

Lund University

Master of Science in Social Studies of Gender

Major: Political Science

SIMV07

Spring 2018

Supervisor: Augustín Goenaga



LUND UNIVERSITY

“Mommy meets Money”

Digitized forms of affective labor among ‘mommy’ bloggers
and the biopolitical production of ‘life’ as a marketable
commodity

Author: **Erla Gjinishi**

Acknowledgements

My deepest appreciation and most heartfelt gratitude goes to all the amazing humans who believed in me all along and always knew that I could do this.

To my family, who raised me with a craving to nourish my soul with knowledge. They are the ones who taught me to believe that “the more I learn, the more I realize how little I know”.

To my best friend, who is secretly my biggest fan and openly my most passionate critic.

To my partner, who has always been there to wipe off my tears of self-doubt and give me ceaseless support and love in this journey.

To “ma” friends, who have turned the pain of writing this thesis and the suffering of doing Gender studies into a beautiful journey of idiosyncratic jokes, library hall breaks, ‘queer garden’ lunches, and deep contemplations about changing the world.

To my supervisor, who has been a continuous source of encouragement, motivation and guidance.

To my teachers and classmates, who have inspired me with thought-provoking ideas and discussions.

And finally, to the Swedish Institute for funding my two life-changing years in Sweden and for believing that I might be one of the future global leaders.

Abstract

This study explores the ways in which digitized forms of affective labor among ‘mommy’ bloggers effectuate biopolitical production of ‘life’ as a marketable commodity. Situating the research in a context of a neoliberal re-structuring of the global order and dissolving biopolitical state boundaries, this study captures the transformation of ‘life’ and its quotidian needs and capabilities into a terrain for commodification. Employing a Critical Discourse Analysis, the study uses the ‘everyday life’ activities manifested in the form of digitized affective labor in the ‘mommy’ blogosphere, as an entry point to research, to explore the blurring of the boundaries between productive and reproductive labor and the suffusion of capitalist market logics to ‘life’ in its entirety. As the findings of the study suggest, the biopolitical production of ‘life’ as a marketable commodity in the ‘mommy’ blogosphere manifests via four interrelated ways: the ‘enterprising’ of motherhood and motherly affects; manufacturing of marketable fantasies; commodification of ‘everyday’ rhythms, routines and leisure time; and commodification of ‘mommy’ subjectivities.

Key words: affective labor, biopolitical production, everyday life, marketable commodities, virtual economy, reproductive labor, social factory, ‘mommy’ blogging

Word count: 18,932

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
1 Introduction	6
1.1 Research Problem.....	7
1.2 Purpose of the Research	7
1.3 Research Question.....	8
1.4 Outline of the thesis.....	8
1.5 Limitations.....	9
2 Background, previous research and entry point to research	11
2.1 Background and context.....	11
2.2 Previous research on ‘mommy’ blogging.....	12
2.3 Entry point to research: Locating the ‘everyday’ in ‘mommy’ blogging.....	14
3 Theoretical framework	16
3.1 Reproductive, Productive and Virtual economy (RPV) framing.....	17
3.2 Immaterial labor and the biopolitical production of ‘life’	20
3.3 ‘Life’ at the nexus of productive and reproductive labor	23
3.4 ‘Mommy blogging’ as a digitized form of affective labor	25
3.5 The ‘mommy’ blogosphere as social factory	28
4 Methodology	29
4.1 A brief introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis	29
4.1.1 Epistemological frame: The concepts of power, ideology and hegemony in CDA.....	30
4.2 Analytical approach: Three-dimensional model of discourse analysis	32
4.3 Research design and strategy.....	35
4.4 Choice of Material.....	35
4.4.1 Purposive sampling of ‘mommy’ bloggers	35
4.4.2 Theoretical underpinnings of the choice of material	36
4.4.3 The <i>global</i> as the unit of analysis	37
4.4.4 Cross-sectional time-horizon of the research strategy.....	38
4.4.5 Illustration of the sample	38
4.5 Feminist research in online spaces: Note on reflexivity.....	39
4.5.1 Ethics and limitations	40

5	Analysis	41
5.1	Motherhood ‘enterprised’: ‘Mommy’ affects as a site for commodification	43
5.2	Everyday rhythms, routines and leisure commodified	47
5.2.1	<i>Everyday routines #commodified</i>	48
5.2.2	<i>Domestic reproductive labor #commodified</i>	50
5.2.3	<i>Leisure time #commodified</i>	52
5.3	Marketable fantasies: Manufacturing forms of ‘life’ and desire	54
5.4	Re-defining and commodifying ‘mommy’ subjectivities.....	59
6	Discussion and Conclusions	63
6.1	Future Research	65
7	Bibliography	66

1 Introduction

This study engages with ‘mommy’ blogging as a mode of immaterial labor where transformations associated with the neoliberal restructuring of the global order and the rise of virtual economy can be traced. ‘Mommy’ blogging, in this study, is established as a digitized form of affective labor where the blurring of the boundaries between productive and reproductive labor becomes visible. The blurring of these boundaries is situated in a new *biopolitical* context where the relationship between capitalism and that which constitutes ‘life’ is deeper and more intimate than prior to the emergence of new modes of immaterial labor. Simply put, ‘life’ in its entirety appears to be incorporated into market logics and “worked up” for market profit.

That said, this study attempts to capture the ways in which ‘mommy’ bloggers, acting as a “multitude” of laborers, contribute to biopolitical production of ‘life’ as a marketable commodity. In the context of such transformations, ‘mommy’ lives and subjectivities as workers and mothers, and their ‘everyday’ experiences of reproductive labor, emerge as a site of and for commodification and consumption. The study, thus, explores how the mundane ‘everyday life’ routines are suffused with market logics and reduced to consumer choice. As such, this study attempts to navigate the ways in which ‘mommy’ blogging constructs the market as a prime locus of legitimation in society. In doing so, it contributes to exploring how ‘mommy’ blogging maintains itself by “translating” motherhood and motherly affects, ‘everyday’ routines and leisure activities, and lifestyles, into marketable commodities.

1.1 Research Problem

The ‘informationalization’ and digitalization of economy, amidst neoliberal restructuring of the global order, has enabled new modes of accumulation and labor to emerge (Hardt & Negri, 2000). More specifically, these new modes of labor are to be traced in the immaterial nexuses of creative and communications industries. The distinct feature that characterizes immaterial labor is located at the *intersection* and the blurring boundaries between productive and reproductive labor. This characteristic establishes immaterial labor as an activity where “the production of ‘life’ is no longer limited to the realm of reproduction, but rather “‘life’ determines production itself” (Hardt & Negri 2000). As such, ‘life’ emerges as a site of and for production and a terrain where commodification processes occur.

‘Mommy’ blogging as an immaterial labor activity, where the boundaries between production and reproduction blur, represents a site where such changes in the modes of labor and global order can be traced. These *experiences* emerge as a site of labor where the incorporation of ‘life’ to capitalist market logics occurs. Hence, this study attempts to capture the transformation of the boundaries between reproductive and productive labor as manifested in the affective labor practices of ‘mommy’ bloggers and explore the ways in which this transformation has implications in the biopolitical production of ‘life’ as a marketable commodity.

1.2 Purpose of the Research

I build my theoretical framework combining *immaterial labor and biopolitical production of ‘life’* to realize two aims:

First, I aim to explore the ways in which the commercialization and monetization of ‘mommy’ blogging effectuates a biopolitical production of ‘life’ as a marketable commodity. Departing from ‘everyday life’ and reproductive labor activities displayed in

the ‘mommy’ blogosphere, the study attempts to capture the ways in which ‘life’ in its entirety is immersed into market logics.

Secondly, I attempt to make extrapolations to the larger macro-developments happening amidst a global neoliberal restructuring of the global order. I use ‘everyday life’ activities observed in the ‘mommy’ blogosphere as an entry point to exploring the ideologically-charged superstructure where the relations of the economic base of capitalism are legitimated and reproduced.

In order to accomplish these aims, I attempt to answer the following research question and sub-questions.

1.3 Research Question

In what ways do the digitized affective labor practices in the ‘mommy’ blogosphere effectuate a biopolitical production of ‘life’ as a marketable commodity?

Sub-questions

- How are leisure activities, and routines and rhythms of everyday life within digitized affective labor incorporated into market logics?
- How are ‘mommy’ subjectivities deployed as a site for production and commodification?

1.4 Outline of the thesis

The thesis starts by laying out the macro-context in which the study is placed by introducing the shift to immaterial labor practices amidst a neoliberal, and subsequently, a biopolitical restructuring of the global order. I continue then with an introduction of ‘mommy’ bloggers through previous research. Afterwards, I establish the entry point to research that is inspired by the feminist political economies of the ‘everyday’. This

section establishes the ‘everyday’ practices in the ‘mommy’ blogosphere as an entry point to research to then make extrapolations to the larger macro-developments amidst a neoliberal re-structuring of both economy and everyday life.

The thesis then continues with establishing the theoretical framework that guides the work for the analysis. I start with laying out the epistemological commitment of the study which is built on Spike Peterson’s framing of reproductive, productive and virtual economy (RPV). I continue, then, with combining the concept of immaterial labor, biopolitical production and social factory as an analytical lens that enables the conceptualization of ‘life’ at the nexus of production and reproduction, ‘mommy’ blogging as a digitized form of affective labor and the ‘mommy’ blogosphere as a social factory.

The next chapter continues with the presentation of the methodological framework for this study. I use the three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis developed by Fairclough to conduct an interpretative analysis of the discursive practices deployed in the ‘mommy’ blogosphere to understand the dialectical relationship between semiosis/language and other elements of the social practice.

The thesis then continues with the analysis which focuses on four main emergent themes: enterprising of motherhood; commodification of the ‘everyday’ routines, rhythms and leisure; manufacturing of marketable fantasies; and re-defining and commodifying of ‘mommy’ subjectivities.

The last chapter includes concluding remarks and discussion, summarizing the findings and contextualizing them within theories of neoliberal governmentality.

1.5 Limitations

One of the limitation of this research is that it was conducted by a single researcher, thus, it is possible that a different researcher doing interpretative analysis would have reached other conclusions. In addition, the study is based solely on analyzing the discursive practices deployed in the ‘mommy’ blogosphere, therefore, one of the biggest concerns

is the absence of the ‘voices’ of ‘mommy’ bloggers. Other conclusions might have been reached, had other methods been applied.

Due to time limitations but also considerations regarding the labor-intensiveness of discourse analysis methods, the research is focused solely on analyzing three ‘mommy’ bloggers. This entails limitations in terms of the generalizations of findings for the entire ‘mommy’ blogosphere. On the other hand, the findings of this study might be specific to this genre of blogging and cannot be generalized for other modes of immaterial labor in the creative/communication industries. However, the theoretical framework is built as such that other forms of immaterial labor can be studied by employing it.

2 Background, previous research and entry point to research

2.1 Background and context

Ensuing a neoliberal restructuring of the global order and dissolving of state-bound *biopolitical* borders, occurring since the 1970s (Peterson 2003, 2005); a shift in economic paradigms to virtual economies, has transformed the nature of work towards “more immaterial and cybernetic forms of labor [...] defined in terms of culture and media” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, 2004). This shift has ignited changes in labor processes as “information, communication, knowledge, affects, and relationships have come to play a foundational role in the production process” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 289). This new form of labor – referred to as immaterial labor - is characterized less by the production of material and durable goods than the production and consumption of ephemeral tastes and desires (Hardt & Negri, 2000).

The rise of this paradigmatic form of labor occurs amidst a new biopolitical context in which the relationship between ‘life’ and capitalism is more intimate and deeper (Hardt & Negri, 2000). In this new relationship, ‘life’ and its quotidian needs and capabilities are suffused with market logics and transformed into a terrain for production and commodification, where the boundaries between productive and reproductive labor blur (Ibid). Such a transformation is particularly traceable in the *immaterial nexuses* of the “production of language and the symbolic”, more specifically, in various forms of immaterial labor (Hardt & Negri 2000, 2004).

This study argues that one of these immaterial nexuses is manifested in the encounters of personal experience with digital technology in the form of digitized affective labor. ‘Mommy’ blogging is established as such. In such an encounter, two intertwined forms of value production occur: emotional/affective and economic (Van Cleaf, 2015). The

affective value of ‘mommy’ blogging is generated from the “crowdsourcing of validation”, while the economic value is attained through the monetization of digital expressions of affect (in the form of digital content) by the proprietors of online platforms via advertising and website traffic (Van Cleaf 2015, p.248).

2.2 Previous research on ‘mommy’ blogging

Digital technologies have enabled the expansion of women’s intimate and personal narratives into our cultural register, especially through ‘mommy’ blogs. ‘Mommy’ blogs are a form of personal blogging that deal with motherhood through personal narratives focused on the everyday mundane aspects of life with children (Lopez, 2009; Morrison, 2011; Webb & Lee, 2011 in Van Cleaf 2017). Van Cleaf (2014, 2017) maintains that what sets these bloggers apart from the rest is the openness and honesty to talk about the daily drudgeries involved in raising children, differently from the glossy portrayal of motherhood in mainstream media (Van Cleaf, 2017). Precisely, this revealing of intimate intricacies of their lives as mothers, has enabled them to develop a sense of connection and community between bloggers and readers (Morrison, 2011).

Scholars who have studied ‘mommy’ bloggers have explored different aspects of their blogging activities. Many have explored how these mommy bloggers make visible the gendered norms of care, which are often overlooked in discussions of social media participation (Grant, 2013). Grant (2013) contends that women’s presence on digital platforms deliberates on their digital legitimacy as producers, rather than just consumers (Ibid). Pham (2013), on the other hand, investigates the “invisible technology of neoliberalism” that permeates the paradigmatic fantasy figure of the ‘mommy’ blogger as successful. This happens through a convergence of digital technology and neoliberal demands of entrepreneurship and self-help, and the intensification of commercial markets (Pham, 2013, p. 247). Taylor’s work (2016) explores more in-depth the classed dimensions of ‘mommy’ blogging as creative labor. She points out that both producers and consumers of ‘mommy’ blogs that are present in the creative economy are generally

white and middle-class. Other scholars, such as Christina Morini, have investigated the processes of feminization of the digital labor, arguing that practices of immaterial labor draw heavily on the baggage of female experience (2007, p. 41).

Important to this research, however, are studies of scholars who have looked at the monetization of ‘mommy’ blogs. Andrea Hunter (2016) examines the shifting landscape of ‘mommy’ blogging in the last decade, from a ‘radical act’ of exposing motherhood in its ‘raw’ form to a commercialized narrative of successful motherhood. Hunter, more specifically, investigates the resistances and backlash from the readers of ‘mommy’ blogs against this commercialization (2016).

The tensions surrounding the commercialization of ‘mommy’ blogging have been captured by several scholars, including, Hunter (2016), Kroløkke, et al., (2015), Kara Van Cleaf (2014, 2017). Van Cleaf’s work has been particularly inspirational and relevant for my research, as it explores aspects of monetization of ‘mommy’ blogging. Her work has mostly focused in exposing the falsehood of treating as “radical” the opportunity for mothers to capitalize on their online experiences instead of politicizing them. She argues that the imaginary saturating the ‘mommy’ blogosphere is that “the experience of motherhood can become an entrepreneurial activity online, even if the value sought by the mother-blogger is emotional” (Van Cleaf 2015, p.255). By that, she makes the case that even the “most” radical content put out by ‘mommy’ bloggers is “domesticated” online (Van Cleaf 2017, p.148).

A heavy focus on Van Cleaf’s analyses regarding the monetization of ‘mommy’ blogging is placed on the exposure of the long-standing gendered structures of work permeating the blogosphere, practically, of women’s engagement in reproductive labor confined to domesticity due to gendered expectations of childcare (Van Cleaf 2017). Although, newly positioned as paid work that “invests in mothers’ creative selves”, ‘mommy’ blogging is still confined to home and is undervalued (Ibid).

While monetization of ‘mommy’ blogging and some aspects related to it - such as feminization of labor, undervaluing of reproductive labor and depoliticization of the act of exposing motherhood - have been explored, other aspects have been less investigated. My study aims to further the research on ‘mommy’ blogging, by building upon this research on monetization and commercialization of narratives of motherhood. My study attempts to fill the gap in the exploration of monetization of ‘mommy’ blogging by contextualizing it in the new biopolitical context and the neo-liberal restructuring of global order. By doing so, the study attempts to capture the ways in which various aspects of ‘everyday’ life and reproductive labor – through the lens of motherhood - are incorporated into capitalist production processes and, subsequently, emerge as marketable commodities.

2.3 Entry point to research: Locating the ‘everyday’ in ‘mommy’ blogging

Feminist perspectives have long stressed the importance of recognizing how the ‘mundane matters’ in understanding broader processes of global change. Cynthia Enloe’s work has been important in demonstrating how the long-held feminist motto ‘the personal is political’ should be expanded to understand how in fact ‘the personal is international’ and how the ‘international is personal’, as well (Enloe, 1989). Enloe’s call to conceptualize global political economy in such a way invites us to think “how everyday lives are enmeshed in broader power relations and structures [...] takes shape via everyday actions” (Elias & Roberts, 2016). Embodied experiences of ‘everyday life’ help in identifying the ways in which global economic discourses and practices manifest themselves on a more personal level through affective experiences of work (ibid).

Feminist scholars have engaged with the ‘everyday’ in various ways to point to the link between micro- and macro-developments. Whereas they have engaged with various conceptualizations of the ‘everyday’, I choose - for the purposes of my study - to engage with Henry Lefebvre’s notion of everyday life to do that. For Lefebvre, everyday life is a

dialectical unity between three elements: work, leisure, and family (Davies & Niemann, 2002, p. 570). The totality and unity of these three aspects is dialectical in the sense that each of the elements excludes the others, yet they form an identifiable whole. Everyday life is thus characterized by ‘routine’: daily reproduction at home with the family, and leisure activities outside of the home and work (Ibid). This conceptualization of everyday life points to a way of defining it as a time and a space not organized by the demands of work and the production process, which are determined for the worker in line with the requirements of capital (Davies & Niemann, 2002, pp. 570-571).

Having established that, it is important to move to an understanding of the relationship of the everyday life in the context of ‘informationalization’, which pertains to the idea that lives are ever more dominated by technologies (Hardt and Negri 2000, p. 291). The new media technologies provide us with a unique opportunity to capture the “in between” of life that occurs in the ‘minutiae’ of the everyday life. Technology triggers a “technical expansion” of the ‘self’, which allows for a more intense experience of subjectivity (Hansen, 2009, p. 589). Blogs, especially, do this work of capturing and expanding smaller units of everyday lived experience — “moving into the daily rhythms of our lives, recording easily forgotten moods, capturing bodily changes, and registering the mundane moments of motherhood” (Van Cleaf, 2015, p. 77).

Digital technology taps into our embodied states. Evermore so, online spaces politicize ‘everyday life’ in new ways by memorializing the ‘mundane’ and transforming the private to public (Gray 2009; Shaw 2011, Somolu 2007, Maddrell 2012 in Morrow et.al, 2014). That is why, the capturing of ‘mundane’ everyday aspects of life is particularly possible in the blogosphere. Mostly because ‘mommy’ blogging is a form of personal blogging that deals exclusively with motherhood and parenting through personal narratives on the mundane and quotidian aspects of life with children (Lopez, 2009; Morrison, 2011).

3 Theoretical framework

This section of the study establishes the theoretical framework that guides the work for the analysis. I start with laying out the frame of this study which is built on Spike Peterson's reproductive, productive and virtual economy (RPV) framing that rejects the conventional divide of economy from culture, productive from reproductive labor, and agent from structure. This establishes the bigger picture of the macro-developments in terms of the transformations of the modes of labor as a result of the shifts towards informational/virtual economies. This serves two purposes: firstly, it sets out the epistemological commitment of the thesis to study economies post-structurally; and secondly, it places the labor of 'mommy' bloggers at the intersection of RPV.

In the following part of the theoretical framework, I combine the concept of immaterial labor, biopolitical production and social factory as an analytical lens that enables an understanding of the biopolitical production of 'life' as a marketable commodity. More specifically, I do that by combining these theories to conceptualize three important aspects that will guide the analysis: *'life'* at the nexus of production and reproduction; 'mommy' blogging as a digitized form of affective labor; and, the 'mommy' blogosphere as a social factory.

I establish, then, a connection between the paradigmatic shifts of modes of labor and the emergence of a new biopolitical context. Hardt and Negri (2000, 2004) argue that this new biopolitical context is characterized less by disciplinary and restrictive forces than by a productive relationship between 'life' and capitalism that is far more intimate than Foucault had argued for. Here I introduce the concept of *biopolitical production* of 'life' to capture "the transformation of 'life' and all its quotidian needs and capabilities into a terrain for commodification. Since Hardt and Negri note that this biopolitical dimension can be traced at the immaterial nexuses emerging in the creative/communication

industries, I then present ‘mommy’ blogging as one of the modes of immaterial labor, more particularly, as a digitized form of affective labor.

To understand the link between the digitized forms of affective labor among ‘mommy’ bloggers and the biopolitical production of ‘life’, I engage with the debate about reproductive and productive labor between Marxist feminist perspectives and Autonomist Marxist perspectives (represented by Hardt and Negri). I engage with the debate to demonstrate how the digitized forms of affective labor exhibited in the ‘mommy’ blogging’ niche are a manifestation of the blurring boundaries between production and reproduction. This, in turn, serves to highlight the ways in which ‘life’ in its entirety is put to ‘work’ in a social factory (‘factory without walls’) where “all of life to its times, spaces, rhythms, purposes, and values” is governed by capital. I close the theoretical framework chapter with the conceptualization of the blogosphere as a ‘social factory’. The concept of ‘social factory’ serves to highlight how in a context of de-territorialized, dispersed and decentralized labor, the whole society is placed at the disposal of profit in a ‘factory without walls’. I do so to emphasize that the ‘mommy’ blogosphere emerges as the “ultimate” social factory, where work processes have shifted from the factory to society and ‘life’ itself is put to work for capital.

3.1 Reproductive, Productive and Virtual economy (RPV) framing

Arguing of a shift to neo-liberal re-structuring of the global order amidst globalization processes occurring since the 1970s, Spike Peterson develops an analytical framing that attempts to rewrite global political economy as the *interaction* of reproductive, productive, and virtual economies (Peterson, 2003). She understands these three economies post-structurally, as mutually constituted systemic sites by material effects, social practices, and institutional structures, thus pointing to the conceptual, cultural and subjective dimensions of these sites (Peterson, 2005, p. 4). Peterson’s reference to economies is Foucauldian, in the sense that they are conceived as mutually constituted, coexisting and interactive systemic sites through and across which power operates

(Peterson, 2003). As such, the reproductive, productive, and virtual economies expand the landscape of inquiry beyond conventional economics phenomena. As systemic sites of power, “involving meaning systems, normalization, subjectivities, and institutions”, they allow to map “identities and culture *in relation to* conventional social practices, processes, and structures” (Peterson, 2002, p. 5).

As a means to offering a more nuanced and ‘realistic’ framing for the study of global political economy, Peterson establishes the reproductive, productive, and virtual economies as *interacting, overlapping and co-existing* economies (Peterson, 2002). In fact, the ‘RPV framing’ intends to shift thinking from positivist disciplinary orientations that impair understanding of the social to analyzing symbols and structures as mutually constitutive (Ibid). Though analytically distinguishable, the three economies are to be understood as “not only overlapping but mutually constituted and always dynamic”, and the framing itself is “cross-disciplinary, multi-institutional, multi-level, and ‘multicausal’” (Peterson, 2002, p.6; 2003; 2005).

Her framing of three (RPV) intersecting economies brings together the conceptual and material dimensions of ‘social **reproduction**,’ non-wage labor, and informalization into relation with the global, flexibilized, information-based and service-oriented ‘**productive** economy,’ as well as with the ‘**virtual** economy’ of commodified knowledge, and the exchange less of goods than of signs (Peterson, 2005). Such framing posits “**identities** (sexualities, subjectivity and self-formation,), **meaning systems** (discourse, ideologies and symbols), and **social practices/institutions** (social structures and actions) as co-constituting dimensions of social reality” in an unmatched fusion of culture and economy afforded by information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Peterson, 2003, p. 119). The economic phenomena are deeply rooted in social relations, and the social as multi-dimensional and relational, RPV framing rejects the separation of culture from economy, agent from structure, productive from reproductive, and domestic from international politics (Peterson, 2003, p. 38). As a means to conceptualize a shift from the binary inclinations of conventional framing, the RPV framing serves as a heuristic device which posits identities (subjectivity and self-formation), meaning systems

(symbols, discourse, ideologies), and social practices (actions and social structures/institutions) as *co-constituting* dimensions of social reality (Peterson, 2003). Analytically speaking, the interaction between the three makes possible a model for investigation and interpretation of complex social phenomena as the three dimensions - “*who we are,*” “*how we think,*” and “*what we do*” – are integrated (Peterson, 2003; 2005; 2009).

This analytical framework is part of my epistemological commitment to examine identities, ideas and practices as co-constituting aspects of the economy; as the subjective identities of agents in the reproductive, productive and virtual economy are inextricable from the traditionally conceived ‘economic’ activities. I place ‘mommy’ blogging at the intersection of reproductive, productive and virtual economy. I recognize it as a labor activity that not only comprises symbolic and cultural codes, but also causes the reconfiguration of social power and the construction of desires, identities and ideologies (Peterson, 2003, p. 119).

In the virtual mode of economy, *information* - encompassing knowledge, ideas, codes, concepts - *is* the commodity itself (Peterson, 2005). Virtual/informational economy, hence, comprises a transformation of knowledge, thinking and cultural codes (Peterson, 2005, p. 11). Because information is inherently conceptual, its function as a commodity entangles culture and economy. Once incorporated as commodity, the value of *information, product or experience* is subsumed to market logic (Peterson, 2003; Peterson, 2005). A closer integration of the symbolic and the material transforms lived ‘everyday experience’ into commodifiable and, thus, integrates into a system of exchange and capital accumulation (Peterson, 2003, p. 137). The production processes of running of a blog is enmeshed in the production of everyday life as it marks a profound shift in the relationship of conceptual and material production (Peterson 2003, p.133). In such a context, the suffusion of capitalist logics throughout the ‘whole’ of life is rendered possible due to work incorporating “inalienable and social aspects of an individual and communities such as affect, communicative capacity and cognition” (Jarrett, 2016, p. 53)

The commodification of information, on the other hand, spurs a fusion of economy and culture. The exchange of aesthetic or cultural symbols/signs, in a context of heightened consumerism, comprises a mode of the virtual economy, which is core to understanding the laboring practices in the blogosphere. This encompasses the construction of a *social imaginary* of desires and tastes, and the marketization of tastes, pleasure, and leisure (Peterson, 2005). The cultural symbols and aesthetics present in the laboring practices in the blogosphere emphasize how the signs, symbols, codes of these commodities are invested with cultural meaning and value. This points to how in the new context of the transformation of modes of labor, capital centers less on creating consumer goods than on producing subjectivities and a totalizing market culture that boosts consumption (Peterson, 2005, p. 11). “Aestheticization of commodities” fuses economic and cultural activity by penetrating *everyday life*, and subsequently, legitimating consumerist imperatives (Peterson, 2005, p. 12). This is backed up by Terranova (2000) who develops the concept of “aestheticization of everyday life” to explain that economic and cultural shifts linked with immaterial labor are built on activities that blur the distinction between labor, leisure and domesticity.

3.2 Immaterial labor and the biopolitical production of ‘life’

In the previous section, I have already presented Peterson’s RPV framing in the context of a restructuring of the global order towards new economic/informational paradigm that gravitates towards new modes of labor. Hardt and Negri (2000, 2004, 2009) argue that the shift to this new paradigm, occurring since the 1970s, is embedded within a form of capitalism that is “cognitive” and is characterized by “an informatized, automated, networked and globalized production process” that not only leads to a transformation in the working subject; but also puts *language, knowledge and emotion* at the heart of production and reproduction within society (Hardt & Negri, 2000).

Such transformations have a fundamental impact also in the *biopolitical* structuring of the global order (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 32). The biopolitical production of this new order, as they suggest, is to be traced in the *immaterial nexuses* of the production of language, communication, and the symbolic produced within communications industries (Hardt & Negri, 2000); more precisely in those sites that Hardt & Negri conceptualize as *immaterial labor* (Hardt & Negri, 2000 in Lemke, 2011, p. 67). They distinguish between three aspects of immaterial labor:

The first is involved in an industrial production that has been informationalized and has incorporated communication technologies in a way that transforms the production process itself. [...] Second is the immaterial labor of analytical and symbolic tasks, which itself breaks down into creative and intelligent manipulation on the one hand and routine symbolic tasks on the other. Finally, a third type of immaterial labor involves the production and manipulation of affect and requires (virtual or actual) human contact, labor in the bodily mode. These are the three types of labor that drive the postmodernization of the global economy (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 293)

Immaterial labor is attuned towards the minutiae of human existence. As this form of labor pertains to appropriation of affect and the capacity to “generate and circulate feelings, emotive responses, passions and aspirations” (Hardt, 1999), “productive labor is no longer that which directly produces capital, but that which reproduces society” (Negri 1996:157). It is not only confined to economic phenomena, but it also includes social formation (Lemke, 2011, p. 67). This is because affective labor, both virtual and real, is centered on manipulation of affects and the products of such labor are relationships and emotional responses: “feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement or passion” (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 96).

Hardt and Negri borrowed Foucault’s concept of biopolitics to theorize on immaterial labor but put it through an important revision that is crucial in building the theoretical foundation of my study. In transforming the concept of biopolitics developed by Foucault, Hardt and Negri identify a transformation in the relationship between ‘life’ and capitalism that is far more intimate than Foucault had argued for. In their trilogy *Empire* (2000),

Multitude (2004) and Commonwealth, Hardt and Negri put forth the concept of *biopolitical production of 'life'*, which is formed at the intersection of two predispositions of the contemporary capitalist society: the increasing importance of style and language in the production of commodities and “the transformation of “life” and its quotidian needs and capabilities into a terrain for commodification and production, (Hardt and Negri 2000 in Read, 2001, pp. 27-28).

Biopolitical production designates the ontological process in which the social reality is materially produced (Negri & Hardt, 2000, 2004). This means that *the production of 'life' is no longer limited to the realm of reproduction and subordinated to the labor process, but rather 'life' determines production itself* (Hardt and Negri in Lemke 2011, p.69). Hardt and Negri’s “biopolitical” expands the delineations of what is considered “life.” ‘Life’ is no longer produced solely in the cycles of reproduction. On the contrary, ‘life’ is what infuses and dominates all production (Hardt and Negri in Read 2001, p.28). ‘Life’, in their conceptualization, does not merely constitute biological elements, but in fact comprises the entirety of embodied existence such as affects and desire (Ibid). Not only “bare life” becomes productive for capital, but in fact everything that constitutes a “form of life” - including desires, communities, styles and ways of communicating (Read, 2001, p. 28). All facets of social life, “networks of communication, information, linguistic forms, the production of knowledge, collaborative social relationships, affects and the producers themselves” are incorporated in it (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 32). This biopolitical production highlights how directly it engages ‘life’ in its entirety (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 94). In their words:

Biopower is a form of power that regulates social life from its interior, following it, interpreting it, absorbing it, and rearticulating it. Power can achieve an effective command over the entire life of the population only when it becomes an integral, vital function that every individual embraces and reactivates of his or her own accord (Negri & Hardt, 2000, pp. 23-24)

In this new biopolitical context, Hardt and Negri (2000) see the emergence of a “multitude”. In their terms, the “multitude” represents “the heterogenous and creative

whole of actors who move within power relations, without invoking a higher authority or an underlying identity” (Hardt & Negri in Lemke 2011, p.71). At its core, the multitude is a “deterritorializing” force, as it challenges any categorizations of identity based on territorial boundaries. The “multitude”, thus, owes its formation to the new conditions of production within a “globalized biopolitical machine” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 40). This has implications on the global contemporary capitalist social order, as “the institutions, infrastructure, and cultural practices associated with globalization”, express “capital's attempt to immanently produce and manage social order in the model suggested by the multitude” (Hardt & Negri in Grove & Coleman, 2009, p. 501). This speaks of a “society of control” in which power “extends throughout the depths of consciousness and bodies of the population and at the same time across the entirety of social relations” (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p.24).

Biopolitical production of ‘life’, in this sense, emerges out of “the most deterritorialized recesses already carved out by the multitude of laborers” (Hardt & Negri in Grove & Coleman, 2009, p. 502). This suggests that capital works everywhere “through relays and networks of domination, without reliance on a transcendent center of power” and it ‘subsumes’ the entirety of the social field (Grove & Coleman, 2009, pp. 501-502).

Drawing from Marx, Hardt and Negri conceptualize this as the “real” subsumption of society under capital, as society is more intensively fashioned by capital (2000, p. 255). In the “formal” subsumption of life, capitalist forms - wage labor, the commodity, money - are imposed on a preceding ‘non-capitalist’ domain (Ibid). Whereas, in the ‘real’ subsumption, *desires, subjectivities and needs* constantly attune along with capital. The processes of capital accumulation transpire throughout the spheres of reproduction (Hardt & Negri, 2000).

3.3 ‘Life’ at the nexus of productive and reproductive labor

Above, I have laid out how in the new biopolitical context the ‘real’ subsumption of life under capital occurs throughout the spheres of reproduction. It is, thus, crucial here to understand the link between reproductive labor and the affective labor practices of

‘mommy’ bloggers. Establishing such link is important for understanding how social reproduction emerges as a site of production, as the boundaries between ‘life’ and ‘work’ are increasingly dissolved. To do so, I engage with the debate on social reproduction put forth by Marxist feminists, so as to understand the need for a broader notion of social reproductive labor, especially in a context of ‘informationalization’ and digitalization that contributes to transforming the boundaries between production and reproduction.

Feminist perspectives on social reproduction identify three key components of it, consisting in: unpaid production of both goods and services in the home; biological reproduction and the provision of sexual, emotional, and affective services; and, the reproduction of culture and ideology (Rai & Bedford, 2010, p. 8). Modes of immaterial labor, particularly those pertaining to affective labor, have been predominantly associated with unwaged domestic labor and limited to the space of the household (Oksala 2015, p. 287). Feminist scholar, Kathi Weeks, however argues for a rejection of the traditional Marxist feminist category of reproductive labor that is focused solely on practices of unwaged work through which daily needs for food, shelter, biological reproduction and care are met (2011).

Instead, Weeks propounds that in contemporary capitalism, social reproduction is to be conceived in a broader sense than reproductive labor confined to domesticity (2011, p. 29). As commodities are substituting domestically produced goods and services, and forms of household and care work; a narrow notion of labor is no longer sufficient (Weeks, 2007, pp. 235-236). A broader understanding of affective labor encompasses “the production of the forms of social cooperation on which capitalist accumulation depends as capital continually seeks to govern all of life to its times, spaces, rhythms, purposes, and values” (Weeks 2011 in Oksala 2015, p.287).

But some feminist scholars, have argued that the blurring of the boundaries between work and that which is “life” is not a new development emerging from recent changes in modes of labor linked to technological change (Jarrett, 2016). The emotional/affective labor performed by women in the form of social reproductive labor has always been part of capitalist logics and it is not a new formation of labor (Federici, 2011). As Jarrett (2016)

notes, the gendered dimension of immaterial labor has been overlooked, arguing that immaterial labor only received scholarly attention when it moved “out of the kitchen and onto the Internet”. The old lesson, Van Cleaf argues, returns via the digital: blogging motherhood creates value (online communities, profits, site traffic) for capital enterprises just as motherhood per se creates value (communities, profits, humans, and workers) for capital (2014, p. 45).

Such a conceptualization, in fact, puts to light how feminist perspectives have persistently incorporated the reproductive sphere into the discussions of what constitutes productive labor and what kind of labor produces value for capital. However, they have overlooked the role of ‘informationalization’ and digitalization in changing the boundaries between productive and reproductive labor.

3.4 ‘Mommy blogging’ as a digitized form of affective labor

Affect’s relationship to digital labor is relevant in the context of ‘mommy’ blogs. Because of their affective functions, these blogs represent this conflation between affect and the digital. This convergence represents a conjuncture of political, economic, and social importance, because ‘mommy’ blogs are sites of overlap between work and leisure (Taylor, 2016, p. 124). This overlap indicates economic opportunity for ‘mommy’ bloggers. The concept of cyber commodification frames this better as it refers to the monetization of “items that we would not normally think of as financial concepts [...]” (Cherry, 2013, p. 389).

As communication technologies and their model of interaction become dominant to laboring activities in cognitive capitalism (Gill & Pratt, 2008, p. 8), ‘value’ is ever more so extracted from relational and emotional elements (Morini, 2007, p. 40). The expansion and insertion of technology into daily rhythms magnifies the circulation of affect (Van Cleaf 2014, 2017). This is because digital platforms “attach to our bodies, measure our

states of being and record the intimate moments of our lives” (Van Cleaf, 2017, p. 450). The cultural storyline of motherhood, of the mother’s labor of love, also saturates the blogosphere, which establishes ‘mommy’ blogging as a digitized form of affective labor (Van Cleaf, 2017, p. 449).

‘Mommy’ blogs highlight everyday work of care performed by mothers, as the blogs register all the mundane moments of daily life. They illuminate motherhood as an “episodic attunement of fleeting moments, moods and affects that accompany the work of care” (Van Cleaf, 2017, p. 450) This is particularly rendered possible through the ‘mommy’ bloggers’ ability to draw the readers into a feeling of “family-like” intimacy (Van Cleaf, 2017). Just as family unity necessitates intensive emotional labor by the mother, predominantly (Hochschild, 1983); ‘mommy’ bloggers digitize similar emotional labor to connect their readers to their blogs through deployment of affect and inhabiting ‘femininity’ and motherhood.

Through digital technologies, the affective dimensions related to “processes of laboring, socializing, and entertaining” get put “to work” (Clough 2007 in Van Cleaf 2017). Affect, “unconscious and preconscious capacities and machinations of all forms of life” – basically everything - gets put to work (Van Cleaf, 2014, pp. 21-22). In such an arrangement, reproductive labor also changes. Adkins and Dever note: “[R]ather than as a form of labour which works simply to replenish, replace or restore social energy, that is, to reproduce the social this labour is now organised and valued for its promissory potential” (2016, p. 124). This is tightly related to the ability of capital to invest in and amplify affect, especially that which lies at the “excess of subjectivity”, meaning that the subject of “mother” or “woman” itself finds circulation and value (Clough 2007 in Van Cleaf 2017).

In understanding this “excess of subjectivity” amidst transformations pertaining to a new neoliberal order, it is substantial to employ theories about the neoliberal subject – the subject promoted and ‘governed’ in neoliberal economies where immaterial labor is the hegemonic form of labor. As many scholars maintain, the understanding of neoliberalism should not be reduced to “a bundle of economic policies with inadvertent political and

social consequences”, but rather should be extended to address its political rationality that enables it to expand beyond the market (Bakker, 2007, p. 550). When neoliberalism is deployed as a form of governmentality, market values spread out to all institutions and social relations, molding them in accordance with private sector and market rules (Ibid). As Bakker argues, the political sphere is, thus, succumbed to “microeconomic rationality with the intention of submitting all aspects of human life to concepts of market efficiency and rationality” (Bakker, 2007, p. 551).

Within neoliberal regimes, the “rational, calculating sphere and the sphere of love, reproduction, and regeneration” collapses (Feher, 2009). As the categories of capital and labor have disintegrated, pulling the production of the ‘self’ to the market, “every sphere of life is mined for value or experiences that create value for the subject” (Feher, 2009, p. 29). Feher calls this new subject, the “human capital” (Feher, 2009, p.24). These subjects targeted by neoliberalism are to be conceived as the “managers of a portfolio of conducts pertaining to all the aspects of their lives” (Feher, 2009, pp. 29-30).

As a mode of immaterial labor, digitized affective labor manifests itself as an activity that produces the cultural content of the commodity (Lazzarato, 1996), the “raw material” of which is subjectivity, and the “ideological” environment in which this subjectivity lives and reproduces (Lazzarato, 1996; Hardt & Negri, 2000, 2004). Subjectivity represents both the *base element* of production and the *product* of production, as elaborated by Lazzarato:

“If production today is directly the production of a social relation, then the ‘raw material’ of immaterial labor is subjectivity and the ‘ideological’ environment in which this subjectivity lives and reproduces. The production of subjectivity ceases to be only an instrument of social control and becomes directly productive because the goal of our postindustrial society is to construct the consumer/communicator - and to construct it as ‘active’. (Lazzarato, 2004 [online])

3.5 The ‘mommy’ blogosphere as social factory

The collapsing of distinction between work that can be appropriated by capital and that which is ‘life’ highlights how work processes have shifted from the ‘factory’ to society. In Hardt and Negri’s conceptualization, the ‘real’ subsumption of life under capital is ascribed to the social factory, as it represents a site where the intermeshing of sociality with the ‘prescriptions’ of capital is mobilized and the saturation of the whole life to market logics occurs (Hardt & Negri in Jarrett, 2016, pp. 53-56). A social factory, in their terms, represents the social and cultural institutions that “interpellate” subjects towards particular kinds of work-relations that become indispensable in the continuity of the capitalist mode of production (Jarrett, 2016, p. 56).

For a new mode of production such as capital to be established, it is not sufficient for it to simply form a new economy, it must “institute itself in the quotidian dimensions of existence – it must become habit” (Jarrett, 2016). Therefore, in a new biopolitical context in which “all of life to its times, spaces, rhythms, purposes, and values” are governed by capital in a ‘factory without walls’, the intensification of control over the social factory’ occurs via the labor practices of a “multitude” of workers (Hardt, 2005; Gill & Pratt, 2008, p. 7) That is because labor is de-territorialized, dispersed and decentralized, and ‘the whole society is placed at the disposal of profit’ (Negri, 1989: 79).

The blogosphere where ‘mommy’ bloggers perform their labor activities, thus emerge as the ultimate social factory, whereby “work processes have shifted from the factory to society” and ‘life’ itself is put to work for capital (Ritzer, et al., 2012, p. 383).

4 Methodology

4.1 A brief introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis

Manifestations in the virtual economy compel us to employ a poststructuralist lens that caters to interpretation (Peterson, 2005, p. 10). Interpretivism is understood here as “a postpositivist orientation that understands language, knowledge and power as mutually constituted” (Peterson, 2003, p. 14). When language and thought become the primary sources of the production of wealth, labor becomes biopolitical (Hardt & Negri, 2000). It is important, therefore, for my study to begin with the study of language to address the “biopolitical” of affective labor.

Within the context of an “informatized, automated, networked and globalized production processes [...] leading to transformation of working subject, language, among other dimensions, is central to production and reproduction in society (Negri & Hardt 2000 in Lemke, 2011, p. 67). That is why this study makes use of a poststructuralist approach and method such as Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (hereinafter referred to as “CDA”), which puts language and discourse at the center.

CDA encompasses a variety of approaches towards the social analysis of discourse. These approaches may differ in the type of research issues, theory and methodology they apply. Methodologically, the version of CDA that I apply, entails working ‘trans-disciplinarily’ by engaging with other theories that address contemporary processes of social change (Fairclough, 2012, p. 2), such as the concept of biopolitical production that I have already introduced in the theoretical framework. This version of CDA is especially concerned with contemporary processes of social change - associated with neoliberalism, globalization, knowledge-based economy, and so on - in their discursive aspect. Theoretically, CDA holds a dialectical view of the relationship between discourse and

other elements of social practices. Also, the analysis oscillates between structure and agency.

The objective of undertaking such a CDA, also in line with the theoretical framework, is to explore the ways in which *social changes* are *changes in discourse*. This entails an exploration of the relations between changes in discourse and changes in non-discursive elements of social reality (Fairclough, 2001). The aim is also to identify the linguistic, semiotic and “interdiscursive” features of texts which are a part of the processes of social change. Interdiscursivity pertains to the way various that categories, such as genres, discourses and styles are articulated together. In the context of this study, interdiscursivity is crucial. It allows the incorporation of the elements of “context” or the macro-developments into the analysis of texts, to demonstrate the relationship between actual discursive events and more “durable” social practices. Interdiscursivity has a mediating role in enabling the detailed linguistic and semiotic features of texts to be connected with processes of social change on a broader scale (Fairclough, 2012, p. 457).

The CDA that I apply for this study considers discourse as one among many aspects of social practice. Discourse pertains to “semiotic elements of social practices”, such as language, non-verbal communication, visual images, and so on (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 38). Discursive practices – through which texts and visuals are produced (created) and consumed (received and interpreted) – are an important form of social practice which contributes to the constitution of the social world (Fairclough, 1995). In the context of my study, the Instagram and blog posts manifest as the discursive practice through which I understand practices of affective labor. It should be noted here that the concept of discourse is reserved for *semiological* systems to keep it distinct from other non-discursive dimensions of social practice (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 18).

4.1.1 Epistemological frame: The concepts of power, ideology and hegemony in CDA

The aim of conducting *critical* analysis of discourses is about scrutinizing the power relations in society and identifying and challenging the normativity of such relations

(Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 2). I combine Fairclough's conceptualization of power, with Hardt and Negri's, as they both depart from Foucault's theory of power. In such conceptualizations, power is understood as closely connected to discourse and is spread across different social practices, and it manifests as "productive, constituting discourse, knowledge, bodies and subjectivities" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 13).

For the purposes of a methodologically sound study, Hardt and Negri's conceptualization is employed. For Hardt and Negri, power is not transcendent and external to productive and social relations, but rather it is *immanent* to such relations and formed inside of them (2000, p.33). It is because of that, they argue, that communications industries have such a central position in organizing production in a new scale and making its justification immanent. In their words:

"Power, as it produces, organizes; as it organizes, it speaks and expresses itself as authority. [...] The imaginary and the symbolic [...] integrate within the biopolitical fabric, not merely putting them at the service of power, but integrating them into its very functioning"
(Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 33).

Engaging "biopolitically" and understanding the "workings" of power is crucial for my study, enabling an understanding of two "interconnected poles of modern governance", the micro level (individual) and the macro level (Bazzul, 2017). Comprehending larger discourses and ideologies facilitates an understanding of what is happening at the individual level and vice-versa.

An important aspect of CDA is 'ideology', referring to the '*meaning in the service of power*' (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 14). Ideologies are constructions of meaning that contribute to the production, reproduction and transformation of relations of domination (Fairclough 1992b: 87; cf. Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999: 26f.). Fairclough's understanding of ideology draws on Thompson's view of ideology as a practice that operates in processes of meaning production in everyday life, where *meaning* is mobilized to maintain relations of power (Thompson, 1990). Discourses can be ideological to different degrees - the ideological discourses being those that contribute to the upholding and transformation of power relations. Ideology has material effects as discourse

contributes to the creation and constant recreation of the relations, subjects and objects which inhabit the social world (Fairclough, 1995, p. 73) .

On the other hand, the political concept of *hegemony* is crucial in CDA as it provides the means to scrutinize how discursive practices are part of a larger social practice involving power relations. In this sense, the discursive practice is an aspect of a hegemonic struggle that contributes to the reproduction and transformation of the order of discourse of which it is part of. An order of discourse constitutes the ideological facet of an unstable hegemony (Fairclough, 1995). For this study, hegemony is particularly useful in tracing how hegemony is always open to contestation, as the orders of discourse (upholding it are not a closed system, but rather an open system, which can be changed by what happens in actual interactions (Fairclough, 2012, p. 456).

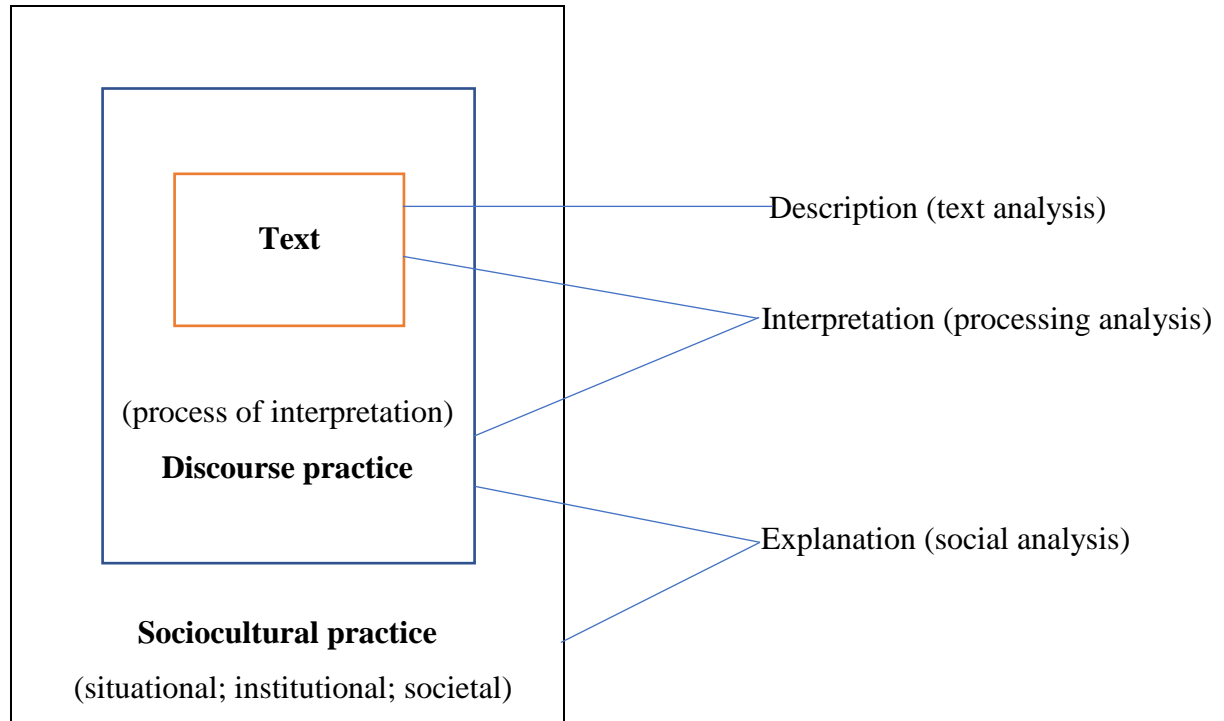
4.2 Analytical approach: Three-dimensional model of discourse analysis

On more practical terms as to how the critical discourse analysis is to be employed for this research, I use Fairclough's three-dimensional method of discourse analysis. Fairclough's approach is a text-oriented form of discourse analysis that unites three traditions (Fairclough, 1992, p. 72):

- 1) Detailed textual analysis within the field of linguistics;
- 2) Macro-sociological analysis of social practice;
- 3) Micro-sociological, interpretative tradition within sociology where everyday life is understood as product of individual's actions following shared 'common-sense' norms.

Drawing from both a macro-sociological and micro-sociological tradition is beneficial for my study. A macro-sociological perspective allows for an understanding of social practices as shaped by social structures and power relations of which subjects are not always aware of. On the other hand, the interpretative tradition encourages an understanding of how individuals actively produce a norm-bound world in their everyday

practices (Fairclough, 1992). In his three-dimensional model, Fairclough distinguishes between discursive practice, text and social practice as three levels that can be analytically separated. In the following section, I present how I look at all three levels.



Discursive Practice: My analysis of the discursive practice will focus on how the texts (and images) are produced and how they are consumed. Analyzing the consumption of the blogging materials is a substantial part of the analysis. A full understanding of the activity of blogging is only possible through the examination of not solely bloggers and the blogs they produce, but also of the readers and their interactions with the blog and the blogger” (Baumer, et al., 2008, p. 2). It is thus crucial to deeply engage with the study to understand the communities formed through blogging and the boundaries and membership of these communities (Baumer, et al., 2008, pp. 39-40).

These will give me insights into the ways in which texts treat social relations and thereby construct versions of reality and social relations. As the relationship between texts (including written and visual) and social practice is mediated by discursive practice. Hence it is only through discursive practice – whereby people use language to produce and consume texts – that the blog materials shape and are shaped by social practice. The

analysis of communicative events – blog posts (text and images), and Instagram stories, etc., will include:

- *analysis of the language*
- *analysis of the discourses and genres* which are articulated in the production and the consumption of the text (the level of discursive practice);
- considerations about whether the *discursive practice reproduces or, instead, restructures the existing order of discourse* and about what consequences this has for the broader social practice (the level of social practice).

Practices in the ‘mommy’ blogosphere have a partially discursive and partially material aspect. They are discourses that are materially grounded. That is why the theoretical framework is not only built on political economic theory but incorporates the theoretical aspects of CDA in understanding the dialectics of discourse, and how discursive understanding of the world constructs and reconstructs the world, “without losing sight of the material reality of the world” (Fairclough, 2012, p. 464).

Social Practice: After analyzing the text/visual images as discursive practice, my focus turns to the broader social practice of which these dimensions are part of. According to Fairclough, there are two aspects to this contextualization: the relationship between the discursive practice and its order of discourse, which comprises the mapping of the partly non-discursive, social and cultural relations and structures that constitute the wider context of the discursive practice (Fairclough, 1992, p. 237).

It is the analysis of the relationship between discursive practice and the broader social practice that provide me with the opportunity to arrive to the conclusions of this study. The findings of the study address the ideological consequences of ‘mommy’ blogging, more specifically focusing on how the discursive practices transform the order of discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 86), especially the discourse of motherhood as a labor of love.

4.3 Research design and strategy

The CDA approach that I adopt entails an *abductive research strategy*. For my study, abduction involves “constructing theories based on social actors’ language, meanings and accounts” (Montesano Montessori, 2011, p. 175). I start the research with describing the activities and then deriving from them concepts that contribute to understanding the problem that is being researched. This study adopts the viewpoint in CDA, which considers abduction as a “constant movement between theory and empirical data” (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009 in Montesano Montessori, 2011, p.175). This abductive approach that I take consists in a first reading of Instagram and blog posts for emergent themes using an *open coding* process. Through an iterative process, I “test” these against newly emergent themes. I do this by performing a more focused coding at a later stage of the research. As my theoretical framework developed further, I was able to employ theoretical coding. This means that the coding for this study comes from both empirical data and theoretical considerations.

This choice is inspired by the situatedness of the research in a post-structural framework, which requires a dialogue between theory, methodology and data, in order to make sense of the social processes that I seek to understand. The analysis is performed following the three dimensions distinguished in section 4.2 above. The outcome of each analytical stage was related to the relevant three levels of abstraction in CDA. The primary tool of analysis that I utilize to track progression of data collection and ongoing analysis is analytic memo writing.

4.4 Choice of Material

4.4.1 Purposive sampling of ‘mommy’ bloggers

My study draws on purposive sampling of ‘mommy’ blogs that are publicly available and whose blogging activities have been monetized to certain extents. While other bloggers,

such as those promoting fashion, beauty and make-up, are also interesting to study by using the same theoretical framework that I have developed, they do not provide such an opportunity to investigate the biopolitical dimension of affective labor as ‘mommy’ bloggers do. Mostly, because ‘mommy’ blogging makes reproductive labor visible to a greater extent and highlights affective labor more distinctly. However, the choice of my material and the method itself is less an attempt to define or document the entire genre of ‘mommy’ blogging than a way to understand and explore at the interpretive level the biopolitical dimension of this ‘online niche’.

Blogs, on the other hand, offer novel opportunities to capture “all the baggage of self-reporting (honesty, accuracy, memory) personal information” (Wilkinson and Thelwall 2001 in Van Cleaf, p.37), because they offer a “publicly available, low cost and instantaneous technique for collecting substantial amounts of data” (Hookway 2008:92). Hookway claims that blogs are a more “naturalistic” means of collecting personal information because “the anonymity of the online context enables the blogger to remain unselfconscious about what they produce and share in the blogs (Hookway 2008:93). As in the case with the study of ‘mommy’ bloggers, blogs allow me to study “personal feelings” and “fantasies” generated in the digital in excess as they are published online (Hookway, 2008; Van Cleaf, p.37).

4.4.2 Theoretical underpinnings of the choice of material

The theoretical underpinnings of CDA for choosing the relevant material from these blogs is based on the understanding that every instance of language use is a communicative event that encompasses three important dimensions to be taken up for analysis: **linguistic features of the text** (speech, writing, visual image or a combination of these); **the processes related to both the production and consumption** of such event (discursive practice); and the **wider social practice** to which the communicative/discursive event belongs (Fairclough, 1995, p. 97; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 48). Therefore, this study attempts to explore the ways in which texts and visual images (Instagram blog posts)

are produced and interpreted. As interdiscursive analysis is a central feature of CDA, it allows me to incorporate elements of “context” into the analysis of the Instagram posts as discursive practices, to demonstrate the relationship between them and more durable social practices. Also, it allows me to connect semiotic features of texts and images with processes of social change on a broader scale.

4.4.3 The *global* as the unit of analysis

Most importantly, the study of blogs enables to study geographically distant populations. In terms of the geographical scope of my research, I make my choice based on Peterson’s argument that the *global* is a unit of analysis (Peterson, 2003, p. 40). She argues that the most problematic tendency in feminist research is the assuming of territorial states as the societal unit of analysis (Peterson, 2003, p. 37) With the growing influence of decision-making and power of states shaped by new forms of government and transnational markets, the territorial states have become increasingly irrelevant (Peterson, 2003). Contemporarily, as boundaries of states have become more porous through globalization and neoliberal capitalism, previous biopolitical spatial boundaries have been largely disintegrated (Hardt & Negri, 2004, 2009).

My Google search on the most influential ‘mommy’ bloggers pointed to the classifications by several platforms (forbes.com, Vogue and momtastic) of three bloggers: **Mother of Daughters**, **Mommy Shorts** and **LoveTaza**, among the top influencers in the industry.

While I attempted to employ global as the unit of analysis, searching for the most influential ‘mommy’ bloggers restricted my unit of analysis to a rather limited geographical location. The three selected ‘mommy’ bloggers’ backgrounds are not very diverse, as two of them come from the United States and one from the United Kingdom. Moreover, they are all white, educated, heterosexual and middle class. While it could have been interesting to include a ‘mommy’ blogger with a more diverse background, it is more important for the study to understand the *workings of power* that come with the influence of the blogger.

4.4.4 Cross-sectional time-horizon of the research strategy

The social constructivist epistemology of CDA studies places a focus on a *longitudinal* research design. This means that the data is repeatedly analyzed from the same sample or obtained over time. Due to a limited time for conducting this study, I had to drop the idea of a longitudinal research design. Therefore, I decided to adopt a *cross-sectional* time horizon (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2012). With the cross-sectional time horizon, I have the opportunity to conduct an in-depth investigating of the research subjects at a particular point in time (6 months period) with the aim to generate rich data outcomes. This research design, however, entails the disadvantage of limiting the possibility to explain why and how the observed patterns occur over time.

4.4.5 Illustration of the sample

Georgaca & Avdi (2012) argue that projects of discourse analysis generally are limited to small samples, as the analysis itself is labor-intensive. In choosing my sample for this research, I have also taken into account more practical considerations such as the available time, quantity of the blog posts and general resources. With such considerations in mind, I have followed Titscher et al. (2007) proposal on obtaining the material for analysis based on four pillars: the *source* from where the selection can be retrieved; the *material of interest*; the *amount* of material for analysis; and the *unit of analysis*. Based on these guidelines, the sample for my study is as below:

Selection criteria	Sample description
Source	The Top 3 most influential ‘mommy’ bloggers on Instagram as identified by forbes.com, Vogue and momtastic platform: Mother of Daughters, Mommy Shorts, LoveTaza
Material of interest	Blog posts published in the period October 2017 – March 2018
Quantity	Blog archive (including images, texts and reader comments) within the selected time-period). Over 600 Instagram posts and blog posts linked to them were included in the study
Unit of analysis	Discourse themes identified in blog texts, comments, and images

4.5 Feminist research in online spaces: Note on reflexivity

Online spaces are complex and profuse environments for feminist research, as they have the potential to politicize ‘everyday life’ in alternative novel ways and complicate the boundaries between public and private, in which a plethora of wide-ranging actors self-publish their experiences (Jean Kenix, 2009; Friedman, 2010). As my research involves studying these actors who use the online space to make their everyday lifestyle and consumption choices public, I take from Frederici (2011) in maintaining that although the Internet might be a virtual public, it is also a commodity and a capitalist market place. This means that the everyday lives that I encounter in the blogging online spaces are politicized, but “they are also produced and consumed as commodities, by those with the power to frame their everyday lives as meaningful” (Morrow, et al., 2014). As Morrow, Kern and Hawkins (2013) argue, online research opens new ways of understanding key notions in feminist research ethics, such as politicization, researcher positionality, subjectivity and power. As such, I ground my research ethics on their critical dialogue on interpreting politics and visibility in online spaces.

When I entered the digital fieldwork, my impulse was to interpret the everyday lives - expressed through discursive practices - encountered in the ‘mommy’ blogosphere as political. My interpretation of ‘mommy’ blogs as political because of their ability to make ‘everyday’ domestic practices more visible was complicated by the fact that they are commodities that are produced and consumed at a profit. That is what sparks my commitment to avoid romanticizing the politics of everyday life exhibited in the blogosphere.

Visual representations of ‘everyday life’ in the ‘mommy’ blogosphere do more than merely capture everyday life: they produce it. As such, I attempt to avoid interpreting the online content produced by the bloggers as “transparent representations of everyday life”, but rather by using critical discourse analysis I scrutinize the social and power relations of their production and consumption. My interpretation of these everyday politics attempts to

interpret how certain everyday lives become visible, why they are written about, and for whom. I take seriously the caution against “narrow interpretations that equate visibility with politics, given the highly uneven terrain that shapes online visibility and access”. (Morrow, Hawkins & Kern 2013, p.5)

That is not to suggest, however, that because ‘mommy’ bloggers’ profit from that work, their online representations and subjectivities are depoliticized. The feminist critiques of categories like public/private and personal/political inform the way I ‘read’ the politics of the online environment that I am studying and, and how I perform the politicization of what and who becomes visible in these spaces.

4.5.1 Ethics and limitations

Doing research in online spaces raises ethical questions, especially as I am exercising a practice of authoritative interpretation on the material made available by the bloggers. Since the material is not based on interviews, the power relation during the interaction researcher-researched is absent. Since the blogs that I am analyzing are published openly for anyone with an Internet connection, therefore the blogs can be treated as public media (Griggs 2011), which gives me the possibility to stay invisible and work under ‘cyberstealth’ (O’Reilly, 2009, p. 218).

As I am working with materials that contain private information (both visual and written) regarding children, I have taken into consideration the ethical implications of including such material in my study. Therefore, I only provide descriptions of images from Instagram accounts of the ‘mommy’ bloggers and exclude any visual material. I only provide links to the Instagram posts, in case readers might need to refer to the actual posts at any point.

5 Analysis

The ‘mommy’ bloggers that are part of this research study, Naomi ([LoveTaza](#)), Clemmie ([Mother_of_Daughters](#)) and Ilana ([Mommy Shorts](#)), center their blogger profiles around their initially spontaneous efforts to document their lives as mothers and to celebrate motherhood, pregnancy and family. All three of them express that their journeys in the blogosphere started out as attempts to share “bits and pieces” of their everyday lives around mothering, pregnancy, womanhood, and all the ‘side’ elements that come with them. Their Instagram blog posts cover a wide range of lifestyle topics, including travels, food, home décor, nursing, mothering, pregnancy and fashion and style, but all of them tend to gravitate around their lives as mothers.

The three ‘mommy’ bloggers have gathered through the years thousands of loyal readers, who like, comment and share their blog posts daily, especially as observed in their Instagram accounts. They have been around in the digital space for several years ranging between 5 to 10 years of blogging regularly and offering a peek into their ‘mommy’ lives. In total, all three of them have millions of followers in their Instagram accounts – to be more accurate, 1,060,000 followers - and within the six-month period that I have followed and researched their work, they have an aggregate amount of over 600 posts that they have shared with their readers.

Naomi Davis of LoveTaza, introduces herself to her blog followers as “married to her best friend”, raising her “three little ones in New York City” and expecting two twins. She describes her blogging and Instagram accounts as a space where she shares “bits and pieces “of her family’s adventures in New York City, and her love for celebrating motherhood, family, travel, good food, and life’s simple joys.

In similar fashion, Clemmie of “Mother of Daughters”, presents herself to the world as “mama to 4 little women, wife of @father_of_daughters, midwife and book author”. The striking headline to her blog says: “Part-time midwife. Full time mother”. On a more elaborate Instagram post about her blog, Clemmie writes:

“There was a blog called gas&air which I started on maternity leave back in 2011. I talked about all types of birth, pregnancy, working shifts, breastfeeding, perineal massage, a bit of motherhood and poo! I owe that blog a lot of credit after all it was because of the success of that blog and my devoted readers and followers that got me my first book deal. One of the strengths of my blog was the weekly birth stories. Published every Monday, written entirely by the woman and never edited by me; they were (and still are) beautiful, raw, captivating and empowering.”¹

Ilana Wiles of “Mommy Shorts” is no different. Her Instagram headline reads: “#Lifewithdaughters in NYC. Author of "Remarkably Average Parenting." In a more detailed account, Ilana presents herself in the About section of her blog as follows:

“I’m a working mom from NYC who writes a blog instead of sleeping. I have two daughters. Harlow is three-years-old and Mazzy is six. If you think you have more adorable children, Mazzy and Harlow will challenge your children to a cuteness contest. Where everyone will automatically tie. Because pitting our kids against each other is totally NOT COOL. (Although I do it all the time.) My husband’s name is Mike. I love him slightly more than my computer. But slightly less than ice cream. The four of us plan to stay in downtown Manhattan until someone drags us kicking and screaming to the ‘burbs.”²

The first thing that I came across in a first reading of the Instagram posts of these ‘mommy’ bloggers was their generosity to let the readers into their deepest and most intimate facets of their lives, including their relationships with their kids, their husbands, their (pregnant) bodies, their homes and the “messiness” of their daily lives. I found myself growing a

¹ https://www.instagram.com/p/BhXGZnSBEi4/?hl=en&taken-by=mother_of_daughters

² <http://www.'mommy'shorts.com/about>

special interest into these women's lives that I even had a hard time to distinguish whether that grew out of my researcher curiosity or my curiosity as a woman who identified herself with the daily routines of these bloggers.

This is particularly attributed to the mastery of these 'mommy' bloggers to talk about the affective labor of motherhood in emotional and provocative terms. Using language very elegantly and spicing it up with humor and memoir-style of writing, these mothers open up to great extents about the struggles and joys they go through in their everyday lives, such as caring for children, negotiating relationships with their partners, accommodating their careers and business personas with motherhood, and coping with maternity and pregnancy.

Amidst oftentimes ambivalent experiences of motherhood, Clemmie, Ilana and Naomi, present blogging as a labor of love that is born out not only of their joy in sharing their motherhood journeys, but also their personal interest to redefine motherhood for themselves and other women. Through their work, they emerge as 'intermediaries' of culture and the symbolic, but also of the public and the private, of production and consumption, of the economic and the symbolic. This is more particularly noticeable in four interrelated ways in which 'mommy' blogging effectuates a biopolitical production of 'life' as a marketable commodity: enterprising of motherhood and motherly affects; commodification of 'everyday' routines and leisure; commodification 'mommy' subjectivities; and manufacturing of marketable fantasies.





5.1 Motherhood 'enterprised': 'Mommy' affects as a site for commodification

The everyday experiences of Naomi, Clemmie and Ilana as mothers exposed in the blogosphere, demonstrate how - inner 'life' and intimate affective experiences – find value for commodification and become a terrain for consumption practices. Exposing motherhood, home, and the 'private' in the blogosphere puts to light the fact that no private

and ‘non-market’ sphere is left untouched by marketization. Especially by blogging motherhood and deploying digital forms of affective labor, they expose that everything pertaining to ‘life’, even a site with emotional value such as motherhood itself is worked and monetized, and ‘biopolitically’ produced as a marketable commodity.

Motherhood in the blogosphere is deployed as an “episodic attunement of fleeting moments, moods and affects that accompany the work of care” (Van Cleaf, 2017, p. 450), which draws the readers into a feeling of “family-like” intimacy (Van Cleaf, 2017). Just as family unity necessitates intensive emotional labor by the mother, (Hochschild, 1983), ‘mommy’ bloggers digitize similar emotional labor to connect their readers to their blogs through deployment and enterprising of motherhood.

It is common among Naomi (LoveTaza), Clemmie (Mother of Daughters) and Ilana (Mommy Shorts) to deploy digital forms of affective labor and then capitalize on those motherly affects to earn paid partnerships and sponsored posts. In a sponsored post, followed by a colorful picture of her two happy daughters on a pink inflatable (see post [here](#)), Mother of Daughters advertises a travel agency and holiday resort, by capitalizing on her mother-daughters relationship. With an easy and accessible language, she excitedly reveals how this sponsored trip has transformed her re/connection as a mother with her older daughters. She writes:

“These two  it’s felt like I’ve only got 2 daughters this week. I’ve had time to listen, play and engage with their conversations without shouting ‘hold on, in a minute, no we can’t do that because of the twins and hurry up!’ We’ve beaten each other at Connect 4, UNO, Marco Polo and competed in endless hand stand competitions in the pool. These last few days at [@marigotbayresort](#) have calmed us down, reconnected the little gaps again and I’ve never had so many spontaneous cuddles from them   ”

By exposing how she has “had time to listen, play and engage with their conversations”, has played numerous games and has done “endless hand stand competitions in the pool”, her intimate experiences and affective relationship with her daughters is built as an activity from which capitalist value can be extracted. Their “spontaneous cuddles” and their time of “reconnect[ing] the little gaps again” are posited as digital deployment of affective labor

out of which motherly affections can be ‘consumed’. These motherly affects are deployed as a site where processes of commodification occur. Deployment of motherly affects and motherhood itself emerge as an ‘enterprisable’ and marketable commodity.

In the immaterial forms of labor, all facets of social life, including affects, are incorporated in the production processes (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 32). This highlights how biopolitical production engages ‘life’ in its entirety (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 94) and how the affective dimensions related to “processes of laboring, socializing, and entertaining” are enmeshed together and put “to work” (Clough 2007 in Van Cleaf 2017).

For instance, Ilana of Mommy Shorts, in a short Instagram post (see post [here](#)), “puts to work” her breastfeeding experiences as a mother, to advertise a breast-pumping device that has “no cords or dangling bottles”. Drawing from what she refers to as one of “her worst breast pumping stories, including the time a male co-worker walked in” on her as she was standing “all hooked up”, she mobilizes the feelings of other mothers by asking: *“I mean, how you could forget that ridiculous contraption and the milk-stained nippleless bra???”*

Her post is accompanied with a picture that puts one of her babies at center stage, although at the time of the post her children are grown up. By drawing from memories from the time when her kids were still babies, she attempts to make the case for how negative experiences can stick with the mother in a form of ‘trauma’ that some sort of relief is only to be found in consumption practices and choices. Capitalizing on experiences of motherhood and, subsequently enterprising such an intimate aspect of private life, ‘mommy’ bloggers draw the readers into a feeling of “family-like” intimacy (Van Cleaf, 2017). In blogging motherhood, these mothers create value for capital enterprises just as motherhood create value for capital (Van Cleaf 2014, p. 45). They create value in capitalist terms via enterprising motherhood and mobilizing commodifiable audience attention around motherly affects.

To illustrate, Naomi from LoveTaza, in one of her posts (see post [here](#)) explains how after her “mama-daughter trip to Paris”, a bakery in New York City, where she lives, extended an invitation for a workshop on baking raspberry macarons, her daughter’s favorites. In the

blog post dedicated to her trip (see mother-daughter trip post [here](#)), Naomi wrote extensively about her experiences with her daughter during the trip and shared a wide array of activities and private moments, including opening up about communicating more intimately with her daughter after having to juggle a balanced relationship between her and the other two children. Among many thoughts she lays out, one passage conveys more intrinsically the message:

“...but as she’s growing older so very quickly, i’ve really craved some alone time with my first baby girl when we aren’t interrupted, when we could really open up and get to know each other better without any distractions or interruptions. it’s fascinating actually, because i was telling josh on the phone while in paris one night after eleanor had fallen asleep how it was maybe 2 days into our trip, that she really opened up one night in a way i hadn’t seen before, sharing so much about her school life and friends and asking so many questions about everything. it wasn’t immediate. it took a couple of days for us to get to that spot where we just opened all the doors and i’m grateful she was willing to let me in like that...”

What is striking among the series of pictures shared in the blogpost, however, is a picture of her daughter holding macarons, accompanied with the following caption:

“...this cute girl wanted to try all the macaron flavors, but the raspberry ones really stole her heart. anywhere we could find raspberry flavored, we snag a few. it’s now on our bucket list to learn to make them at some point in the future.”

This passage from the blog shows how her motherhood experience is capitalized on to enter the market domain. A simple line about her mother-daughter experiences in the trip prompted an opportunity to generate monetary value, as shortly after the trip, Naomi was invited on a workshop for making macarons, as a means to advertise the bakery. Similarly, as in her previous Paris mother-daughter trip, the mother-daughter macaron workshop experience was used to promote products and potentially serve as the base for future paid partnerships. The potentiality of capitalizing on experiences of motherhood highlights the biopolitical production of ‘life’ experiences as commodifiable and marketable.

Among other posts, one of Ilana’s (Mommy Shorts) posts (see [here](#)), exemplifies this as well:

“My dream come true as a parent would be for my family to all curl up on the couch, cuddling together, each of us lost in our own books. Once Harlow learns to read we are all set... I put together a video in collaboration with [@LeapFrogOfficial](#), using old footage of Harlow pretending to read (she's been "reading" books and making up stories since she could talk) and showing how her letters and sounds have been coming along lately. Watch the video and enter to win the LeapStart interactive learning system pictured here! Link in bio. [#sponsored](#)”

As this post demonstrates, experiences of motherhood, such as cuddling and curling up, and experiencing children's first experiences of reading and so on are “worked” up for marketability and commodification. The various examples presented in this section demonstrate the operating of a form of (bio)power that regulates ‘life’ from its interior. This kind of power commands over the entire ‘life’ when it becomes an “integral, vital function that every individual embraces and reactivates of his or her own accord” (Hardt & Negri 2000, 2004). But most importantly, this highlights how the digitized forms of affective labor by ‘mommy’ bloggers, deployed at their “own accord” have effectuated a biopolitical production of everyday life activities as sources of power and potential to become marketable and emerge as commodities. Deploying motherly affects through means of “enterprising motherhood”, ‘mommy’ bloggers act as a ‘deterritorialized’ and ‘decentered’ multitude that produces a biopolitical order in which ‘life’ in its entirety emerges as a marketable commodity.

5.2 Everyday rhythms, routines and leisure commodified

Time, space, and private life are pulled into productivity in the ‘mommy’ blogosphere. Leisure time, home space and everyday rhythms and routines are pulled into circuits of capital as opportunities to capitalize on them arise through paid partnerships and sponsored advertisements. As the distinction between work time and leisure, and public and private space appear to have collapsed, a landscape in which daily ‘mundane’ rhythms and routines, and leisure time can be “worked” and “marketized”, emerges. This is a tendency

towards which ‘mommy’ blogging work tends to gravitate. The following examples illustrate this.

5.2.1 *Everyday routines #commodified*

Mother of Daughters, in one of her posts says the following:

“We had a wonderful week away at Walt Disney World but now it’s time to get back to reality. A big family like ours often means that we end up eating breakfast in shifts (let’s face it - it’s a miracle if we’re all sat down together in the first place!). But this week @DorsetCereals has challenged us to eat #BreakfastOnTheSlow for the next 5 days. We’re trying to stop, slow down and reconnect – not just for breakfast but throughout the day as well - and actually finish those all important conversations at the start of the day that often get cut short when we’re rushing around with our busy lives.”

By using a relatable story about how difficult it is to have a big family sit down all together around the table to enjoy a simple routine, such as eating breakfast all together, Clemmie produces a narrative on which she can capitalize on to advertise products. As she has been challenged by the company to join their advertising concept of “Breakfast On the Slow”, Clemmie adjusts her family’s mealtime routine and makes a commitment to also effectuate a new way of conducting other activities throughout the day by “slowing down, reconnecting and finishing all important conversations”.

A simple routine of having a meal with the family or connecting with them does not escape the realm of production process. As observed here, the time and space of ‘everyday life’ appears to be organized by the demands of work and the production process. Leisure and everyday life activities are determined in line with the requirements of capital (Davies & Niemann, 2002, pp. 570-571). ‘Life’ and daily mundane activities determines production (Hardt and Negri in Read 2001, p.28). This points to a “the transformation of “life” and its quotidian needs and capabilities into a terrain for commodification and production. As a form of labor mediated through technology, which registers “states of being” and “intimate

moments of lives” (Van Cleaf, 2017, p. 450), ‘mommy’ blogging expands circulation of affect. That effectuates a site where even “unconscious and preconscious capacities and machinations of all forms of life” get put to work (Van Cleaf, 2014, pp. 21-22).

For instance, in one of the Mommy Shorts posts (see post [here](#)), a rather mundane quotidian need and activity such as the bedtime routine is “worked up” to enter the domain of production. In a picture of her with her whole family, Ilana, her husband and her daughters are all curled up in each other’s hugs as they sit on a big comfortable sofa. What is striking, however, is that they are all wearing matching pajamas. It does not take much wondering, as she excitedly introduces the sleepwear company, which has a variety of designs and to the convenience of her family’s Jewish tradition, also ‘Hanukkah pajamas’. This illustrates how everything that constitutes a form of ‘life’, even “bare life” becomes productive for capital (Read, 2001, p. 28).

Instagram blog posts, where Ilana and other ‘mommy’ bloggers share everyday routines are amongst the most common and the following (see post [here](#)) captures it well:

“Mazzy and I share a creative side, a love for adventure, a similar sense of humor, a big head of brown hair and a need for our morning “coffee” to get the day started. Every day, for the past seven years, Mazzy has needed a cup of warm milk (one minute in the microwave, no more, no less) served in her favorite Munchkin 360 cup before she’ll even entertain the thought of getting out of bed.”

The image that accompanies the post is one of Ilana laying on the bed, with her daughter by her side, engaging in one of their morning routines of drinking “coffee”. She explains how one of her daughters has engaged in this morning routine for several years and puts such a routine at the disposal for profit, as she continues with the rest of the post, which reads as follows:

“Post a photo of you and your munchkin to [#MyMunchkinandMe](#), sharing how you and your little one are alike, for a chance to win a \$250 [@munchkininc](#) gift card. Bonus! Anyone who enters with a Munchkin product in their photo, will also be entered to win a \$400 gift card! Two winners in total. You must follow and tag both [@’mommy’sshorts](#) and [@munchkininc](#) to win. Plus, I’ll be featuring

*some of my favorite photos in a blog post just in time for Mother's Day.
♡#sponsored*

The two parts of the blog post serve to highlight how two contrasting spheres have collapsed into each other: “the rational and calculating sphere”, and the sphere of “love, reproduction, and regeneration” (Feher, 2009). The sphere of family routines is tangled together with the sphere of rational, calculations for generating profit. This, once again, establishes how “value” resides in forms of life itself, relations and affective interactions which occur throughout society.

In this realm of enmeshed spheres of love and monetization, reproductive labor also is transformed from “a form of labor which works simply to replenish, replace or restore social energy”, to labor that is “organized and valued for its promissory potential” (Adkins & Dever 2016, p. 124). One of the ‘mommy’ Shorts’ posts (see post [here](#)) captures this:

“Anyone else spend the months of December, January and February with a cough or cold that just won't die? 🧑‍🤔 This month's swag bag is for every mom who ever suffered through a sick day and wished that their own mom would come over and take care of them. It's got chicken soup, cozy pajamas, a warm cable knit throw, #VicksVaporub and so much more... see everything inside and how to enter at the link in my bio! #sponsored”

This exemplifies how life is captured by capital in its entirety, as the mundane and everyday life routines conflate with the market sphere. The stories of motherhood and everyday routines, rhythms, joys and struggles, emanate as realms with the potentiality to be marketable.

5.2.2 Domestic reproductive labor #commodified

In one of her posts (see post [here](#)), which she calls “not the prettiest of posts but this is the reality of my life”, Clemmie of Mother of Daughters uses the relationship with her husband

“who loves DIY but refused to wear ‘old clothes’” and the fact that she has four little children, to advertise a brand of washing machines. She does not miss the chance to build some sort of solidarity with other women who are reading the post and do the same as part of their lives as mothers, while also trying to acknowledge their contribution for recommending to her those washing machines, which she refers to as “bad boys”.

The image that she picks to accompany this post (see post [here](#)) is rather simple - with just two laundry machines and two bags full of dirty clothes - and not much colorful, contrarily to many of her other posts. While the picture is characterized by greyness, the dirty clothes are quite in order inside the laundry bags and not overloaded. This is almost to symbolize her life staying in order because of her smart choice of the newly purchased washing machines. Clemmie ends the Instagram post with two hashtags, #ad and #mumlife, thus putting together her work as a mother and wife at home together with a money-making activity such as product advertising.

The other bloggers, Ilana and Naomi, from Mommy Shorts and Love Taza, as they register mundane moments of daily life, they illuminate motherhood as an “episodic attunement of fleeting moments, moods and affects that accompany the work of care” (Van Cleef, 2017, p. 450). This digitized form of care work that ‘mommy’ bloggers perform is illustrated in one of Naomi’s (Love Taza) posts.

As observed in her Instagram post, which she calls “Laundry girl” (see post [here](#)), Naomi captures a rather mundane moment of domestic work such as doing laundry. By putting herself on center stage and boasting about loving being the “laundry girl of the family”, she promotes the routine as a woman’s and mother’s labor. In an “attunement” of the moods and affects accompanying reproductive labor, she declares: “...*one of these days i’m gonna learn how to properly fold a fitted sheet to show my affection for both machines!*”. As she explains, that is related to the fact that she is using “products we trust to bring into our home”. She refers to both the machines and the laundry products.

The use of words ‘trust’ and ‘affection’ are important to note. They play an important part in establishing the blogger’s authority to endorse the products. Her deployment of affection for the advertised products, on the other hand, serves to promote two contrasting feelings regarding domestic work: a sense of tediousness that accompanies reproductive work and a sense of comfort that comes with consumption. Her posing playfully for the camera in doing an otherwise tedious routine produces an immaculate visual representation for communicating the message across to her readers.

Inviting the audience into her daily life routines is deployed here not only as an act of establishing relatability around tediousness of reproductive domestic labor. It goes beyond that, because in building relatability and a “family-like intimacy”, the blogger creates a channel through which platforms for consumption and commodification can amplify and thrive. In asking the readers to share their own laundry routines and how they choose products that are safe for families with little children, she creates that platform. Mobilizing and engaging the readers through that strategy makes it easier to build the base from which marketable value can be extracted. She entices the readers with a special free gift, or what she refers to as “fun freebie”, that her readers can exclusively benefit from.

Both cases that I have presented above are an illustration of how the production of ‘life’ is no longer limited to the realm of reproduction, as the reproductive labor processes themselves are rather incorporated into market logics. Social reproductive labor determines production itself and it is subordinated to the production process (Hardt and Negri in Lemke 2011, p.69) in the form of paid partnerships and sponsored posts. Social reproductive labor is established as a site with potentiality for commodification and marketization. The processes of capital accumulation, thus, transpire throughout the spheres of reproduction (Hardt & Negri, 2000).

5.2.3 Leisure time #commodified

Everyday life is a dialectical unity between *work, leisure, and family* (LeFebvre in Davies & Niemann, 2002, p. 570). Thus, everyday life, is not only characterized by everyday ‘routines’, but also leisure time outside of the home and work that escape demands of work and the production process. However, ‘mommy’ blogs emerge as sites where an overlap between work and leisure occurs (Taylor, 2016). These “overlaps” denote a terrain of opportunities for ‘mommy’ bloggers to materialize leisure time and leisure activities as a marketable commodity.

For instance, Naomi of LoveTaza, in several of her posts, has established herself as an authority in promoting “taste” regarding vacation or family get-away sites, which has earned her many paid partnerships and sponsored posts with various companies. For instance, in one of her Instagram posts (see post [here](#)), she writes about her experience with her children in a skiing resort, which initially starts as a storytelling piece about the family’s leisure time:

“We had the best time on the slopes last week with our tiny snowboarders! Between Conrad's shrieks as he'd start to go faster on his board to the amount of hot chocolate I consumed, I'd call the experience a success!”

After establishing her vacation as successful family time, she continues with advertising a taxi transportation service that has improved her family’s vacation time turning it into a “convenient and hassle free” experience. While the blog post initially starts as an occasion to share the experience with the readers and possibly start a conversation about the hassles and struggles of having a skiing experience with the children, it quickly turns into an opportunity to advertise. Naomi writes:

“We also partnered with [@Uber](#) when getting to and from the slopes last week which made the experience so convenient and hassle free since we were picked up right at our hotel door and dropped off at the bottom of the slopes! Kind of a game changer when you don't have to worry about finding a spot to park at the base of the mountain, or hauling a lot of gear from the back of the parking lot to the slopes! Have any of you ever tried Ubering to a ski hill before?”

In an act of marketization of tastes, pleasure, and leisure (Peterson, 2005), Naomi's family's lifestyle is projected as a ground for commodification. The aggregate of experiences and lifestyle choices of 'mommy' bloggers displayed in the blogosphere, in their entirety, designate everyday routines, rhythms, reproductive and leisure activities as an arena where production-for-profit occurs. This happens in a context of commodification of items and experiences that would "not normally be thought of as financial concepts" (Cherry, 2013, p. 389).

5.3 Marketable fantasies: Manufacturing forms of 'life' and desire

In creating marketable fantasies and aspirational spaces for their audiences, who are consumers of their influence, 'mommy' bloggers offer insights into the construction of a *social imaginary* of desires and tastes (Peterson, 2005). In building the social imaginary for such tastes and desires, 'mommy' bloggers also construct a landscape that is conducive to commodification. Value resides in forms of life itself, "within modes of expression, intensive relations, abstract knowledge, communications and affective interactions which occur throughout society" (Hardt & Negri, 2000).

The readers' responses to the 'mommy' bloggers' posts about the way they conduct their daily lives are a strong example in pointing out how the work that the bloggers perform serve to produce forms of life and desire and how those forms of life and desires emerge as marketable commodities. They arise as an opportunity to become commodifiable depending on the tactics and strategies that these bloggers deploy to capitalize on them. It should be noted, however, that the potentiality to commodify upon such experiences and forms of 'life' oscillates between the agentic capabilities of 'mommy' bloggers and structures of neoliberal governmentality pervading everyday lives.

It is common to see how many of the ‘mommy’ bloggers posts about how they conduct their lives as mothers and consumers of certain products and brands, is “flooded” with readers’ comments, especially from other mothers, about how they envy and desire the parts of their lives that the bloggers ‘invite them in’. In most of the posts from all three bloggers, readers commented with questions about almost all elements that were in sight in a blog post, including women’s clothing, baby and children clothing, home appliances and furniture, cafes and restaurants, etc.. Questions were usually either short, such as “where is the scooter from?”, “Where is the rug from?” or “Where did you buy your shirt?”, “Also wondering about the carpet info?! ♡ it!”, “I’m sure you’ve answered this many times but where are those adorable bowls and spoons from? 😊”; or included some congratulating or flattering comment, such as “Can't get over your style”, “Love this skirt... and I want your skirt”.

As affective labor is centered around manipulation of affects, the products of labor are *relationships and emotional responses*. ‘Mommy’ bloggers mobilize “feeling[s] of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement or passion” (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 96) among their readers as they project coveted “forms of life” centering around various marketable desires and fantasies.

That is the case also when it comes to fashion and clothing style for mothers. For instance, one of the readers commented on Naomi’s (LoveTaza) post as follows:

“Whenever I go shopping I ask myself “would taza wear this?” It’s how I buy all my clothes. Outfit = perfection”

Or a similar comment in Mother of Daughters, says:

“You always look so great. I take a lot of style inspiration from you... and you even gave me the guts to cut a LOB, which I’ve been contemplating on for years 😊”

That is why, for instance, many of Naomi’s sponsored ads are built around her influence over pregnancy clothing style on her followers. In a paid partnership post (see post [here](#)) with a maternity clothing company, she combines a mix of emotions – enjoyment and

hardship - related to her twin pregnancy. She then goes on advertising the ‘looks’ that she has put together in collaboration with the company. Making the story relatable to her readers, she also makes it also commodifiable claiming that she did it “to help other women to shift their mood and help them feel better, especially on the hard days”.

She writes: *“These looks also work before and after pregnancy too, so you can keep on wearing them after the nine month stretch, and are nursing friendly, which is always the biggest plus in my book!”*

Among many commenters one of them expresses her long-time admiration of her style even as she has gone through many pregnancies and writes the following:

“Dear Naomi @taza i wonder how you ALWAYS stay in shape during your pregnancies and just look amazing everyday? 😊 i have been following you since you were pregnant with Samson and suspect you have a secret elixir 😊😊”

Because Naomi (LoveTaza) is the most influential ‘mommy’ blogger due to the number of followers in her Instagram, she has the highest frequency of paid posts. That explains also the wide variety of products that she advertises, which range from clothing for adults and kids, to travel arrangements and travel products, and from home appliances and furniture to dome decoration services, and so on. As I have closely analyzed her posts of the last six months, a lot of her business partnerships arise as a result of capitalizing on the audience tastes and desires. A common occurrence among commenters is the frequency and amount of questions regarding various elements seen in the posts. Followers and readers of the blog posts not only comment to congratulate the bloggers about certain looks of themselves and their children, but also to ask questions about various elements in sight in the pictures. This establishes the power of well-curated settings and imageries to effectuate opportunities for commodification.

Among many of Naomi’s posts (LoveTaza) that receive congratulatory comments regarding different aspects of their lifestyle, one of them illustrates more clearly how

opportunities for marketization and commodification arise, and how various aspects of ‘lifestyle’ become marketable. A commenter, after Naomi’s Instagram post about the reveal of her kids playroom in her apartment (see blog post [here](#)), wrote the following:

“@taza love your post, and all the neat toys you have for your kiddos! I would LOVE for you to do a gift guide for children with some of the toys/dress up outfits/games etc. you have used over the years with your kids! I have purchased some similar items I have seen in your playroom and they are some of the best toys for my kiddos! You have an eye for fun toys and I’d love to hear more! Thanks!!”

This comment, among many that are similar in nature, exemplifies not only the authority and the power of the blogger to manufacture “forms of life” that are constructed as desirable, but also sets the stage for potential opportunities to capitalize on such “forms of life” in the future. As the commenter already reveals, they have purchased items that Naomi has advertised in the past. However, the commenter’s demand to Naomi for introducing a “gift guide for children” with toys, games and outfits that she has used over the years with her kids, presents a potential for Naomi to monetize other domains of her lifestyle.

In a relatable story about her dream of having a space at home that is designated as a play table for her “littles”, she does that (see post [here](#)). She advertises a children’s playroom furniture company by masterfully creating a story about how she had imagined and dreamed of her children creating “messy art”, doing homework, practicing and accomplishing new things and creating memories and important moments around the “tiny table”. The use of the words such as “imagined” and “dream”, repeatedly is an interesting choice. She eventually ties closely the fulfillment of her dreams about the space that she wants to create for her children with her consumption choices. She does not hide her excitement by saying that the table is fulfilling her dreams already.

The post is accompanied with a picture of her two children sitting around the table against a backdrop of an elegantly decorated children’s space with a combination of bright colors. Her daughter is sitting quietly and writing/painting, while the son looks prepared for the photo as he is looking to a camera with an excited expression on his face. The image almost

conveniently combines all the elements that Naomi had ‘dreamed’ and aspired of providing as a parent for her children.

‘Mommy’ blogs not only demonstrate the capital investment in affect, but the content speaks also of particular gender- and class-based fantasies surrounding motherhood. This points to a power issue pertaining to whose lives get to become visible and whose lifestyle get to receive attention, recognition and desirability. These three elements highlight that the potential for marketability and commodification rests on the aptitude of a blog to be “Instagram-worthy”, and with that, to be desirable and establish a “marketable fantasy-worthy” kind of lifestyle.

An exchange between Naomi (LoveTaza) and one of her commenters, exposes how the ‘mechanisms’ of building ‘marketable fantasies’ occurs. In one of Naomi’s posts, she shares a picture of her children around the Christmas tree and her husband helping their youngest child to put a decoration on the tree. She writes the following to explain the situation:

“Putting that 🌟 on top! Also, should probably warn you that I'm gonna over gram this tree for the rest of December. 🎄👶 Lots more photos on the blog today of it in all its glory. #christmastree#christmasinnewyork#mostwonderfultimeoftheyear”

Among many comments on the post, one captures more clearly the way “forms of life” are established and consumed as marketable fantasies. The commenters writes the following:

“Every single time I think about you guys having twins I get emotional and excited and overwhelmed with love all over again. How magical that one can feel that for a family they have never met yet, feel so close ❤️🌟”

In other cases, the readers identify ‘mommy’ bloggers’ are way of conducting their everyday lives with children. For example, one of the comments on Mommy Shorts reads:

“The absolute best part is you let your kids be 100% true to themselves...there is no better gift to a child than to embrace who he/she is”.

This points to the way in which the ‘real subsumption of ‘life’, including desires, subjectivities and needs, is constantly transforming alongside capital. ‘Mommy’ bloggers are able to project forms of life and produce marketable desires out of various sites. Most of the readers that commented on the Instagram posts projected some form of covet in response to travel or vacation posts, such as:

“Wow. It doesn’t even look real ♡” or “Dying. I want to visit Palm Springs so bad! Loving these posts”, and so on.

These examples illustrate how the biopolitical production of ‘life’ as a marketable fantasy points to the transformation of “life” and needs and capabilities into a terrain for commodification and production (Hardt and Negri 2000 in Read, 2001, pp. 27-28. As a new mode of production, capital institutes itself in the quotidian (ibid). This establishes the ‘mommy’ blogosphere as a ‘social factory’ where the saturation of the whole life to capitalist market logics happens (Jarrett, 2016, p. 53). In this ‘social factory’, ‘mommy’ subjects are interpellated towards work-relations that enable the continuity of the capitalist mode of production (Jarrett, 2016, p. 56). And in enabling such a mode of production they also produce their lifestyles as sites that emerge as marketable commodities.

5.4 Re-defining and commodifying ‘mommy’ subjectivities

‘Mommy’ blogging work illustrates how the ‘real’ subsumption of ‘life’ to capital happens in the ‘social factory’, where subjectivity is made productive (Jarrett, 2016, p. 56). The subjectivities are made productive in the ‘social factory’ because they are put to “work” and produce value in capitalist terms. As the ‘real’ subsumption is intensively shaped around capital, *subjectivities* also attune alongside capital (Hardt & Negri 2000, p. 255). In biopolitical production, not only “needs, social relations, bodies and minds” are produced; but also the *producers* themselves are created (Hardt and Negri 2000).

Affective labor practices of ‘mommy’ bloggers produce the “cultural” content of the commodity. The “raw material” (Lazzarato, 1996; Hardt & Negri, 2000, 2004) in

producing such commodity is the *subjectivity* itself. ‘Mommy’ bloggers deploy a combination of subjectivities, such as that of mother, woman and consumer. This combination of subjectivities represents both the base element of production and the product of production.

For instance, as observed in one of her blog posts (see [here](#)), Clemmie of Mother of Daughters, deploys her mother subjectivity as a the base for production. She presents her collaboration with a clothing company by posting a video of their ad in which she is also part of, and accompanies the post with the following:

“What does mumsy mean to you? I'm proud to say that I have collaborated with @boden_clothing to redefine the word. It doesn't make sense that just because we're mums, we're expected to dress for practicality rather than for style. For our kids rather than for ourselves. It's important to take the time for yourself, to wear things that make you feel like your own person, as well as a mum. Yes, I'm a mum, but that doesn't mean I should only dress in clothes that I don't mind getting baby food all over, does it? Having my own style is what defines me, not how many children I have. #womenwhowearitlikeamum #mumsy#motherofdaughters #ad”

In redefining what it means to be ‘mumsy’, Clemmie embarks upon the neoliberal project of pulling the production of the ‘self’ to the market. She uses the “production of the self” as the base for production in capitalist terms. That is because she can capitalize on the project of “redefining mumsy”. This example serves to illustrate how “every sphere of life is mined for value or experiences that create value for the subject” (Feher, 2009, p. 29), as the neoliberal subject becomes the “manager of a portfolio of conducts pertaining to all the aspects of their lives” (Feher, 2009, pp. 29-30)”.

In the case of Clemmie, this is tightly related to the ability of capital to invest in and amplify affect, especially that which lies at the “excess of subjectivity”. Clemmie, in an act of redefining the meaning of the both “mother” and “woman”, creates those subject formations as “sites” that find circulation and value (Clough 2007 in Van Cleaf 2017). In another post (see post [here](#)), Clemmie expresses this by saying:

“When I tell people I’m a mum 4 their usual reaction is ‘you don’t look like a mum and you don’t dress like one either!’ What does a mum even look and dress like then? Mothers come in all shapes and sizes and from all different backgrounds. Motherhood shouldn’t define you so be experimental with clothes, be brave, embrace your figure and if doubt always wear a bright lipstick 🗝️🖋️ @boden_clothing #ad#womenwhowearitlikeamum”

Both Instagram posts, published within a time span of a few weeks between each other, are part of her paid partnership with a clothing company that prides itself in creating a clothing line for ‘mums’. As they express in their campaign section from their website, they are on a “mission to reclaim what mum style really means: wearing what YOU want in your OWN way”³. Under their video ad from Youtube introducing the clothing line for mothers, the company writes the following: “From CEO to shepherd, midwife to model, meet the Boden mums reclaiming what mum style REALLY means”⁴.

The interdiscursive blend noticed in the advertisement that accompanies Clemmie’s post and her post per se, is a blurring of boundaries between two orders of discourse – the neoliberal consumer discourse and the feminist discourse on re-defining fixed notions of motherhood. One of the most prominent themes in the advertisement is the neo-liberal idea of individuality and the consequent freedom of the mother as an individual to choose any empowering clothing style they want. This reinforces that only through consumerism is the mother (and the woman behind that mother) rendered empowered. Thus, the subjectivity of ‘mom’ becomes the arena where such a blend of notions comes to life.

It is only through the re-definition of what it means to be ‘mumsy’ through the navigation of stylizations of the body, that the mother becomes a fully-fledged subject. The advertisement of the clothing line attempts to present social relations in a new and subversive way, by challenging the existing norms of how mothers are supposed to look and dress like. This sentence captures it well: “*Having my own style is what defines me, not how many children I have*”. But, it fails to do so as it nevertheless overemphasizes

³ <http://www.boden.co.uk/en-gb/wear-it-like-a-mum>

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ik77Xatej2o>

looks and appearances as the sole grounds through which one is deemed worthy of being a subject.

As the examples above illustrate, many of the discursive practices among the three ‘mommy’ bloggers capitalize on redefining ‘mommy’ subjectivities. In such acts, the *subjectivity* emerges as a marketable commodity and a terrain where the processes of commodification occur. The incorporation of ‘mommy’ subjectivities as the base of production for capitalist value, highlights the incorporation of the “affective” as less of a significant, cultural moment of recognition of motherhood per se, but more as a moment of accumulation of market value.

6 Discussion and Conclusions

I first entered the blogosphere, not as a researcher, but as what would rather be called a ‘lurker’ in internet language. My initial response to activities happening there, especially in the blogosphere and Instagram, raised many questions. But one that stuck with me was about the shifting nature of work occurring amidst a rise of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), and the subsequent ‘digitalization’ of work, especially affective labor performed by women in various genres of the online blogging niche. ‘Mommy’ blogging loomed large as this new mode of labor out of which women seemed to extract “value” out of reproductive labor that they had otherwise done for free as part of social reproduction.

Inspired by what Cynthia Enloe calls a feminist curiosity, I decided to investigate, what appeared to be from “scrolling up and down” through the Instagram pages of ‘mommy’ bloggers as a suffusion of market logics into ‘everyday life’. Feminist perspectives of the political economies of ‘everyday’ opened up a new window of opportunity to research ‘mommy’ blogging in the context of a global neoliberal restructuring. I took upon the notion of ‘everyday life’ and attempted to look at the ways in which the ‘everyday’ of reproductive labor was transformed from an act of replenishing and restoring social energy and reproducing ‘the social’ to a labor “organized and valued for its promissory potential” (Adkins & Dever, 2016).

As the analysis of the three ‘mommy’ bloggers’ Instagram and blog posts suggests, the global transformations in the modes of labor and accumulation have led to an incorporation of reproductive labor into production processes and market logics in the form of digitized affective labor. This, in turn, represents a new *biopolitical* context in which a “multitude” of laborers (read: mommy bloggers) through their practices of immaterial labor, produce ‘life’ in all its “recesses” as a site for production, consumption and commodification. The

deployment of digitized affective labor among ‘mommy’ bloggers, thus, effectuates a biopolitical production of ‘life’ as a marketable commodity.

As this study finds, in the ‘mommy’ blogosphere, this happens through four interrelated ways: enterprising of motherhood and motherly affects; commodification of ‘everyday’ routines, leisure and domestic labor; manufacturing of marketable ‘fantasies’; and commodification of ‘mommy’ subjectivities. Experiences of motherhood and motherly affects are “worked up” in the ‘mommy’ blogosphere and emerge as a site for production. As such, these experiences, otherwise previously pertaining to social reproduction, are ingrained into market logics and emanate as marketable commodities. Together with these experiences, also the everyday routines, rhythms and leisure activities emerge as a terrain for production and commodification. As time, space, and private life are pulled into productivity, and as work and leisure time have collapsed; a terrain in which ‘everyday life’ can be “worked” and “marketized”, emerges. Not only do ‘everyday life’ activities arise as sites for marketability and commodification, but also the subjectivity itself becomes a marketable commodity and a terrain for production. In deploying a combination of subjectivities as mothers, consumers, and producers/workers, ‘mommy’ bloggers also project ‘forms of life’ that arise as marketable ‘fantasies’. Their lifestyles per se manifest as sites of production, consumption and commodification.

These various examples demonstrate the operating of a form of (bio)power that regulates ‘life’ from its interior (Hardt & Negri 2000, 2004). This kind of power commands over the entire ‘life’ when it becomes an “integral, vital function that every individual embraces and reactivates of his or her own accord” (Ibid). The digitized forms of affective labor by ‘mommy’ bloggers, deployed at their “own accord”, effectuate a biopolitical production of ‘life’ as marketable commodity. As the main themes that emerge out of the analysis, demonstrate, motherly affects, ‘mommy’ subjectivities, ‘desirable lifestyles’ and everyday routines and leisure activities, are “harnessed” for their potential to be marketable commodities. This highlights that ‘mommy’ bloggers, acting as a ‘deterritorialized’ multitude of actors, contribute to producing a biopolitical order in which ‘life’ in its entirety is saturated with market logics and immersed into capital.

6.1 Future Research

The findings of this study serve to make extrapolations about macro-developments, especially amid a neoliberal governmentality overriding the most intimate aspects of ‘life’. Neoliberal governmentality enables a molding of social relations and institutions in concord with market values, logics and rules (Bakker, 2007, p. 550). However, as Bakker argues, the political rationality behind the neoliberal agenda, which enables it to extend to such intimate and private spaces of human lives, needs to be addressed more thoroughly.

This research is a step into doing that. More particularly, because it explores the ways in which the rationality that enables a neoliberal ideology to expand beyond the market and spill over everyday life, rests precisely in its biopolitical dimension. Explorations of neoliberal agendas and ideologies through a biopolitical lens are thus crucial in understanding the ways that power over ‘life’ and ‘forms of life’ is dispersed among and effectuated by a multitude of actors and workers. Future larger-scale research on various sites of immaterial labor and virtual economy is needed. Such research would shed light onto the various dimensions of the “internal workings” of the ideologically-charged superstructures where the relations of the economic base of capitalism are legitimated and reproduced.

7 Bibliography

Hochschild, A. R., 1983. *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. s.l.:University of California Press.

Adkins, L. & Dever, M., 2016. The financialisation of Social Reproduction: Domestic Labour and Promissory value. In: L. Adkins & M. Dever, eds. *The Post-Fordist Sexual Contract: Working and Living in Contingency*. s.l.:Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 129-147.

Bakker, I., 2007. Social Reproduction and the Constitution of a Gendered Political Economy. *New Political Economy*, 12(4), pp. 541-556.

Baumer, E., Sueyoshi, M. & Tomlinson, B., 2008. *Exploring the Role of the Reader in the Activity of Blogging*. Florence, Italy, CHI 2008.

Bazzul, J., 2017. Biopolitics and the 'subject' of labor in science education. *Cultural Studies of Science Education*, Volume 12, p. 873–887.

Cherry, M. A., 2013. Cyber Commodification. *Maryland Law Review*, 72(381).

Cleaf, K. V., 2015. Of Woman Born to Mommy Blogged: The Journey from the Personal as Political to the Personal as Commodity. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 43(3&4), pp. 247-264.

Coté, M. & Pybus, J., 2007. Learning to Immaterial Labour 2.0: MySpace and Social Networks. *Ephemera*, 7(1), pp. 88-106.

Davies, M. & Niemann, M., 2002. The Everyday Spaces of Global Politics: Work, Leisure, Family. *New Political Science*, 24(4), pp. 557-577.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Jackson, P., 2012. *Management Research*. 4. ed. London: Sage Publications Ltd..

Elias, J. & Roberts, A., 2016. Feminist Global Political Economies of the Everyday: From Bananas to Bingos. *Globalizations*, 13(6), pp. 787-800.

Enloe, C., 1989. *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. London: University of California Press.

Fairclough, N., 1992. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fairclough, N., 1995b. *Media discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.

Fairclough, N., 1995. *Critical Discourse Analysis: the critical study of language*. s.l.:Longman Group Limited.

Fairclough, N., 2001. Critical Discourse Analysis As A Method in Social Scientific Research. *SAGE Research Methods*, pp. 121-138.

- Fairclough, N., 2012. Critical Discourse Analysis. *International Scientific Researchers (ISR)*, Volume 7.
- Federici, S., 2011. Feminism and the Politics of the Commons. *The Commoner*.
- Feher, M., 2009. Self-Appreciation; or, The Aspirations of Human Capital. *Public Culture*, 21(1), pp. 21-41.
- Ferber, M. & Nelson, J., 2009. Beyond economic man: Feminist theory and economics. *University of Chicago Press*.
- Foucault, M., 1979/2008. The birth of biopolitics: Lectures at the college de France, 1978-1979. *NY: Palgrave Macmillan*.
- Friedman, M., 2010. On Mommyblogging: Notes to a Future Feminist Historian. *Journal of Women's History*, 22(4), pp. 197-208.
- Georgaca, E. & Avdi, E., 2012. Discourse Analysis. In: D. Harper & A. R. Simpson, eds. *Qualitative Research Methods in Mental Health and Psychotherapy: A Guide for Students and Practitioners*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., pp. 233-247.
- Gill, R., 2008. Culture and Subjectivity in Neoliberal and postfeminist times. *City University of London*, Issue 25.
- Gill, R. & Pratt, A., 2008. In the Social Factory? Immaterial Labour, Precariousness and Cultural Work. *Theory, Culture & Society (SAGE Publications)*, 25(7-8), pp. 1-30.
- Gramsci, A., 1991. *Selections from Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Gregg, M., 2009. Learning to (Love) Labour: Production Cultures and the Affective Turn. *Communication and Critical/Cultural studies*, 6(2), pp. 209-214.
- Grove, K. & Coleman, M., 2009. Biopolitics, biopower, and the return of sovereignty. *Environment and Planning: Society and Space*, Volume 27, pp. 489-507.
- Hansen, M., 2009. The Time of Affect, or Bearing Witness to Life. *Critical Inquiry*, Volume 30, pp. 584-626.
- Hardt, M. & Negri, A., 1994. Labor of Dionysus: A Critique of the State-Form. *University of Minnesota Press*.
- Hardt, M. & Negri, A., 2000. *Empire*. s.l.:Harvard University Press.
- Hardt, M. & Negri, A., 2004. *Multitude*. *Penguin Group*.
- Hardt, M. & Negri, A., 2009. *Commonwealth*. *Harvard University Press*.
- Hunter, A., 2016. Monetizing the mommy: mommy blogs and the audience commodity. *Information, Communication and Society*, 19(9), pp. 1306-1320.

- Jarrett, K., 2016. *Feminism, Labour and Digital Media*. 1 ed. New York : Routledge.
- Jean Kenix, L., 2009. Blogs as Alternative. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 1, 14(4), pp. 790-822.
- Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L., 2002. *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. s.l.:Sage.
- Just, D., 2015. A Biopolitics of Immaterial Labour. *Political studies*, 64(2), p. 401–416.
- Kroløkke, C., Borda, J. & Demo, A. T., 2015. *The Motherhood Business: Consumption, Communication and Privilege*. Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press.
- Lazzarato, M., 1996. Immaterial labour. *Radical thought in Italy: A potential politics, 1996*, pp. 133-147.
- Lemke, T., 2011. *Biopolitics: An advanced introduction*. New York and London: New York University Press.
- Lopez, L. K., 2009. The radical act of 'mommy blogging': redefining motherhood through the blogosphere. *New Media and Society*, 11(5).
- Montesano Montessori, N., 2011. The design of a theoretical, methodological, analytical framework to analyse hegemony in discourse. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 8(3), pp. 169-181.
- Morini, C., 2007. The feminization of labour in cognitive capitalism. *Feminist Review*, 87(1), pp. 40-59.
- Morrison, A., 2011. "Suffused by Feeling and Affect": The Intimate Public of Personal Mommy Blogging. *Biography*, 34(1), pp. 37-55.
- Morrow, O., Hawkins, R. & Kern, L., 2014. Feminist research in online spaces. *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of*.
- Negri, A. & Hardt, M., 2000. *Empire*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Oksala, J., 2015. Foucault, Marx and Neoliberal Subjects. *Theory, Culture and Society*.
- O'Reilly, K., 2009. *Key Concepts in Ethnography*. s.l.:SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Peterson, S. V., 2002. Rewriting (Global) Political Economy as Reproductive, Productive and Virtual (Foucauldian) Economies. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 4(1), pp. 1-30.
- Peterson, V. S., 2003. *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy: Integrating reproductive, productive and virtual economies*. s.l.:Routledge.
- Peterson, V. S., 2005. *'Identities' and Instabilities of Neoliberal Marketization*:. Honolulu, Hawaii: s.n.
- Peterson, V. S., 2009. Interactive and Intersectional Analytics of Globalization. *A Journal of Women Studies*, 30(1), pp. 31-40.

- Pham, M.-H., 2013. Susie Bubble Is a Sign of The Times. *Feminist Media Studies*, 13(2), pp. 245-267.
- Rai, S. M. & Bedford, K., 2010. Feminists Theorize International Political Economy. *The University of Chicago Press*, 36(1), pp. 1-18.
- Read, J., 2001. The Hidden Abode of Biopolitical Production: Empire and the Ontology of Production. *Rethinking Marxism*, 13(3-4), pp. 24-30.
- Ritzer, G., Dean, P. & Jurgenson, N., 2012. The Coming of Age of the Prosumer. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 56(4), pp. 379-398.
- Rose, J. & Spencer, C., 2016. Immaterial labour in spaces of leisure: producing biopolitical subjectivities through Facebook. *Leisure studies*, 35(6), pp. 809-826.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A., 2009. *Research Methods for Business students*. 5. ed. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Taylor, J., 2016. Laptops and Playpens: 'Mommy Bloggers' and Visions of Household Work. *The Post-Fordist Sexual Contract*, pp. 109-128.
- Thayne, M., 2012. Friends like mine: The production of socialised subjectivity in the attention economy. *Culture Machine*, Volume 13.
- Thompson, J. B., 1990. *Ideology and Modern Culture*. s.l.:Polity Press.
- Titscher, S., Meyer, M. & Wodak, R. V. E., 2007. *Methods of text and discourse analysis*. 1. ed. London: Sage Publications Inc.
- Titscher, S., Meyer, M., Wodak, R. & Vetter, E., 2007. *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis: In Search of Meaning*. London, Sage Publications.
- Van Cleaf, K., 2014. Blogging Through Motherhood: Free Labor, Femininity, and the (Re)Production of Maternity. *CUNY Academic Works*.
- Van Cleaf, K., 2017. Our mothers have always been machines: The conflation of media and motherhood. In: J. Daniels, K. Gregory & T. McMillan Cottom, eds. *Digital Sociologies*. Great Britain: Policy Press, pp. 449-462.
- Weeks, K., 2007. Life Within and Against Work: Affective Labor, Feminist Critique, and Post-Fordist Politics. *Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization*, 1(7), pp. 233-249.
- Weeks, K., 2011. *The Problem with Work. Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*. Durham: Duke University Press.