. She and her husband aim to live with as little environmental impact as possible. For instance, they have a large garden where they grow their own vegetables, herbs and fruits and only buy products made eco-friendly or compostable materials. To that end, Lucia’s business is an online provider of sustainable and eco-friendly homewares and gifts. Lucia does not design, commission or manufacture these supplies. Rather she sources, re-labels, packages and sends them to

customers in Australia. Lucia previously rented a small warehouse space to hold her business' stock but, to save costs, she currently stores stock in her in-laws' garage and her own home. After five years of operation, Lucia has only recently managed to break even or make a modest profit each month through the business.

### **Appendix G.ii.e: Maggie**

Maggie is a 42-year-old woman living in the outer suburbs of Melbourne, VIC wither her husband, George, and their 2 children. Describing herself as always being ‘a bit of a geek’, Maggie completed a Bachelor’s in Applied Science and landed her ‘dream job’ straight out of her final year internship. Working for a decade at an international medical testing company, Maggie went on to complete diplomas in Marketing and Business management. This additional training and ‘insane work ethic’ meant by the time she was in her late 20s, she was marketing manager for the Australian team. At this point, she and her husband (having met in university) decided to start a family, assured that there would be ample provisions and support from the company. Around this time, Maggie noticed small changes at work. Questions usually directed to her were sent to junior members of her staff, she was not included in long-term (5 year) planning meetings despite her proposed primary carer parental leave being less than a year and three weeks before she was supposed to go on leave, her email access was terminated. Brushing these aside as technical glitches and miscommunications, Maggie returned as planned after her primary carer parental leave and was subjected to the same exclusions. She found navigating work and motherhood a deeply uncomfortable experience with no flexibility in work hours, location or, indeed, any of the supports she was originally offered. Things came to a head soon after. Maggie and her team had managed to produce the same outputs as before she went on primary carer parental

leave, however, she had placed a stay on communications after eight pm. She explained that if any communications were received after eight pm, she and her team would respond to them the next day. However, she was criticised for being 'uncontactable' and reprimanded lack of communication. For Maggie, this was the 'final straw' and she quit her job. She is cognizant that she was able to do so as her husband's wage (as an engineer) was enough to 'pay the mortgage and make sure the lights were on'. Though she delighted in being able to spend so much time with her children, she felt like her 'legs had been cut off'. It was then that she decided to start her own business 'New Leaf'. New Leaf is an ecommerce app that sells upcycled items such as furniture, jewellery, upholstery and clothing. Buying items through the app earns customers 'points' that they can use as currency in the app or swapped for discounts on purchases. Drawing on her 'geekness' and 'savvy' Maggie has set up a home office to devote more time to developing and marketing her app and products while also managing childcare and domestic work.

### **Appendix G.ii.f: Dot**

Dot is a 39-year-old mother of 2, living in Melbourne's northern suburbs. She completed a bachelor of physiotherapy with honours and, after the birth of her first child, practises part time. Her first child suffered from unexplained hives after moving on to solid foods. After many rounds of allergy testing returning no clear cause, she began him on an intense elimination diet. She jokes he lived on pears, rice, and coconut milk for a month. She systematically introduced foods back into his diet and monitored his reaction with each new food. Ultimately, she did not discover what brought on her son's hives but did note he had a sensitivity to certain food groups, and he has not suffered from hives since going on the elimination diet. Her experience of trying to find recipes for children that did not include dairy, gluten and other common allergens was frustrating enough that she began to write up recipes she developed with allergen-friendly foods. Starting a blog, she consolidated these recipes into a cookbook and now offers counselling and guidance to parents in similar circumstances as herself. Her husband (William, a lawyer) does not believe that their child had any allergies to begin with. It is a significant point of disagreement between the two, but he has supported Dot's efforts to grow her business and recipe blog, supporting her in business loan applications and helping with small business admin and paperwork.

### **Appendix G.ii.g: Dawn**

Dawn is a 44-year-old woman living in the outer suburbs of Melbourne with two of her three children. Before her current business as a life coach and natural therapist, Dawn left school at 16, seeing no point to school and wanting to start work as soon as possible. She held a number of temp jobs, working as a teller in a bank, in data entry and some secretarial experience but never found much satisfaction in the formal workforce. Meeting her first child's father (Aled, a labourer) through friends, she became pregnant at 18. The increased responsibilities of motherhood weighed heavily on her. She feels she couldn't cope with the care of a young child and spent a lot of time away from home, leaving her son in the care of friends or her partner's family so she and her child's father could 'drink and be stupid kids'. By the time her son started primary school, she felt 'constantly stressed and completely hollow'. Hoping to find a solution, she took up yoga and meditation on the suggestion of a friend as a means to 'bring peace' to herself and her home. In these periods of reflection, she was first able to see how unhappy she felt in her life and decided to leave her partner. Setting up a home for herself was terrifying but she felt if she stayed 'nothing would change'. She held down a temp job while completing a natural therapies certificate at a local college. She set up her business offering natural therapies to mothers in particular and soon built up a pool of regular clients. Expanding her business, she soon met her husband (John, a mechanic) and had two more children. She draws a distinct line between her life before and

after starting her business, seeing it as the means through which she was able to live the life she wanted to all along. The guilt she feels from not being able to provide properly for her eldest son as a teen mother motivates her now to give her two daughters 'the time and money they need'. Her - now adult - son does not live with her in the new household but visits frequently.

## Appendix H: Participant Summary Data

Name	Age	Ethnicity	Education	Location	Marital status	No# kids
Participant 1	45	Italian-Aust	Finished High school	NSW	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage – Divorced  Currently Single	2
Participant 2	50	South African  1 <sup>st</sup> Gen migrant	Finished High school	VIC	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	2
Participant 3	39	Italian-Aust	TAFE	SA	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	5
Participant 4	42	Anglo-Aust	Finished High school	VIC	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage – Divorced  2 <sup>nd</sup> Marriage	3



Participant 5	46	Anglo-Aust	Bachelors	VIC	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	2
Name	Age	Ethnicity	Education	Location	Marital status	No# kids
Participant 6	42	Irish-Aust	Masters (Science)	VIC	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	3
Participant 7	43	Swedish 1 <sup>st</sup> Gen migrant	Bachelors (Arts)	VIC	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage – Divorced  Currently Single	4
Participant 8	48	Irish-Aust	Bachelors (Arts)	QLD	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	4
Participant 9	37	Anglo-Aust	TAFE	NSW	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	2
Participant 10	38	Greek-Aust	Bachelors (Arts)	QLD	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	2

Participant 11	43	Anglo-Aust	Masters (Law)	VIC	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	3
Name	Age	Ethnicity	Education	Location	Marital status	No# kids
Participant 12	39	Anglo-Aust	Masters (Science)	NSW	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	2
Participant 13	45	Finnish 1 <sup>st</sup> Gen migrant	Bachelors (Business)	NSW	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	2
Participant 14	38	Anglo-Aust	Finished Highschool	VIC	De facto	3
Participant 15	46	Anglo-Aust	TAFE	VIC	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	2
Participant 16	45	Anglo-Aust	Bachelors (Science)	VIC	1 <sup>st</sup> marriage - Widowed 2 <sup>nd</sup> marriage - Divorced	2

					Currently Single	
Participant 17	37	Anglo-Aust	TAFE	VIC	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	1
Name	Age	Ethnicity	Education	Location	Marital status	No# kids
Participant 18	41	Chinese/Anglo-Aust	Masters (Science)	VIC	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	2
Participant 19	39	Indian-Aust	Bachelors (Arts)	VIC	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	2
Participant 20	46	Italian-Aust	Bachelors (Arts)	VIC	1 <sup>st</sup> Marriage	3



## Appendix I: Sample OCR Output

Miranda Marin	Comments
Sponsored · 0	TheCosyToys Things are a bit up and down
...	for the
I've been told by a "pro Instagrammer"	time being. Who'd have thought that
that my	juggling between home and
Insta isn't pro-looking enough.	the 'Cosy' enterprise is not for the faint of
Not enough of inspo and	heart.
aesthetic flat layouts to	Sometimes I need a few more
get engagement.	hours of child-free time per day,
Come to think of it, I almost fell	or an extra set of hands to help.
disheartened ... but then I realise	Any of you out there in the same
I'm not looking for the 'pro look'. What is the	boat?
professional look	2w
trying to achieve?	
It will be really awkward if my Insta audience	<b>TheCosyToys</b> #mumpreneur #women #mum
were to see me face to face – they will be	#womeninbusiness #hustle
shocked if they find out I don't talk like	2w Reply
a pro Instagrammer!	<b>cindys.at.home</b> Awww!
When I chat with my business colleagues at	2w Reply
home	.~ ~.

<p>the kids do chime in every now</p> <p>and again.</p> <p>To be honest, I enjoy doing what I do,</p> <p>o Write a comment ... GIF</p> <p>and won't have the energy not stamina to</p> <p>pretend to</p> <p>be another person, who</p> <p>puts up inspo, even on days</p> <p>where I'm</p> <p>exhausted.</p>	<p>.</p> <p>TheCosyToys @cindys.at.home</p> <p>2w Reply</p> <p>~~ heatherbunn Definitely agree! but your</p> <p>toys are so inspiring! @TheCosyToys – wine</p> <p>time with the girls soon? :*)</p> <p>Add a comment</p>
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<p>newleaf #boostyourbusiness #withnewleaf</p> <p>MEET OUR</p> <p>CREATIVES #4 of 7</p> <p>We'd like to introduce 7 amazing talented ladies who will be lending a hand to improve one lucky business owner – we'll DRAW THE LUCKY WINNER TODAY!! (Draw open until Spm!)</p> <p>#4 MENTORING with June Brown of @BrightonsMumsCollective, worth \$200!</p> <p>Along with all the other opportunities, the lucky dip winner will ALSO receive 3 hours of mentoring with June, an award-winning entrepreneur, founder of The Mums Collective (a lovely mum-friendly co-working space for women with childcare) and featured in the local Brighton Express this week!</p>	<p><b>Georgie Lee ...., Ladies In Biz • • •</b></p> <p><b>Facebook Group</b></p> <p>2 hours ago • IE</p> <p>Dear Ladies Just wanted to pick your brains for some helpful advice. I work from home and am approaching EOFY which is extremely busy for my business.</p> <p>I also have 2 kids aged 6½, and 9m. 6½ year old is at school hence the daily school pick up and drop off and I'm struggling To find enough time every workday to do household stuff and achieve my business targets and finish client projects.</p> <p>Any helpful hints for time management for for both home and my business?</p> <p>My partner is quite helpful when at home, but now works longer workdays due to the EOFY rush.</p>
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<p>June has an absolutely incredible business acumen and is also one of the most supportive female entrepreneurs I know. Her enthusiasm is infectious and her brilliant ideas and business acumen are highly valued.</p> <p>Today's lucky dip winner gets to hang out with June (in person at The Mums Collective Brighton, phone, or Zoom) to discuss their current business situation, their stretch goals and a plan to get there. Our lucky dip winner gets to take home some valuable tips to #boostyourbusiness!</p> <p>Read all about June in Brighton Express</p>	<p>10 Comments</p> <p>[()] Like (J Comment</p> <p>Sally Sorensen</p> <p>Karlie Hobson-Clark</p> <p>can definitely empathise, I have 2 little people as well.</p> <p>I think recognising the EOFY rush, what I would suggest is to just simplify the general home stuff. Get someone to help with the cleaning etc. Make super easy family favorites like spag bol. Remember not to stress out if things are not always completed.</p> <p>Remember that the hours you have are less when you factor in school hours. Make sure you are focused in working on the important and strategic stuff like client deadlines early in the AM. x</p> <p>2 hours ago • Like • Reply • 0 1</p> <p>Maggie Cullen Thanks- I feel housework i. ...</p> <p><b>Jess McLaren</b></p>
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<p><a href="https://brighton.example.com/20171231/JuneBrownFeatureArticle/">https://brighton.example.com/20171231/JuneBrownFeatureArticle/</a></p> <p>Remember, for your chance, log on to <a href="http://www.new-leaf.example.net/boostyourbusiness">www.new-leaf.example.net/boostyourbusiness</a> for details!</p> <p>View all 3 comments</p> <p>1 DAY AGO</p>	<p>Karlie is spot on – maybe see where you can get some help, even if it's just until the EOFY rush is over. I'm lucky to have a helper 21hours per week and it's been a tremendous help. She does babysitting for me and also helps with the cleaning. My business also uses a Virtual Assistant so we can outsource some paperwork to help us with our EOFY rush.</p> <p>It's actually reasonably priced and gives us some extra time in the work day. The Facebook Group should have some opportunities for you to try them out.</p> <p>If cost is a factor, maybe consider listing down what you're doing and re-assess priorities; just park (or get rid of) anything that wastes your time or doesn't seem to give your business any added benefit.</p> <p>Then it's just a matter of re-prioritising what comes f1rst. Hope this helps! xxx</p> <p>2 hours ago • Like • Reply • 0 2</p> <p>o Write a comment ... GIF</p>
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