
Co-occupation categories tested in the mothering context

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fulfilment of the degree
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Declaration of thesis being own work

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**Declaration concerning Thesis presented for the degree of
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Solemnly and sincerely declare, in relation to the thesis entitled:

Co-occupation categories tested in the mothering context – do the four co-
occupations categories describe the mothering occupations of mothers of
children aged 0-5 years?

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Abstract

Co-occupation is a concept original to occupational science that is based on theoretical understanding and has largely been neglected in empirical research. The concept of co-occupation arose in the mothering context and refers to the interplay and interdependence of the occupations of two or more people; however it is often thought of as being human interaction.

This study was undertaken to help clarify the complexities of co-occupation and provide empirical data to support the initial definition of this concept. Based on a previous study's hypothesis, that co-occupations can be categorised into 'doing with', 'doing to', 'doing for', and 'doing because of', this study was designed to validate or refute these four categories as an accurate framework for co-occupation. To answer the research question, '*do the four co-occupation categories describe the mothering occupations of mothers of children aged 0-5 years?*' a content analysis of ten blogs written by mothers of children under the age of five was undertaken.

The findings reveal that not all mothering events extracted from the blogs fit under the original four categories. A further category, 'doing alongside', was identified as describing an important kind of co-occupation; it lets the mother achieve tasks other than childcare and lets the child develop an understanding of the world with only minimal interference from the mother. Other categories were refined to accurately describe the occupational dynamics between mother and child in these co-occupations. Positioning this study's findings in relevant literature demonstrates how co-occupation is omnipresent but not often recognised or described as such. Taxonomic issues around activity, occupation, and co-occupation arose and are discussed, a call for a common language in occupational therapy and occupational science is made, and the individualist view on occupation is critiqued. Further research recommendations are made and implications for practice, especially paediatric and maternal mental health, are discussed.

Acknowledgements

The moment a child is born, the mother is also born.

~Rajneesh~

This thesis would not have been possible to write without the courage and openness with which some mothers in this world blog about their lives with their children, share their highs and lows, anxieties and victories. To those mothers goes my heartfelt gratitude and respect.

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Preface

When I started my Honours' study in 2010, I was unaware of the concept of co-occupation. Now, being immersed in the topic of co-occupation I see this phenomenon everywhere and am intrigued. There is a pragmatic belief that a multitude of experience leads to the development of understanding and I can only assert this: Over the last two years I have been both a researcher of and a participant in co-occupation; I investigated the occupations of a dog-owner related to her dog, I have extensively studied literature on co-occupation, and I have been an active participant in co-occupations, especially in the mothering context as I am the mother of one beautiful girl and one baby 'on the way'. I am also a wife and a family member as well as a friend, student, and researcher. These different perspectives have helped me develop and deepen my understanding and I am excited to present this thesis on the co-occupations between mother and child.

I am also a German living in New Zealand. My German heritage is certainly evident in my academic processing and writing style as I have been told by both my supervisors. I am sure this is true, not only because they told me, but because the first 18 years of my (co-)occupations took place with my German family and friends, in a German Kindergarten, in three German schools and in various baby-sitting jobs for German families. I may have spent the last seven years in New Zealand but still identify as a German in New Zealand and not only because my passport says so.

As we occupational therapists and scientists believe, being occupied is the essence of who we are as humans. I am sure that my personal preferences and Germanic traits, being structured, enjoying doing tasks step by step, asserting and reasserting, introducing and reintroducing topics, making sure to get my point across, will always be part of me and therefore my writing style.

So join me and be guided through my understandings of the co-occupations of mother and child, the issues encountered, and the research possibilities for occupational science.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Co-occupation, an original concept in occupational science, was developed by Pierce (2004) in the mother-child context and arose from the need to communicate about occupations more accurately and specifically. Co-occupation refers to the interdependence of the occupations of two or more people. The mother-child context is not only the genesis of this concept but also remains the context in which co-occupation is most often described and reflected upon; however there appears to be little published empirical research on this topic to date. The concept of co-occupation has since been challenged by several authors who have attempted to re-define the term (L. Olson, 2006; Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow, 2009a). As is described in this thesis, co-occupation is, due to the highly interactive nature of mother-child occupations, often misunderstood as human interaction. However, as Pierce defined, the phenomenon of co-occupation is more complex and versatile than interaction.

This thesis builds upon a classification of co-occupation that was developed by Doidge (2011) in a study that examined the occupations of a dog-owner that are related to her dog. In the dog study, it was found that occupations related to a dog, a living being, co-occupations, can be assigned to four categories: ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’. A hypothesis proposed in the dog-study suggested that occupations in every relationship can be assigned to these four categories. The mothering context, being the context in which co-occupation arose and is most often described, appears to be an appropriate context to test this yet non-validated concept. Given that there is a considerable amount of literature on co-occupation in the mothering context available, a comparison and discussion around mothering co-occupations is possible.

This study is designed to validate or refute the four categories ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’. To validate or refute a theory or assumption, an affirmative or negative answer rather than a descriptive answer is required. Considering this and other factors outlined in the literature review, the

research question was posed: *‘Do the four co-occupations categories describe the mothering occupations of mothers of children aged 0-5 years?’*

Philosophically, this thesis is written and viewed through the pragmatist paradigm, an eclectic pluralist paradigm (Biesta, 2010) that requires mixing of methods. Ontologically, pragmatists share the belief that while there is truth, the truth may not ever be known. Reality, being distinctly different from truth, changes as understanding changes (Morgan, 2007). Knowledge is based on the physical world as well as on cognition, psychology, and pluralism of experience. Occupational scientists view humans holistically and therefore recognise and value individual experience (Zemke & Clark, 1996b), making pragmatism and occupational science philosophically congruent. Methodologically, pragmatists let the research question dictate the research methods, enabling the researcher to choose a methodology that appears suitable to the context.

Content analysis methodology is suited to answer the research question and was chosen to guide the research process. Content analysis is an unobtrusive methodology in which inferences from existing text are made. In this research, blogs written by mothers were used as empirical, original text. Posts from 10 mothering blogs were selected through multistage random sampling.

This thesis consists of six chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion. This introduction has briefly summarized the generating of the research question and the justification for the research methodology and data source. In the second chapter, the literature review, relevant literature is appraised to position the research topic in its context. The literature addresses four topics: (1) occupational science, including its history and current research foci, (2) occupation and co-occupation, including definitions of occupation and different understandings of the concept of co-occupation, and (3) mothering occupations, including definitions on the key words ‘mother’ and ‘mothering’ and an outline of several types of mothering occupations. Through identifying gaps in knowledge throughout the literature review, the forming of the research question is enabled.

In the methodology, the research process is outlined and justified and each of the ten mothers' blogs is described. The methodology commences with the research approach which includes philosophical and methodological choices. The data collection process is then outlined and justified before describing the research population. Blogs as a data source are appraised, including an account of its history and research issues when using blogs as a data source. The sampling strategy of the thesis is outlined and the ten sampled blogs are briefly described; common themes of the blogs are outlined. The data analysis and synthesis are then described based on Krippendorff's (2004) and Weber's (1990) guidelines to undertaking content analysis. Ethical and validity issues are addressed.

The fourth chapter, the findings, guides the reader through the many dimensions of mothering occupations, introduces categories into which the mothering occupations were divided, and answers the primary research question. The findings chapter contains both a qualitative structured description of mothering events and an overview of the distribution of mothering events in the newly defined categories.

In the discussion, the findings of this thesis are positioned in relevant literature, comparisons are drawn, and reasons for similarities and differences are discussed. The chapter contains a comparison between the current study's categories and those of the dog study; a brief justification for the differences is provided. The author's current understanding of co-occupation based on the findings of the study is discussed and compared to understandings of other authors; dimensions that may be a source of the differences are investigated. Taxonomic issues in occupational science and therapy are addressed; it is suggested that the individualist view on occupation may mislead understandings of occupation. One aspect of the theory-practice divide between occupational science and therapy is discussed: co-occupation is a concept original to occupational science and apparently a term non-existent in but also invaluable to occupational therapy. Content analysis as a novel and suitable methodology in occupational science and blogs as an appropriate source of potential empirical data are appraised. Limitations of the research, research recommendations, and implications for occupational therapy practice are then highlighted.

The sixth and final chapter of this thesis is the conclusion in which three key issues identified in this thesis are drawn together: (1) taxonomic confusion on activity, occupation, and co-occupation, (2) moving beyond the individual in occupational science research, and (3) co-occupation as the essence and building blocks of relationships. Research recommendations and practice implications are summarized prior to concluding the thesis with a hypothesizing statement.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Introduction

As flagged in the introduction, there is some confusion around the concept of co-occupation. Literature on co-occupation was consulted to establish the gap in knowledge around co-occupation and to form the research question. The research aim is to validate or refute the four categories ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’ as accurate descriptors of co-occupation in the mothering context through answering the research question *‘do the four co-occupations categories describe the mothering occupations of mothers of children aged 0-5 years?’*.

This literature review primarily addresses two strands of literature grounded in occupational science: co-occupation and mothering. Preceding an appraisal of these topics is a brief overview of the occupational science discipline, its aims, history, and current research agenda to provide a professional focus and a justification for grounding this study in occupational science. Occupation, the core of occupational science, is examined prior to exploring the term co-occupation. This exploration provides background knowledge about the theoretical underpinnings, discrepancies, and current understandings of the concepts occupation and co-occupation. Co-occupation and mothering literature is reviewed separately, however some blurring is evident as mothering is the genesis of the concept of co-occupation (Esdaile & Olson, 2004). The terms ‘mother’ and ‘mothering’ are defined and occupationally focused literature helps identify mothering occupations and a professionally relevant view on the context of this research. The identified knowledge gaps shape the research question.

Literature searches were conducted for each theme on the databases CINAHL and Google Scholar; further literature was located through searching the online version of the Journal of Occupational Science (JOS). Several library databases were searched. Some literature was located through the reference lists of already located articles. Other databases such as OTCATS and OTSeeker were consulted but did not

yield any relevant results, most likely due to the theoretical focus that the topics of interest for this research are approached with.

Occupational Science

Definition and history of the “evolving discipline”

Occupational science is an academic “evolving discipline” (Zemke & Clark, 1996b, p. vii) that focuses on human occupation in its form, function, and meaning, and on how occupation is reflective of and linked to health. Occupational scientists assume that occupation is a central and defining aspect of human life; a commonly used definition by Zemke and Clark (1996b) describes occupations as “chunks of daily activity that can be named in the lexicon of the culture” (p. ix).

Occupational science was founded in 1989 through the launching of a doctoral programme at the University of Southern California (Zemke & Clark, 1996b). Elizabeth J. Yerxa has been credited with its founding, although the distinct ideas of occupational science have been articulated earlier by Adolph Meyer and Eleanor Clarke Slagle in the early 20th century (Yerxa et al., 1990). A very early view on humans as occupational beings was voiced by the English philosopher Locke in 1690 who describes three sciences in his “Essay of Human Understanding” (cited in A. A. Wilcock, 2003, p. 116) that were deemed necessary for humans to understand their world. Locke refers to what is today considered occupational science when he writes: “... Or, secondly, that [science] which man himself ought to do, as a rational and voluntary agent, for the attainment of any ends, especially happiness...” (cited in A. A. Wilcock, 2003, p. 116). Wilcock writes “that which man himself ought to do” has the same meaning as the brief statement that contemporary occupational scientists use to describe their discipline, “the study of people as occupational beings”. She describes Locke’s portrayed view as a belief that every person has the potential to be in charge of their occupations and the right and the potential abilities to pursue any goals, “especially happiness”, a view that today’s occupational therapists and scientists embrace (Gray, 1998).

Occupational science's conceptual roots and assumptions lie "in the practice of occupational therapy, with its concerns with the adaptation, by way of engagement in occupation, of persons with disabilities" (Clark et al., 1991, p. 304). Occupational therapy is a practice that evolved through experience, observation, and the appreciation of the human need to be meaningfully occupied, rather than being built upon an academic, scientific, or philosophical understanding (A. A. Wilcock, 2003). Occupational science is therefore a discipline that was established after its core beliefs were already practiced.

Yerxa expresses a dualistic view on the link between occupational science and therapy. She describes occupational science as a foundation for occupational therapy practice that informs, builds, and justifies occupational therapy reasoning (Yerxa et al., 1990), enabling therapists to identify and articulate the characteristics of and need for occupational therapy intervention (A. A. Wilcock, 1991). On the other hand, Yerxa also writes that occupational scientists are concerned with the universal study of human occupation and should not limit their research to its immediate application to occupational therapy practice (Yerxa, 2000).

As a science that was established after its understandings were already practiced, occupational science refutes positivistic views on occupation and, due to its roots in occupational therapy philosophy, embraces qualitative, subjective, and rich understandings of occupation and their meaning to the individual. This is mirrored in the approach that occupational scientists take when researching human engagement in occupation (Zemke & Clark, 1996c).

Research foci in occupational science

Occupational science has three foci that are being addressed through empirical research (Hocking, 2000b). These foci are presented in Hocking's framework with three levels: The central focus and first level of this framework is occupation, the second level addresses individuals' experiences of occupation which Hocking (2000b) terms "occupational processes" (p. 58), and the third level links occupation to other phenomena such as health.

Firstly, occupation, seen as situated centrally in people's lives, is the primary focus of occupational science research. Some argue the need for understanding occupations in-depth to help occupational therapists use occupations more knowledgeably and effectively in their interventions (Dickie, 2003; Wright-St. Clair, 2004) and bring occupational therapists "back to the uniqueness of the profession and their media: occupation" (Molineux, 2004, p. 1). However, others (e.g. Clark, 1997; Glover, 2009) assert that research on occupations ought to be carried out to further occupational science knowledge without being restricted to produce imminent consequences for occupational therapy intervention (Lunt, 1997).

A second goal in occupational science is to understand the "subjective experience, process, features and outcomes of occupational performance" (Hocking, 2000b, p. 59) that create what Hocking refers to as "occupational processes" (p. 59). Pursuing this goal is evident by many occupational scientists' use of qualitative methodology when researching occupations and thus delving into their participants' unique experience and perception of occupation (e.g. Scheerer, 2004).

Thirdly, the link between human occupation and overall wellbeing is a core assumption of occupational science and has been a main concern of occupational scholars such as Yerxa (1998), Wilcock (2010), and Law and Bennett (2010). Occupational scientists and therapists share the belief that occupation is a central and essential aspect of a healthy human life. This view has been refined and redefined; current understandings vary among scholars: Some assume that occupational balance is crucial, referring to balance of leisure and work occupations (Lovelock, Bentley, Dunn, & Wallenbert, 2002). Others argue that the concept of occupational balance misses the essence of wellbeing through occupation and argue that occupational integrity, referring to the congruence between one's occupations and identity and beliefs, is defining of one's satisfaction and healthy life (Pentland & McColl, 2008; Wada, Backman, & Forwell, 2010). Pierce (2001) argues that occupational scholars tend to glorify occupation and calls for research on less pleasant occupations to further understanding of the phenomenon 'occupation'.

In summary, from an occupational perspective, meaningful occupation can be described as the essence of being human. Leading the occupational therapy profession back to using their core strategy, occupation as means and ends of therapy (Gray, 1998) is one goal of occupational science with the central goal of occupational science being research on understanding occupation. To understand and communicate about the interplay of occupations of two or more people, Pierce (2004) developed the concept ‘co-occupation’, a concept that has since been challenged by others interested in occupational terminology. To build a conceptual understanding of the concept ‘co-occupation’, the term ‘occupation’ is explored prior to examining different definitions of ‘co-occupation’.

(Co-)Occupation

Definition of ‘occupation’

Etymologically, the term ‘occupation’ is derived from the Latin root ‘occupatio’ and translates to “to occupy or to seize” (Christiansen & Townsend, 2010, p. 2). In occupational science literature, this etymologic root is evident in several definitions such as when scholars describe occupation as a phenomenon which enables people to structure their day and occupy time and space (Alsaker et al., 2006; Gevir, Goldstand, Weintraub, & Parush, 2006). However, there are varying definitions of the term occupation in both occupational science and occupational therapy.

After two decades of researching occupation (Pierce, 2009) and human engagement in occupation (Hocking, 2009), there still appears to be some confusion on how to best define and explain the phenomenon ‘occupation’. Definitions of the term ‘occupation’ each place emphasis on different aspects of occupation which shows the complexity of this phenomenon when viewed through an occupational lens. Zemke and Clark offer the definition that occupations are “chunks of activity that can be named in the lexicon of the culture” (1996, p. ix), which seems a very broad definition when compared to others such as that of Yerxa (1998). Yerxa writes that occupations have social, psychological, emotional, temporal and spatial components. This illustrates Yerxa’s attempt to scrutinize occupation and list

influencing aspects. Kielhofner (1985) similarly tries to highlight factors that affect occupation and writes that occupations are influenced by the participant's values, beliefs, and experiences with occupations and are organised in specific patterns. Wilcock defines occupation as "a generic term referring to people's goal-directed use of time, interest, and attention" (1991, p. 297), referring again to the etymologic root of the word 'occupation' in that people use occupation to occupy time, interest, and attention. These varying definitions highlight the problematic nature of defining a phenomenon that must be seen in its context. While some scholars describe 'occupation' such as Zemke and Clark (1996b), others such as Kielhofner (1985) attempt to explain the process of 'engaging in an occupation'. Some focus on keeping the definition simple and only address the apparently necessary components; others try to incorporate as many aspects of occupation as possible. Occupation may be difficult to define because it is a phenomenon that can only exist through the intertwining of its aspects such as time and space, and does not exist until it is performed (Polatajko et al., 2004). Simply put, occupations are "the things people do" (Hocking, 2009, p. 140).

However, occupational scientists and therapists are concerned with varying levels of "the things people do" (Hocking, 2009, p. 140) from a voluntary movement in a single joint to role fulfilment; referring to every single voluntary movement as 'occupation' would cause confusion when communicating with fellow scholars (Hagedorn, 2000; Polatajko et al., 2004). Polatajko and colleagues revised occupation taxonomies to clarify the differences between occupation, activity, and task, building on Hagedorn's (2000) Taxonomy of Human Occupation. Polatajko and colleagues' "Taxonomic Code of Human Occupation" (TCOP) (Polatajko et al., 2004) involves seven levels of occupational performance which they base on observable actions only. The levels are (1) voluntary movement, (2) movement pattern, (3) action, (4) task, (5) activity, (6) occupation, (7) occupational grouping (Table 1). The levels follow the typical guidelines of taxonomic codes in that each higher level incorporates all the characteristics from the levels below and adds another dimension of complexity to it.

Table 1 – Taxonomic Code of Occupation (Polatajko et al., 2004)

Level	Term	Description
7	occupational grouping	set of occupations, grouped by theme (such as activities of daily living includes bathing, toileting, dressing, etc)
6	occupation	set of meaningful activities, performed with some consistency or regularity, named for the predominant activity
5	activity	any set of tasks
4	task	action/set of action that involves tool use, simple or compound
3	action	set of purposeful active movement patterns producing an outcome/product, may involve materials
2	movement pattern	a series/set of movement at one or more joints
1	voluntary movement	a voluntary active movement around a single joint with physical, cognitive, and affective components

In comparison, Pierce (2001) describes the differences between occupation and activity and “untangles” (p. 138) them as two equally valuable but distinctly different concepts. Separating activity and occupation helps define occupation to what Pierce describes a unique, one-time experience in a personally constructed context. In contrast, she writes that an activity is a cultural, general idea about a category of action. While the terminology between Polatajko and colleagues and Pierce is not congruent, the general idea of occupation being more complex and meaningful is evident in both differentiations.

Occupation scrutinized

While defining ‘occupation’ appears to be a confusing task for occupational scholars, describing the many components involved is an even more complex undertaking. Occupational science literature offers a wide range of aspects that may determine, define, or contribute to the course, motivation, and outcome of occupations, or what Hocking describes as “occupational processes” (Hocking, 2009b, p. 59). One exhaustive framework about the many aspects of occupational

processes was developed by Hocking (2009). This framework was chosen to define occupation in detail as it appears to encompass all aspects that the appraised papers of other occupational scholars include in their definitions. While separately organised, these parameters appear to be intertwined as they influence and depend on each other.

Capacities, knowledge, and skills. Engaging, and staying engaged in an occupation requires physical and mental skills, knowledge, and capacities (Hocking, 2009). Engaging in an occupation also provides the opportunity to develop and master skills. Lack of individual capacities can sometimes be partially, sometimes fully, and sometimes not at all compensated by external aids (Mihailidis & Davis, 2005). Recent literature on occupational choice identifies the aspects of attitudes, values, and beliefs as a strong influence on what people do, who they engage in an occupation with, and where they participate in an occupation (Abrahams, 2008; Christiansen & Townsend, 2010). Hocking (2009) adds that attitudes, values, and beliefs also influence how the individual approaches and participates in an occupation.

Who and with whom – or – societal and social factors. Society places expectations on who engages in specific occupations (Hocking, 2009), a preconception that results in occupational stereotyping. An example that Hocking provides is that society expects quilters to be adult women rather than men. Societal expectations may therefore encourage or deter people from participating in specific occupations. Individuals can engage in occupations with varying social components. Occupations that require the individual to participate on their own, termed ‘solitary occupations’, to highly social and interactive occupations, referred to as ‘co-occupations’ (Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow, 2009a). The social component has been described as the defining factor of whether an occupation is solitary or co-occupational; however, there may be other influencing components.

What, how, where, and using what – or – the observable features of occupation. Hocking expands on Larson and Zemke’s (2003) list of observable features of an occupation (who, what, how, and where) and adds ‘using what’,

referring to consumables used during the course of an occupation. The geographical place in which an occupation occurs influences the way in which the occupation is carried out as it may afford or restrict engagement and provide or fail to provide necessary components of an occupation (Zemke, 2004).

The way in which an individual engages in an occupation, aside from being influenced by a belief system, may also be dictated by rules and regulations. Occupations may encompass formal rules such as in a rugby game, or they may be regulated by the discretion of a subculture. Hocking (2009) provides an example of informal norms when she refers to older women in Britain believe a ‘proper meal’ consists of meat, potatoes, and vegetables, although meat may be mince, sausages, or eggs. Processes of occupations refer to a sequence in which several steps ought to be carried out such as lining a baking tin before filling in with dough.

When: temporal aspects. Temporality is an intriguing aspect of occupations as it consists of many levels. It may refer abstractly to an occupation’s past, present and future, but temporality may also describe more observable aspects of time, such as minutes or centuries (Zemke, 2004). Temporality has been discussed in the occupational science literature as a means to understand time-use, time-allocation, and humans’ perspectives on these temporality features (Christiansen, 1996).

Outcomes. Occupations can have both tangible and abstract outcomes. An example of a tangible outcome is a quilt after spending some time quilting (Dickie, 2003); an abstract example in the same context is having acquired knowledge about how to quilt, quilting language, and aesthetics.

Meanings and standards. The meaning of occupations varies for each participant as their attitude towards and experience of an occupation is unique (Johnson, 1996). Whether or not a specific occupation holds meaning for an individual may reflect their culture, traditions, or religion. Meanings imply standards and self- or community-imposed expectations that influence engagement in occupation. Hocking (2009) writes that meanings are not self-evident, they are an ideation of one’s worldview and are therefore highly subjective and individual.

Sociocultural, political, economic, geographic, and historical contexts.

Sociocultural, political, economic, geographic, and historical context all have an impact on occupation, shaping the context and therefore the meaning of occupation (Hocking, 2009). These aspects may also afford or restrict occupations, for example Hocking compares the traditional Christmas menus of Canada with New Zealand and highlights how the geographical context has an impact on the seasonal ingredients that were chosen to be part of the meal. Cultural belonging may govern what is done and how it is done. Culture offers traditions that some choose to adhere to (Wright-St. Clair, 2004); the traditions are expressed in engaging in certain occupations.

Impact on health. The link between occupation and health is one of the main assumptions of occupational science and therefore an aspect that is essential to address when aiming to understand occupation. While the occupational view in general urges participation in occupation, there are also occupations that have a negative impact on health (Pierce, 2009) such as working with lead (Hocking, 2009).

Occupations – processes too complicated to explain?

Occupations have been termed “processes too complicated to explain” by Dickie (2010, p. 195). The root for this assumption is demonstrated and obvious through the many parameters listed by Hocking (2009), outlined above. There are seemingly endless and interacting aspects of society, context, and psychology influencing occupation – the above components seem to only start explaining the phenomenon occupation. Polatajko (2006) similarly summarizes occupation into “who, what, where, how, why, when, and with whom”. In exploring the aspect of ‘with whom’ in occupations, the concept of ‘co-occupation’ was revealed in the occupational science literature.

Co-occupation

Co-occupation is a concept original to occupational science and has evolved as part of the discipline’s aim to understand and communicate about occupation and its many aspects, particularly in relation to mothering occupations, issues, and concerns (Pierce & Marshall, 2004). It is grounded in interdisciplinary theories and

yet it describes what humans do from an occupational perspective (Pierce, 2009) ‘Co-occupation’ is a term in the occupational science literature that some scholars use when referring to occupations that are interactive in nature (Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow, 2009a; Pierce, 2009; Pierce & Marshall, 2004). The origin of co-occupation is the highly interactive mothering context; Pierce claims that she coined the ‘co-occupation’ in the beginnings of occupational science when one of her great interests was occupational taxonomy (Pierce, 2009). Over the last decade several scholars have studied co-occupation, focused mainly on the child-mother context due to the highly inter-dependent nature of their relationship (Esdaile, 2004; L. Olson, 2006; Pierce, 2000; Poskey, 2007; Price & Miner, 2009).

Pierce defined co-occupations as highly interactive and social occupations that exist because of and are shaped by each other (Pierce & Marshall, 2004). Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow (2009a) write that despite occupational scientists’ knowledge about occupations, there is limited understanding as to how a co-occupational experience is co-created. Probably due to the nature of the occupational therapy profession, most accounts describe co-occupations that are problematic and difficult due to physical or mental health issues on either the child’s or the mother’s side. For example Olson (2004) provides several vignettes of problematic mother-child co-occupations involving mothers and very young children such as feeding/eating, getting to sleep/settling, and comforting/being comforted.

Different understandings of the concept ‘co-occupation’

The confusion around the term ‘co-occupation’ is captured in the diagrams and definitions below. The diagrams have been developed within this thesis to illustrate several contrasting definitions of scholars interested in the concept of co-occupation.

Pierce’s understanding

Pierce claims that she coined the term ‘co-occupation’ in 1990 while tidying up and singing with her daughter (Pierce & Marshall, 2004); she originally defined the term as the occupations of two or more people influencing and interacting with

each other. Pierce described co-occupations as being highly interactive occupations on a social continuum of occupation (Figure 1). This concept and definition appear to be based on Pierce's experience and expert opinion rather than on empirical research.

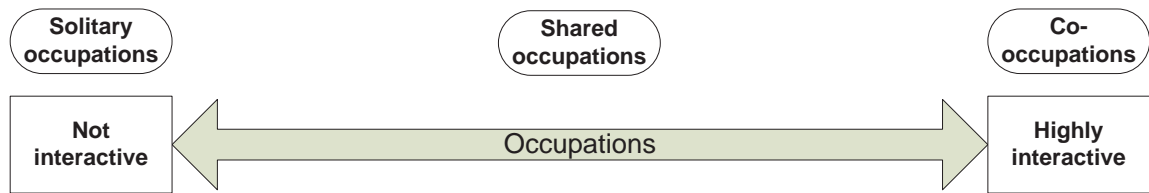


Figure 1 – Co-occupations Pierce

Zemke and Clark's understanding

According to Zemke and Clark (1996b), there are three categories of social engagement in occupations all of which are done in a shared context (i.e. shared time and space); they describe the change in the level of interactivity on a social continuum (refer to Figure 2). Zemke and Clark describe three levels of interactivity: (1) Occupations that are merely done in the same space without any interaction such as standing in the grocery line are named parallel occupations. Further along the continuum and more interactive are (2) shared occupations that occur when people in a shared context work toward the same goal but are not intensely interacting, such as a quilting gathering where each quilter goes about making their own quilt. (3) “The most deeply social occupations” (1996b, p. 213) are termed co-occupations and require two or more people to occur. Zemke and Clark describe the social-interactive component as the defining aspect to determine where on the parallel– co-occupation continuum (Figure 2) an occupation-phenomenon ought to be placed. This is a framework based on theory, reasoning, expert opinion, and literature; it is not based on empirical research.

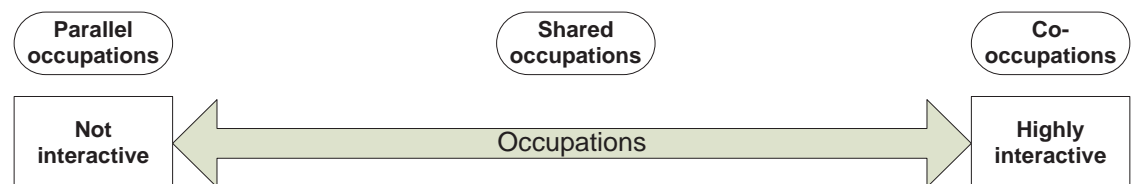


Figure 2 – Co-occupations Zemke and Clark

Olson's understanding

Drawing on her work experience in paediatric occupational therapy, Olson (2004) describes how she sees mother and child situated toward each other in a co-occupation. She writes that each participant engaged in a co-occupation brings their own physical, mental, and emotional skills and capacities (refer to Figure 3) - a statement that is validated in Hocking's (2009) occupation descriptors that were described earlier. Olson writes that co-occupations are co-created occupational experiences; as described earlier, she offers vignette examples of co-occupation which are of the interactional kind such as feeding/eating and comforting/being comforted. This model is based on vignettes and reasoning.

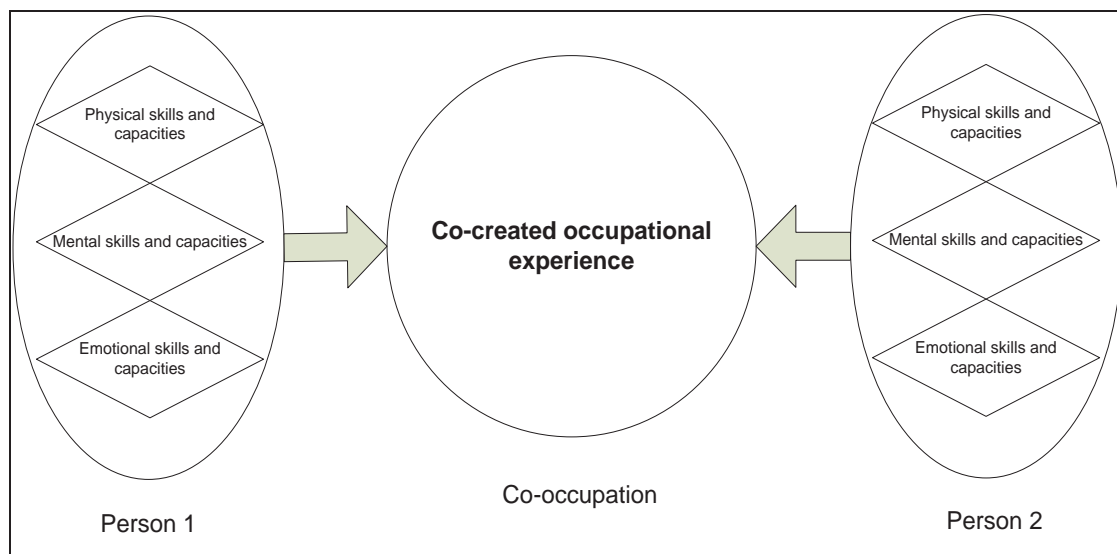


Figure 3 – Co-occupations Olson

Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow's understanding

Basing their understanding on Olson's work, Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow (2009a) have established clear criteria that may help determine the nature of an occupation: in their understanding, co-occupations have elements of shared intentionality (understanding each other's occupational role in the co-occupation), shared physicality (reciprocal motor behaviour), and shared emotionality (being emotionally responsive to each other)(Figure 4). To refine and redefine the term 'co-occupation', Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow articulate their understanding and "extend

the dialogue” (p.151) by writing that co-occupations occur in a shared time and space, are interactive, and have a shared goal. Their understanding is that these aspects of co-occupation are embedded in shared meaning. As do other scholars, Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow give practical examples of their definition but again, this concept is based on theory and experience rather than research.

However, once developed, Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow’s concept was applied to one research study which compared personality dimensions (Pizur-Barnekow & Knutson, 2009) and heart-rate variability during solitary and social occupations (Persch, Pizur-Barnekow, Cashin, & Pickens, 2009). Unsurprisingly, this study showed that during social play, personality and behaviour is more affective and pronounced than during solitary play; the heart-rate variability was deemed non-significant.

Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow claim that, although being a longstanding concept, co-occupation is not thoroughly understood or well researched; how humans create or co-create co-occupation has yet to be explained. Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow’s understanding varies from Pierce’s (2004) as their framework appears to describe interaction between humans rather than the interplay of occupations.

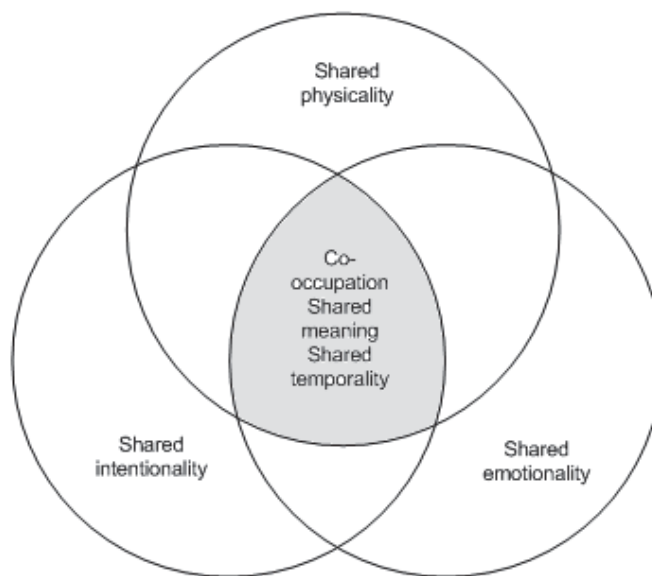


Figure 4 – Co-occupations Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow

Pierce (2009) responds to Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow's (2009) definition of co-occupation. While she agrees that interactivity of humans is one aspect of co-occupation, she believes that shared time, space, and goal, while often occurring in co-occupation, are not essential components thereof (Figure 5). Pierce cites Wendy Wood asking the exemplary question of whether or not a perpetrator and a victim of a crime are engaged in a co-occupation as they do not have the same intentions but are engaged in a highly interactive occupation (Pierce, 2009, p. 203). Pierce's original succinct definition of co-occupation would classify this interaction as a co-occupation and therefore, similarly to Olson's examples, involve negatively experienced co-occupations.

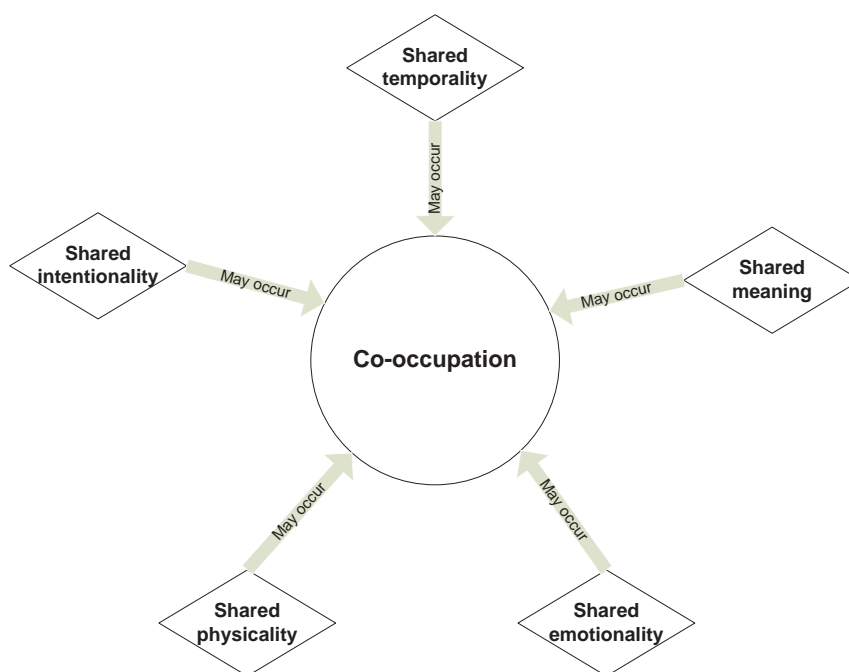


Figure 5 – Pierce's response

Doidge's understanding

Doidge (2011) developed four categories of occupations through analysing the interactive nature of occupations between a dog and its owner (refer to Figure 6): 'doing with', 'doing to', 'doing for', and 'doing because of'. The categories incorporate both Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow's (2009a) and Pierce's (2009) concepts of co-occupations. 'Doing with' occupations are done in the same time and space with both participants contributing equally to the occupations; they have a

shared goal and shared intentions. An example from the dog-owner context is playing ‘fetch’ together when both owner and dog participate equally. ‘Doing to’ occupations are also done in the same time and space but one participant is more active than the other, and intentions and goals may differ between the participants. An example occupation is clipping claws, an occupation that the dog dislikes but the owner sees as a necessity. The owner is the initiator and has to accommodate the dog’s unwillingness that expresses itself in squirming. ‘Doing for’ occupations are done by one individual for the other; shared time and space are not required characteristics. Because the participants are not directly interacting, there is no shared goal or intention. An example of such an occupation is buying dog food – the owner buys food for the dog because the dog cannot buy it for itself; the outcome of the occupation directly relates to the dog and to the occupation of the dog. ‘Doing because of’ occupations do not directly involve the passive individual but merely their existence. An example of this occupation category is ‘reading a book about dogs’. The owner does not read the book for the dog but for their own interest in the dog; it therefore relates only indirectly to the dog, making the dog’s existence the cause for the occupation.

While not based in inter-human context generally, or the mother-child context specifically, this framework is based on empirical research. It describes all the occupations that the dog-owner participates in that are related to her dog, a living, responding being.

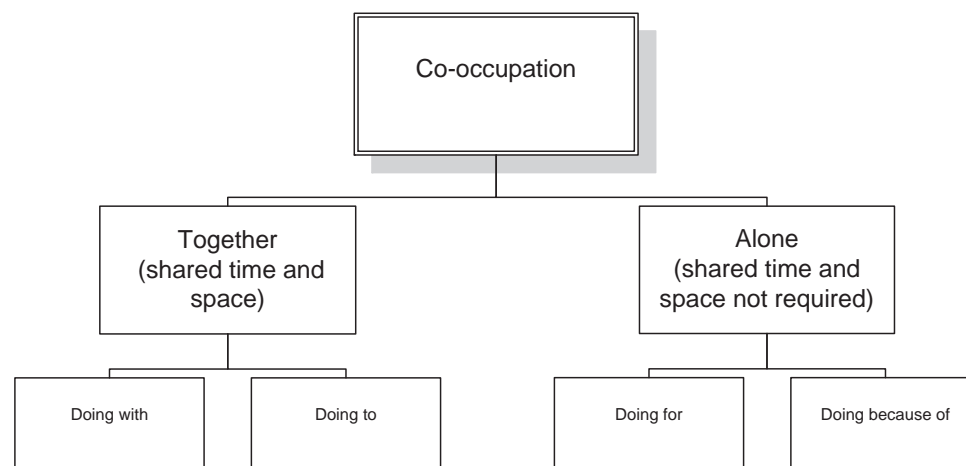


Figure 6 – Co-occupations Doidge

In the dissertation (Doidge, 2011) that describes these four categories, two hypotheses were posed: (1) ‘doing with/to/for/because of’ occupations exist in every relationship and (2) every occupation that occurs in or is related to a relationship can be assigned to one of the four categories.

The four categories are a promising concept to explore as they appear to describe sub-classes of co-occupations; they describe occupations in or related to relationships and provide a more inclusive view of co-occupation than the concept described by Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow (2009a). The four categories describe co-occupations in more detail than Zemke and Clark’s (1996b) and illustrate the interplay between the occupations more particularly than Olson’s (2004) description. The concept and the integrity of these four categories have not yet been validated or examined in inter-human contexts.

Gaps in knowledge

Pierce (2009) acknowledges gaps in the understandings of co-occupation and urges scholars to generate and refine definitions of co-occupations. She states that these definitions ought to be limited to necessary components – cautioning scholars to avoid complicated definitions that may cause confusion. She also asks of her fellow scholars not to glorify co-occupations which often occurs due to the occupational paradigm – that, in general, being occupied and engaged in social occupations is healthy (Lawlor, 2003). Pierce believes that only through understanding less pleasant occupations and co-occupations, occupation can be thoroughly understood and eventually society’s occupational needs can be met.

Although occupations have been studied and focused on over the last two decades (Pierce et al., 2010), there still appears to be some confusion around the term ‘occupation’. Therefore it comes as no surprise that the concept of co-occupation, which is strongly based on the concept of occupations, is not thoroughly understood either. Co-occupation is a concept that has been widely neglected in empirical research to date (Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow, 2009b), possibly because of fundamental disagreement on its definition. Co-occupations, as defined by Pierce (2004), occur in every community and every household; any human activity could be

a co-occupation, as humans share the environment which is influenced by human occupation and vice versa: human occupation is influenced by the environment, resulting in a co-occupational society. Co-occupations enable building, developing, and, on a more negative stance, destroying of culture, politics, and society through inter-human occupation. This co-occupational view moves well beyond the individual, addressing the research need to examine occupation past the individual experience (Dickie, Cutchon, & Humphry, 2006; Fogelberg & Frauwirth, 2010; Ohmer, Meadowcroft, Freed, & Lewis, 2009; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). It is interesting to note that co-occupation is seen as a separate concept in Western occupational science literature when it appears that co-occupations are omnipresent and evident in everyday life.

From an occupational therapy perspective, focusing research on co-occupations seems to be congruent with the current focus on population and primary health (A. A. Wilcock, 2010). Acknowledging that interacting with others and having a stable social network is beneficial for overall wellbeing (Reid, 2008) and occupational science's dedication to provide occupational therapy with background knowledge (A. A. Wilcock, 2003), it is a justifiable next step to focus on the definition of and empirical research on co-occupation. Through research, the relationships between occupation, co-occupation, and subtypes of co-occupations will become visible and provide clearer information on how co-occupations are created (Pierce, 2009, p. 201). Doidge's four categories 'doing with', 'doing to', 'doing for', and 'doing because of' are yet untested. When comparing the structure and the definition of this framework with Pierce's belief that sub-systems of co-occupation may help explain the phenomenon of co-occupation further, the concept of the four categories could enrich the overall understanding of co-occupations.

There is considerable amount of occupation and co-occupation based literature on mothering and mother-child interaction, however, this literature is largely built on opinion and was theoretically derived through occupational therapists' reflections on practice. The concepts may therefore not be transferable and are lacking trustworthiness as the data is limited to memories and practice notes that are reflected upon. Empirical research is required to develop a trustworthy

definition of this concept that stems from transferable research. While Pierce (2009) argues that co-occupations ought to be researched in contexts other than that of mother-child, it may be necessary to firstly agree to a common understanding of co-occupation. An appropriate context to refine the concept of co-occupation could be the genesis of the concept – the context of mother and child.

The four categories are a potentially valid descriptive framework for occupations that occur in relationships. The categories arose from empirical research; it can therefore be attempted to transfer the categories to other research. To progress occupational science knowledge about occupation-based taxonomy in general and co-occupation in particular, these four categories require being either validated or refuted.

Mothering Occupations

Mother and mothering – definitions

A mother is a female parent who may or may not have given birth to the child she raises. Historically, it was the ability to procreate that enabled a woman to become a mother (Rich, 1986), although adoption has long been a secondary route to become a mother (Presser, 1971). In recent years and through medical advances, infertile women have been enabled to become biological mothers (Boivin, Bunting, Collins, & Nygren, 2007). The assumption that always one of two parents is a female mother has been reviewed since homosexual partners have had the opportunity and legal rights to become parents too (Herek, 2002). Primeau, an occupational therapist interested in mothering occupations, cites famous talk show host Oprah Winfrey: “biology is the least of what makes someone a mother” (2004, p. 115); a mother is someone who engages in “maternal work” (Pierce & Marshall, 2004, p. 75), more commonly referred to ‘mothering’ (Dunbar & Roberts, 2006; Griffin, 2004; LeRoy, 2004; Price & Stephenson, 2009a; Segal, 2004).

In the online version of the Oxford Dictionary, ‘mothering’ is defined as “to bring up (a child) with care and affection”, or, alternatively, “to look after (someone) kindly and protectively; sometimes excessively so” (2011). Primeau (2004) writes

that mothering is an occupation characterized by nourishing and protecting someone, and that mothering is not exclusively done by mothers but also by fathers. Ruddick (1995) shares this belief and writes that “anyone who commits her or himself to children’s demands, and makes the work of response a considerable part of her or his life, is a mother” (p. xxii). According to these definitions of mothering, and to Primeau’s research (Primeau, 2000a, 2000b) on household chores and childcare division between parents, not only mothers mother.

As opposed to the above view, anthropologists differ in their conclusion as to how to define mothers due to their intensive research on women’s mothering occupations. During research, women’s ability to perform what is described as “enfolded occupations” (Bateson, 1996, p. 5), commonly referred to as multitasking, was monitored. Bateson (1996) describes ‘enfolded occupations’ occur when women, especially mothers, are able to and frequently do simultaneously attend to household work and childcare. This supports that differences in behaviour are of biological, as well as socially shaped, nature. More women are the main care-taker of their children than men (Francis-Connolly, 2004) and spend about three times as much time being engaged in active occupation with their children as men commonly do (Primeau, 2004). Considering this in Hocking’s (2000a) assumption that identity is determined by occupation, mothers are usually women, which is reflected in most mothering literature; this is also the stance adopted in this thesis.

What are mothering occupations?

Becoming a mother entails a major lifestyle, occupational, and role change for the first time mother (Horne, Corr, & Earle, 2005). Mothering has been described as a lifetime occupation that never stops, not even when mother and child live physically apart or when the child is a parent his/herself (Francis-Connolly, 1998, 2000, 2004). However, mothering occupations change over time in both nature and intensity (Francis-Connolly, 2000, 2004). The time period between the child’s birth and the age of 5 years has been described as being the time frame in which mothering occupations occur most frequently and intensively (Francis-Connolly, 2000). While acknowledging the life course and duration of mothering, this review

focuses on mothering literature that addresses the first five years of the children's lives only.

When does mothering begin? The earliest mothering occupations

There is no definite agreement on when mothering begins although, when considering the previously outlined definitions, mothering may well start before the baby is born. This view is reflected in Esdaile, Farrell, and Olson's (2004) research on anticipating occupations of mothering which include planning for pregnancy, falling pregnant (whether naturally or with medical support), attending birthing and parenting classes and thus preparing for birth, and birthing itself. These occupations generate what Esdaile and colleagues describe as "lifestyle redesign" (p. 3).

Mothering occupations with infants and young children

Mothering occupations that focus on infants and young children have been described as being co-occupations by Olson (2004). She reasons that infants' occupations are associated with the presence of and interaction with their primary caregivers, the primary caregiver usually being the mother. Price and Miner Stephenson (2009a) agree and write that co-occupations are necessary not only for the child's survival but also for its occupational development. Three co-occupations that Olson (2004) describes are feeding, sleeping, comforting. Olson acknowledges that, while describing some factors that may contribute to the co-occupations (refer to Figure 3), there may be more influences than described.

The feeding co-occupations in the early stages of motherhood typically include breast- or bottle-feeding, although in some cases this mothering occupation may not be possible, for example where a child is born prematurely or is experiencing feeding difficulties (Winston, Dunbar, Reed, & Francis-Connolly, 2010). Olson (2004) describes the feeding occupation as one of the first co-occupations (feeding/eating) between mother and child and as the mother's primary role. She writes that feeding involves two actors (mother and child) and describes how various aspects may influence the co-occupation of feeding, including culture,

societal expectations, social support, environment, attitude, and skills in mothering occupations.

While sleeping is not considered an occupation as, while purposeful, it is passive, the facilitation of falling asleep may be considered as an occupation (Vergara, 2002). Olson (2004) describes how various aspects may influence the mother's occupation of settling the infant to sleep and for the infant to fall and remain asleep that include: expectations, other occupations (such as feeding, nappy changing), skills, time, place, and social support.

A further co-occupation described by Olson (2004) is comforting. Olson writes that this specific co-occupation imposes immense societal expectations of the mother as the mother is expected to comfort her child right away and be aware of the reason for her baby's upset. While these are all co-occupations essential to the baby's survival, other co-occupations may be used to facilitate development.

Co-occupations with the focus on enabling occupational development

Esdaile (2004) writes that play in infants and toddlers mainly occurs with the mother, who is most often the infant's or toddler's primary caregiver; however working mothers spend less time playing with their children than stay at home mothers (Pierce & Marshall, 2004). Play is seen as an important co-occupation between mother and child in which the child experiences trust, learns communicating and expressing feelings, and develops other life skills.

Play is described as a co-occupation by Price and Stephenson (2009a). Co-occupation in general, and play in specific, is seen as an integral part of children's day-to-day life. It enables occupational development which is, by definition, "embedded in and inseparable from societal efforts to offer occupational opportunities and social processes that are part of participation in everyday activities" (Humphry & Wakeford, 2006, p. 261). Co-occupation promotes occupational development through engaging in occupations and therefore gaining experience, competence, and confidence. Price and Stephenson (2009a) assert that

through participating in co-occupation, children learn to read social cues and get more involved with peers, family, and friends.

Mothering occupations are not always interactive

Not only do mothers interact with their children to help them develop, they also adapt time schedules and space for their children's occupational development (Pierce & Marshall, 2004). Adapting space includes making more space in the house through moving furniture, positioning equipment appropriately (such as the baby bassinet beside the mother's bed for an infant or setting up toys for independent toddler access), and securing entrances and exits for the safety of their children. Adapting time schedules for the comfort and development of their children includes establishing and maintaining a sleeping and feeding routine for infants, avoiding distractions to the routine, and ensuring occupational diversity (e.g. limiting time watching television).

Other occupations that may not directly involve the child but are still considered mothering occupations are for example making toys for the child (Esdaile, 2004). This involves thinking about the specific needs and wants of the child, how the toy could be used, and crafting the toy.

Occupations without a physical outcome are also seen as mothering occupations. Activism, or advocating, for their children's needs is a mothering occupation when considering the reason and the outcome of the occupation (Llewellyn, Thompson, & Whybrow, 2004); activism is an expression of maternal care work. While wording the same issue differently and adding various facets of work, Lawlor (2004) too describes activism and advocating as a mothering occupation.

In reviewing the literature on mothering it would seem that Ruddick's view "be[ing] a mother means to see children as demanding protection, nurturance, and training and then commit oneself to the work of trying to meet these demands" (Ruddick, 1994, p. 33) is reflected. While recognizing that anyone can 'mother', a 'mother' in this thesis is defined as a woman who is the primary caregiver of a child.

Some mothering occupations are interactive, others are not interactive but still concerned with the welfare of the child and therefore related to ‘being a mother’, such as advocating.

Literature on co-occupation and mothering explores the diversity and value of co-occupation. Co-occupation is both an essential and facilitating phenomenon occurring between mother and child and is not limited to interacting with the child but encompasses all occupations that are related to the child. It appears that mothering co-occupations can be described in the four categories ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’. This assumption is asserted in the following paragraphs.

Positioning the Research Question

This literature review has focused on the three topics occupational science, co-occupation, and mothering. Occupational science is an academic discipline with the goals to understand occupations, occupational processes, and the link between occupation and health with the primary focus being on understanding occupation as a phenomenon. ‘Occupation’, while being studied for over two decades requires further enquiries to be more thoroughly understood. In Western countries, ‘occupation’ is usually defined as being participated in by one person (Abrahams, 2008; Hersch, Lamport, & Coffey, 2005; Hocking, 2009), whereas co-occupation requires engagement of two or more persons.

Co-occupation is a theoretically grounded phenomenon identified by Pierce in the mother-child context (2004). Different scholars have developed different understandings and definitions of this concept with the common component being a degree of interactivity between two or more people and/or their occupations. Doidge (2011) added that the interactivity can be extended to any living being through analysing the occupations of a dog-owner related to the dog, dividing co-occupations into ‘doing with/to/for/because of’-occupations. These categories may be what Pierce (2009) referred to when urging scholars to examine “subtypes of co-occupation” (p. 206).

A limitation to the dog study was that the co-occupations between the owner and her dog are quite different to those in inter-human relationships; dogs are trained and humans are raised and their development is facilitated. Testing the four categories ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’ in an inter-human context has the potential to advance occupational science literature and may help to improve occupational therapy’s advances in population and primary health.

‘Co-occupation’ was initially recognized in the mothering context which remains the focus of identifying and discussing co-occupations. Mother-child occupations, or co-occupations, are an essential component of a child’s occupational development and are the most intensive between the child’s birth and the age of five (Evans & Rodger, 2008). Therefore, setting out to researching the four categories in this context appears appropriate and limiting the context to mothers and children under the age of five is justifiable. Validating or refuting Doidge’s (2011) hypothesis ‘every occupation that occurs in or is related to a relationship can be assigned to one of the four categories’ through undertaking research in the mother-child context led to forming the research question: *‘Do the four co-occupations categories describe the mothering occupations of mothers of children aged 0-5 years?’*.

Having asserted the need for the research and justified the resulting research question, the next chapter describes the philosophical and methodological approaches and the methods employed to investigate this question.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Overview

The aim of this research is to validate or refute the four categories ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’ to contribute to a more thorough understanding of the concept of co-occupation. The overarching research question ‘*do the four co-occupations categories describe the mothering occupations of mothers of children aged 0-5 years?*’ is addressed through the analysis of mothering blog posts.

This methodology chapter outlines the process and the ontological, epistemological, and methodological underpinnings of this study, including methods that shape this study. The data collection process is then outlined and the research population is introduced; blogs as a data source are addressed. The sampling methods of this study are described and an outline of the sampled blogs is provided. Data analysis and synthesis processes are described. Before concluding the chapter, ethical as well as validity issues are addressed.

Research Approach

Pragmatism research paradigm

This study is viewed under the pragmatism research paradigm. A paradigm is a lens through which the researcher views every aspect of conducting a study; it is a framework in which the research context, the research design, the research questions, and the methodology all fit. Lincoln and Guba (1994) assert that to accurately and adequately summarize a research paradigm, three fundamental questions must be addressed: (1) *the ontological question*, (2) *the epistemological question*, and (3) *the methodological question*. Each of these questions are discussed in relation to the paradigm of pragmatism, occupational science, and the research context.

Ontological question - What is the pragmatic view on the form and nature of reality?

Pragmatically, reality is conceived and constantly changed through advancing knowledge (Malone, 2001). Malone (2001) provides an example of the changing conceived reality using the understanding of “air” (pp. 69, 70): once humans knew that air consisted of different gases, their understanding of the ‘reality’ of air changed. Pragmatists believe that there is a truth independent of human understanding – air always consisted of different gases. Research, knowledge, and reality are approached with hypotheses that are generated based on experience, consequences, and anticipations (Biesta, 2010; Zack, 2010).

Relating the pragmatic perspective to this study, it was demonstrated in the literature review that there are several understandings of the concept of ‘co-occupation’ (Doidge, 2011; Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow, 2009a; Pierce, 2009). While this concept started with Pierce’s initial definition of ‘co-occupation’ (2004), her definition challenged several occupational scientists to share their understanding and experiences as described in the literature review. The understanding of co-occupation that this study is based on was developed through studying several definitions of co-occupation and empirically analysing co-occupations between a dog and its owner. The dog study findings and the examined literature led to the anticipation that co-occupations between mother and child can be divided into the four categories ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’. This hypothesis was cited in the beginning of this thesis.

Pragmatism is an eclectic pluralism paradigm that is becoming more accepted since the fierce competition between qualitative and quantitative paradigms from the 1970’s and 80’s subsided (Al-Hamdan & Anthony, 2010). The quantitative paradigm, based in positivism, influences the pragmatism paradigm in that pragmatically that there is truth; however, the truth may remain unknown (Malone, 2001). The qualitative paradigm, the appreciation of subjective experience, influences the pragmatists’ belief in that understandings of a topic can be changed (Morgan, 2007). Pragmatism allows addressing of research questions that benefit

from both quantitative and qualitative methods and thus bridges the chasm between solely quantitative and qualitative approaches (Biesta, 2010).

In this study, addressing the research question both qualitatively and quantitatively has numerous advantages: It enables a richer insight into co-occupations between mothers and their children and acknowledges the subjective experience as is common in occupational science (Hocking, 2009; Whiteford, 1999). On the other hand, quantitatively answering the essence of the research question gives a yes/no/partly answer that is desirable when aiming to validate or refute a hypothesis (Connelly, 2009). In viewing the study through a pluralist paradigm and therefore mixing methods, a rich, detailed, and tangible outcome can be expected (Burke Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Using mixed methods is a different approach than commonly used when examining occupation in general and co-occupation in particular. Most research on occupation is based on qualitative methods to explore the individual's experience for example the meaning of cake decorating was examined through a qualitative phenomenological study (Scheerer, 2004). The few published empirical studies on co-occupation were undertaken using either quantitative or qualitative methodologies. A study on co-occupation in a day-care facility for disabled adults was undertaken through a phenomenological approach (Mahoney & Roberts, 2009) and a study on how behavioural and physiological responses changed during solitary and co-occupation was undertaken using a quantitative methodology (Persch et al., 2009). To date, there appears to be no empirical research on co-occupation using a mixed methods design.

Epistemological question: What is the basic pragmatic belief on what can be known?

In pragmatism, truth is distinctly different from knowledge (Biesta, 2010). One can further one's understanding and therefore increase what is described as conceived knowledge. Pragmatists believe that reality is dependent on human conception, perception, and understanding (Malone, 2001). Hence in pragmatism, knowledge is not only based on the natural and physical world, but also on cognition,

psychology, and pluralism of experience (Zack, 2010). Occupational scientists too appreciate viewing the world holistically, leading to an epistemological congruence between the pragmatism paradigm and the discipline of occupational science.

This research is approached with the pragmatic belief that knowledge can be increased through experience, hypothesis generating, and subsequent research (Biesta, 2010). Co-occupation is a concept based largely on expert opinion and is supported with a variety of experience of working in the mother-child context, yet the definitions lack empirical data to be supported and therefore validated. This research adds textual evidence and therefore helps build a more solid grounding for the theoretical concept of co-occupation.

Methodological question: How can the pragmatic researcher go about what he/she believes can be known?

Pragmatists invite influence from various philosophies to understand a problem. Rather than taking part in the purist “paradigm wars” (Al-Hamdan & Anthony, 2010; Gilbert, 2006; Morgan, 2007), pragmatists endorse, even demand, a mixing of methods to address and learn to understand a problem. As opposed to letting a specific methodology direct the research, the research question is the focus and dictates the choosing of different methods to collect, analyse, and synthesise data depending on the research context, the sample, and the research question (Morgan, 2007). The pragmatic belief of letting the research question dictate the methods is evident in the choice of methods. The research question demanded a quantitative approach while the context of mothering requires qualitative methods, therefore mixed methods were selected.

In summary, this particular study seems to be congruent with the philosophical underpinnings of the research paradigm of pragmatism. An implied aim of the study is to further an understanding of co-occupation. Pragmatists hold the belief that understanding about a particular subject is changed and increased through experience, in this case the understanding about co-occupations is changed through analysing the experiences that the mothers report in their blogs. Therefore, pragmatism is justifiably the research paradigm that this research is viewed through.

Methodological choice

Methodology can be described as the philosophical guidelines of designing and implementing research. Methodological approaches are concerned with the way in which knowledge can be acquired and therefore determine the methods of data collection, analysis, and synthesis that the researcher may implement (Carlson & Clark, 1991). In this research, due to the nature of the pragmatism paradigm, the research question was considered to guide the selection of methods with the methodology selected to fit the methods, the context, and the research question. The research context, occupational science, concentrates on observing and studying human occupation, rather than the intervention in it; using an unobtrusive methodology to enquire into the mother-child context is therefore appropriate. A methodology that fits this research study's aims is content analysis. In the following, the congruence between the methodology and the methods, research question, and context is demonstrated.

Content analysis methodology

The overall aim of content analysis is to make reliable and valid inferences from text (Elo & Kyngaes, 2007; Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002; Weber, 1990). The 'text', referring not only to the written word but to any form of data such as photos, drawings, etc, is seen as a mirror of the human thought, opinion, (Krippendorff, 2004) and occupation. Content analysis is an unobtrusive research methodology approached with either or both quantitative and qualitative methods to make valid inferences from messages (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005)

Content analysis is unobtrusive as it uses existing data; the researcher does not impose any structure on the data and data collection, resulting in less bias (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002; Weber, 1990). In this research, the data is derived from blog content as public blogs are easily accessible and hold existing text as discussed later in this chapter. There is no limitation as to the types of contexts of research, variables to be measured, or message contexts (Neuendorf, 2002) making content analysis an appropriate methodology to research the mother-child context and analyse the content about "the things people do" (Hocking, 2009, p. 140).

Krippendorff (2004) states that: “content analysis is a method for inquiring into social reality that consists of inferring features of a nonmanifest context from features of a manifest text” (p. 25). In this study, content analysis is used to inquire into the reality of mothering by interpreting the different kinds of occupations (“inferring features”) of the bloggers (“nonmanifest context”) from the features of the blog posts (“manifest text”).

In content analysis, the researcher analyses messages in either or both quantitative and qualitative ways (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), a trait that is endorsed by the pragmatism paradigm (Biesta, 2010). The goal of quantitative content analysis is to make inferences about the numerical meaning (Neuendorf, 2002). This is usually achieved by using statistical analysis such as counting the occurrence of phrases or words in the text or the occurrence of a motif in graphics (Elo & Kyngaes, 2007; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Weber, 1990). In this research, quantitative methods may answer the research question with an affirmative or negative answer and yield yet unanticipated findings. The counting of occurrences of occupations that can be described as ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, or ‘doing because of’ helps present the distribution of these occupations and enables making inferences from the percentages. However, these quantitative methods lead to the interpretation of the numerical results only; the occupational science context, having a more holistic focus, requires a deeper exploration of the data not only to affirm or refute the hypothesis but also to deepen the understanding of the essence of the concept ‘co-occupation’. These goals of exploring the context, meaning, and content of data can be achieved through employing qualitative methods (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Approaching text from a purely quantitative perspective, especially when using computer software, has been found to mislead researchers who may make false inferences from text due to false quantitative information; purist quantitative analysis may miss meanings that in employing qualitative methods would be the most obvious (Krippendorff, 2004). While qualitative analysis of text is more reliable in a sense that the human brain is more flexible and adaptable than a computer program, this hermeneutic process is often deemed as biased, as the results may not be able to be generalized (Krippendorff, 2004); this is a limitation of qualitative research in

general. However, pragmatically, research relies on the human brain, its experience and the inferences it makes. Bias should be acknowledged and the quantitative component of this mixed methods study aids in minimizing the bias.

Content analysis methodology can be approached with an a priori assumption, termed deductive approach, or without an a priori assumption, termed inductive approach (Elo & Kyngaes, 2007; Neuendorf, 2002). In the testing of this framework, the deductive approach is used as the research question mirrors the a priori assumption that mothering occupations can be summarized under ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’; the research question asks for an affirmative or negative answer as opposed to a descriptive answer (Krippendorff, 2004). Using a deductive approach is common when testing theories, like the four categories, in new contexts, such as the mothering context (Elo & Kyngaes, 2007; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Although the deductive approach prevails in this research, an aspect of inductivity is also evident in allowing openness to the adjusting of categories if required.

Data Collection

Information needed to describe the research population

In keeping in line with the methodology, a data source that provided a record of mothering experiences without imposing structure was sought. One such data source is public mothering blogs that mirror the (co-)occupational life of mothers and their children under the age of 5. Therefore, this content analysis focuses on mothers who regularly publicly blog about their lives and (co-)occupations with their children, at least one of whom is under 5 years old. To answer and position the research question ‘*do the four co-occupation categories describe the mothering occupations of mothers of children aged 0-5 years?*’ in context, the following information was gathered:

Contextual information was gathered as the family’s context may signify the reasons for differences in mother-child occupations; different contexts may afford or challenge certain occupations (Jase-Kampfner, 2004). Perceptual information,

referring to the way in which the mothers perceive their occupations, was sought as the mother's experiences of being occupied in the context of her family are the core data of this analysis. Demographic data refers to the information pertaining to bloggers such as age, ethnicity, religion, number of children, ages of children. Similar to the reasoning behind collecting contextual data, collecting demographic data may help to identify sources of differences in occupations. In addition, an adequate description of the research population and the sample increases trustworthiness as it makes the findings more transferable (Taylor, 2007).

Research population

The research population of this study are publicly blogging female mothers of children under the age of 5. The research focuses on mothers as they are most often the primary caregiver of their children (J. A. Olson, 2004) and are the focus of literature on co-occupations (Esdaile, 2004; L. Olson, 2006; Pierce, 2000; Price & Stephenson, 2009b). To gather a versatile variety of (co-)occupational experiences, blogs of mothers with certain key characteristics identified through literature searched were selected. Attributes that may influence mothering occupations include relationship status and social milieu (Llewellyn & McConnell, 2004), time required to work outside the house (Pierce & Marshall, 2004), age (Head & Esdaile, 2004), and health status of the child (Price & Stephenson, 2009b; Segal, 1999). A list of key characteristics was established resulting in the following search terms:

- Single/*married*
- Stay-at-home/working
- Young/older
- Having a single child/ having many children
- Lesbian/heterosexual
- Adoptive/birthmother
- Having a special needs child/*having a healthy child*

The italicised words were not used as search terms but are characteristics covered by bloggers with other primary characteristics such as the 'young mum' Michelle in this research has a healthy child, is in a heterosexual relationship, and is

the birthmother of her child. A table that describes each blogger's characteristics is attached in Appendix A.

Sourcing the data

Blogs

Blogs are commonly defined as frequently modified web pages in which the entries are organised in reverse chronological sequence (Jones & Alony, 2008; Nardie, Schiano, & Gumbrecht, 2004; Trammell, Tarkowski, Hofmohl, & Sapp, 2006). Although often described as online journals (Kim, 2009; Snee, 2010), some argue that blogs are more sophisticated (Lewis, 2006) and can be seen as an amalgam between a diary, a website, and an online community (Jones & Alony, 2008). Blogs contain mainly textual data, although they may also contain photographs, videos, and links to other pages, mainly to related topics. This interconnectedness of blogs is known as “the blogosphere” (Jones & Alony, 2008, p. 433).

Firstly published in 1996, blogs are a fairly recent addition to the internet communication media (Herring, 2010; Kumar, Novak, Raghavar, & Tomkins, 2004). The presence of blogs on the internet has exponentially risen since 1999, when a mere 23 blogs were known to exist. By July 2007, 90 million blogs were registered, a number that is thought to double every six months. This proliferation is enabled by freely accessible and easy to use blogging software (Herring, 2010), enabling a “pushbutton publishing for the people” (Nardie, Schiano, & Gumbrecht, 2004, p. 222). Blogs have been described as a fundamentally democratic communication tool (Lascia, 2001) and are also described as a grassroots form of journalism (Nardie, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004).

Blogs are written with different intentions, focusing on various topics: Some blogs are critiquing political movements, some are devoted to technical advances, some share insights on news stories, others give advice on health (Kim, 2009) or family problems. Most blogs are created by individuals to document their lives, share opinions, and articulate their feelings through writing, posting pictures, videos, links, and asking the readers to comment (Kumar et al., 2004). Seven topic unrelated needs

that can be satisfied by blogging were listed by Jones and Alony (2008, p. 437): (1) need for self expression, (2) need for recognition, (3) need for social contact, (4) need for introspection, (5) academic needs for knowledge and interests, (6) need for documentation, and (7) need for artistic activity. There are several privacy settings of blogs that range from advertised and open to the public to password protected and by invitation only (Morrison, 2010).

Anyone with internet access can set up and keep a blog; there are no rules or regulations on the content of blogs (Jones & Alony, 2008; Lascia, 2001; Nardie, Schiano, & Gumbrecht, 2004). Depending on the blogging software, the blogger can set up a blog to their liking. Each blog has a title, most of which refer to what the blog is devoted to or contain one or more characteristics of the blogger (e.g. an example from this study is “The Feminist Housewife”); some blogs also have a subtitle (her blog’s subtitle is “just your average feminist, lesbian, stay at home mom”). Each blog has a “home” page where posts are published. On either one or both sides of the posts is a sidebar on which various features are pinned such as archives which include all posts sorted by date in either a drop down or locked bar. For a blog jargon glossary, refer to Appendix B.

Blogs as a data source for research

Blogs have been described as *the* new data source for research by Jones and Alony (2008) as they provide a novel and rich resource of data through a contemporary and easily accessible medium. Blogs are a novel data source for attitudinal and behavioural research. Lewis (2006) writes that most blogs are freely accessible “fascinating archives of human thought” (p. 1) and as such provide a window into the blogger’s life. Blogs can be rich and deeply personal accounts due to the creative format, topic choice, and links to other topic related websites and blogs (Jones & Alony, 2008). Bloggers often write opinionated posts; their statements are authentic and believable (Jones & Alony, 2008) due to the writers’ motivation of introspection. However, some blogs may contain fictitious content or be fictitious in nature, written by a person who takes on a different identity, different age, even different gender (Burger & Henderson, 2005). Jones and Alony (2008)

state that there are some strategies to reduce deception bias such as excluding blogs that have not been updated regularly for over a year. This recommendation was included in the sampling of the blogs for this research.

Blog data is free of researcher bias if the bloggers are unaware of the researcher's intent. Blog posts resemble a rich monologue providing primary data that is structured with the intention to accentuate the blogger's topic of interest (Lascia, 2001; Lewis, 2006; Nardie, Schiano, & Gumbrecht, 2004; Nardie, Schiano, Gumbrecht, et al., 2004). In many other data collection methods, the researcher structures and influences the collection process and may emphasize topics that they believe are of value (Dingwall, 1997). Blog data is therefore not subject to the biases and weaknesses that other data are, whether collected face-to-face such as in interviews, or remotely, such as in internet questionnaires (Hartley, 2001).

While blog data is virtually free of researcher bias, the population may be seen as biased which is due to the medium, requiring the blogger to have access to a computer and internet, resulting in overrepresentation of some countries and an underrepresentation of others. An inequality in global blogger density is identified with the highest blogger percentage being in the USA and the lowest in Africa (Kumar et al., 2004). Furthermore, bloggers need to be literate and have an attraction to technology; they must be willing to share their thoughts and be focused to keep their blogs up to date. However, due to the technological evolution, access to computers and the internet is becoming more commonplace. With a population that is becoming more accustomed and reliant on technology, the blogging population is expected to proliferate and make a wide variety of data less skewed.

Blog data may be difficult to analyse, not only due to the blog format with its interlinks, but also because the writing style of the bloggers; a post may be lengthy, irrelevant to the researched topic, too short, or simply false (Jones & Alony, 2008). However, these are constraints typical to most data sources, such as that a participant may give answers in an interview or a questionnaire that are not in line with the research topic, they may be too elaborate or curt, or fictitious.

Given the limitations of blogs as a data source, a preliminary blog exploration was undertaken. It was identified that some blogs would be more useful than others to yield information about mothering occupations. Therefore, blogs with the following characteristics were excluded:

- Blogs primarily used to review products
- Blogs providing advice for mothers rather than being written by a mother about her life
- Discussion group blogs
- Political blogs focussing on specific mothering issues
- Abandoned blogs
- Blogs with less than 25 posts
- Private and password protected blogs were excluded due to the methodology's unobtrusive nature. Asking for permission to use the blogs would make the author aware of the research and might result in what is termed Hawthorne Effect (Hartley, 2001). This is defined as a perceived obligation that leads the participants to provide the researcher with the data that they believe they ought to provide.

Multistage random sampling strategy

Multistage random sampling, a sampling technique in which two or more sampling steps are taken (Neuendorf, 2002), was used to select blogs and blog posts as data. Using random sampling reduces bias from the sample and is the most trustworthy sampling method (Taylor, 2007).

Stage 1 – blog sampling – selecting the sampling units

In content analysis, each document sampled to be analyzed is named a “sampling unit” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 98). Sampling units are usually samples drawn from a larger population of the same unit; in this case, the sampling units are the blogs that were drawn from the population of all public mothering blogs. This sampling step is similar to recruiting participants when working with humans.

To achieve a varied representation of the research population, a sample with many different characteristics was drawn. Each sampling unit (each mothering blog) was described by a different key characteristic as described earlier. In this study, mothering blogs were sampled using the search engine ‘Google’ and an online random number generator that was set to produce random numbers between 1 and 20. The random number was used to locate a random blog on the first two results pages of ‘Google’, due to the top-down quality order in which ‘Google’ organises its results. If the located blog matched all inclusion criteria, the blog was saved in the RSS feed, the URL was recorded, and demographic data was collected. If the blog did not match all inclusion criteria, the reason for the exclusion was recorded and the random number generator was used to locate a different blog. The blogs were then read through and an annotation about the structure, the blogging habits, and the family circumstances was written. The sampling log is attached as Appendix C.

Stage 2 – post sampling – recording units

Recording units are units set within the sampling units that can be separately described (Krippendorff, 2004). Due to the large quantity of posts per blog, recording unit sampling was required to select a manageable amount of text. A random number generator was used to select 5% of posts per year for blogs with >100 posts or 10% of posts per year for blogs with <100 posts (see Table 2). These steps are demonstrated using an example below.

Descriptions of Tables 2 and 3

The following two tables show the post sampling of Mary’s blog (“adoptive mum”) as an example. Table 2 depicts that her blog contains a total of 123 posts; therefore the posting sample size is 5%. There are 95 posts in 2011 and 28 posts in 2010, 5% of each are 5 posts and 1 post. To select 5 posts for the year 2011 (5% of the 2011 entity), the random number generator was used to select 5 numbers between 1 and 95, as there are 95 posts in the year 2011 resulting in the numbers 52, 92, 27, 90, 69. The posts were counted from the start of the year 2011 and the selected posts were located and copied into a word document and saved in a file that contains all data of that specific blog. For 2010, only one number was generated, as 5% of the

entity of the 2010 posts (of which there are 28) is 1. The random number generator was set to produce a number between 1 and 28, which resulted in '5'. The fifth post of the 2010 archive was located, copied and pasted, and then saved in a word.docx document. As some photographs were too large, these were reduced in size ensuring the height/width ratio remained constant.

Table 2 - Post Sampling 1 (Mary's blog as example)

	year	number of posts	5%
	2011	95	5
	2010	28	1
Total number of posts		123	6

Table 3 - Post sampling 2 (Mary's blog as example)

Year	RNG	Resulting Post
2011	52	8-Jan
	92	1-Mar
	27	3-Jan
	90	14-Feb
	69	10-Jan
2010	5	31-Dec

Sampling Units – the mothering blogs

The following blog profiles are arranged in alphabetical order of the keywords used in the searching process.

Adoptive mum - Mary

URL - <http://newadoptivemum.blogspot.co.nz/>

The blog identified from the search with the key characteristic of “adoptive mum” was written by Mary. Mary’s blog is titled: “being a new adoptive mum – what they DON’T tell you on prep groups”.



Figure 7 – Mary’s blog

There are no categories other than the headings displayed on the sidebar. On the sidebar, Mary has provided “useful web links”, “adoption blogs”, “crème de la crème”, and tags.

Mary started blogging on this blog in 2010; on 29th June 2011 Mary had published 123 posts of which 5% were sampled. Mary has given her children the pseudonyms Tidge, Squidge, and Midge although she never refers to one child specifically. Mary’s posts vary in length and she does not post any photos of herself or the children. She does not provide a description of herself on her profile and due to “traceability” reasons did not publish the age of her children. However, she describes her 3 adopted children as being under the age of 6. Mary never refers to her children directly when she blogs; she starts each new post with: “being an adoptive mum is...” Mary and her husband Mungo (pseudonyms) are living in the UK.

Lesbian mum – The Feminist Housewife

URL - <http://feministhousewife.wordpress.com/>

The blog that features the key characteristic “lesbian mum” was written by “The Housewife” and is titled: “Feminist Housewife – just your average feminist, lesbian, stay at home mom”.

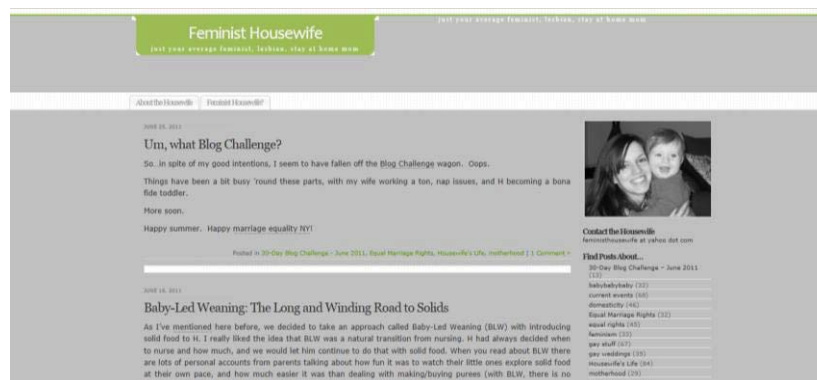


Figure 8 - The Feminist Housewife's blog

On the sidebar, “The Housewife” has provided a contact address, a “find posts about...” section, and “Housewife archives”. “The Housewife” has divided her blog into three areas: “home”, “about this Housewife”, and “Feminist Housewife?!”.

“The Housewife” started blogging prior to the birth of H., however, as this study investigates the mothering occupations between the ages zero to five, posts written before the birth of a child were excluded from the data gathering process. As of 29th June 2010, there were 42 posts, counting from the birth of H. 10% of the posts were sampled. About this Housewife” introduces “The Housewife”, her wife C., and their son H. Their son H. was born in May 2010 – he was 14 months old at the time of data collection. “Feminist Housewife?!” answers the question of whether this title is indeed an oxymoron – which “The Housewife” believes it is not. In her opinion, feminism is the absence of gender discrimination and the freedom to choose lifestyle without being judged. The Housewife and her family live in the USA.

Mum of many – Kathy

URL - <http://kathymomofmany.blogspot.com>

Out of the blogs that were written by “mothers of many”, Kathy’s blog was identified and is titled: Kathy – mom of many.



Figure 9 – Kathy’s blog

Kathy introduces herself on the sidebar with the following quote: *“I’m a Christian mom of 10 children, 6 girls and 4 boys, including one set of twins. Oldest is 20 and youngest is 3. Sometimes I’m asked if I’m Catholic or Mormon; I’m neither.”*

Kathy started her blog in 2008; on 29th June 2011, there were 247 posts published on her blog of which 5% were sampled. This blog does not have any categories other than those displayed on the sidebar which are: a brief description of Kathy, photos of each of her ten children, advertisements, things she likes, live traffic feeds, archives, a map showing geographic origins from the visitors to her page, and followers.

Kathy’s ten children are named Kayla, Stephanie, Allison, Steve, Carolyn, Kelly, Tommy, Matthew, Marc, and Charity. Other than the brief statement that her oldest child (Kayla) is 20 and her youngest (Charity) is 3, Kathy does not provide age descriptions of herself or her children. Her posts often focus on family life and faith, bible studies, and memes that Kathy participates in such as “all in a day”. Kathy and her family live in the USA.

Mum of one – Sweets

URL - <http://momofoneanddone.wordpress.com/>

The blog with the key characteristic “mum of one” was written by Sweets (pseudonym) and is titled: “Mom of One – and Done! Tales from a mom of a planned only child”

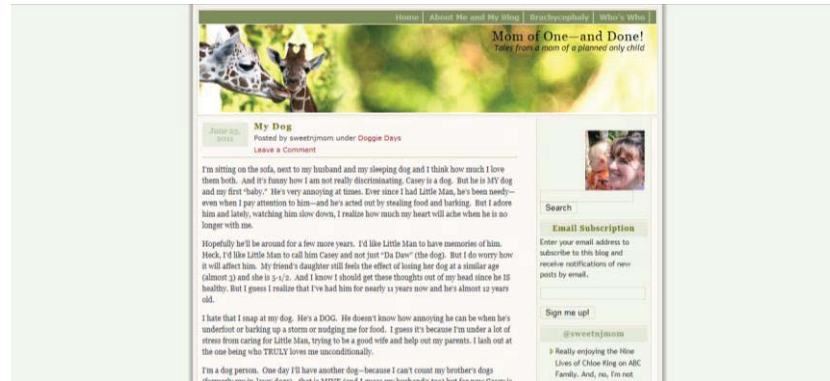


Figure 10 – Sweets’ blog

Sweets has four categories in her blog: “home”, “about me and my blog”, “brachycephaly”, and “who’s who”. On the sidebar, Sweets publishes twitter updates, posting categories, archives, blogging buddies, “Mommy bloggers”, blog stats, tags, and meta.

Sweets started blogging in 2009 and on 29th June 2011 there were 66 posts on this blog; 10% were sampled to provide data for this research. In “about me and my blog”, Sweets introduces herself and the story of meeting her husband, their marriage, and their decision and justification for having an only child (Little Man, aged 2 years). Under “brachycephaly”, Sweets writes about Little Man’s history of suspicion, diagnosis, and treatment of brachycephaly. Under “who’s who”, Sweets introduces important people and pets in her life. Everyone has a pseudonym as she prefers to talk about her family anonymously. Sweets occasionally posts a picture of her son, rarely of herself. Sweets posts between 1 and 9 times per month. She and her family live in the USA.

Older mum (40+) – Karen

URL - <http://momagain40.blogspot.com>

The blog written by an ‘older (40+) mum’ is Karen’s: “Mom again @ 40 - Being a mom again over the age of 40, married for a second time around. With a two-year old toddler and a teenager at the wonderful age of seventeen.”

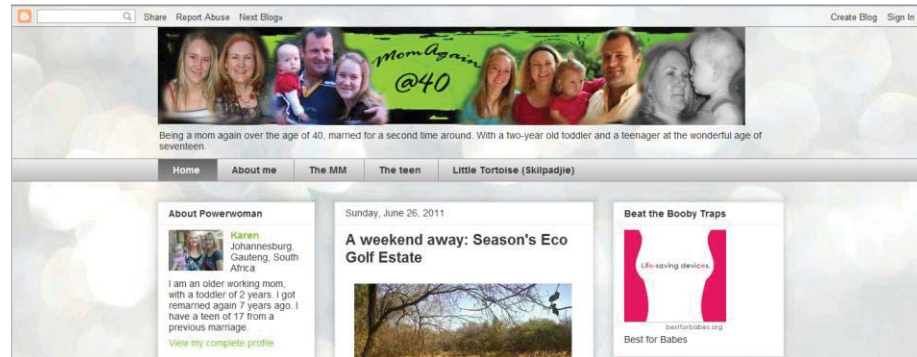


Figure 11 – Karen’s blog

This blog has 5 sections – “home”, “about me”, “the MM”, “the teen”, and “little tortoise (skilpadjie)”. The blog’s sidebar features a brief introduction, add-ons, popular posts, Karen’s followers, blog archives, and advertisements promoting breastfeeding and “old mothering”.

Karen started blogging in 2009. On 29th June 2011 there were 544 posts; 5% were sampled. Under “about me”, she introduces herself as a mom “older than 40” and as “Powerwoman”. Karen writes that her blog is about new beginnings and changing her life for the better. Karen introduces her husband Dries under “the MM” – the millennium man. Here she tells the story about her and Dries met and their life together.

Karen introduces her daughter Arnia Kiara under “the teen”. Arnia Kiara is 17 years old; Karen brought her into her marriage with Dries. Karen writes about Arnia Kiara’s upbringing and her love towards her. Mieka, Karen’s little daughter, is introduced under “little tortoise (skilpadjie)”. “Little tortoise” is Mieka’s nickname because her forehead was wrinkly like that of a tortoise when she was very little. She and her family live in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Single mum – Bridgette

URL - <http://newsinglemama.com/>

The blog written by “single mum” Bridgette is titled: “New Single Mama - Raw and Honest Blog of a New Single Mom”.



Figure 12 – Bridgette’s blog

Bridgette introduces herself in the following: *“I am a single mother of a biracial baby boy just trying to make it on my own. This journey is hard, yet rewarding. Blogging is my therapy, these words are my heart, and people doing better and being inspired by what I have written is my passion and hope.”*

Bridgette’s blog is divided into three parts: “home”, “About Bridgette”, and “Contact”. Her sidebar consists of a “search” option, recently written post-interlinks, topic-tags, “my past” (blog archive), other “single parent blogs”, and links to “parent support sites”.

Bridgette started blogging in 2009; on 29th June 2011 there were a total of 61 posts; 10% were sampled. Bridgette introduces herself and the story about how she came to be a single mother under “about Bridgette”. She writes that she is a mother by choice but a single mother by circumstance. She decided to leave the baby’s dad because of what she describes as his inappropriate lifestyle. Bridgette is a single mother in her early twenties; at the time of data collection, her son Jack was 2 years old. Jack’s father is currently in prison. They live in the USA.

Mum of a child with special needs – Kelle

URL - <http://www.kellehampton.com/>

As a search for “special needs” blogs did not yield any includable results, a search with the key word “down syndrome”, the most common genetic abnormality resulting in disability (Atchison & Dirette, 2007), was undertaken. The blog is written by Kelle Hampton: “enjoying the small things”.

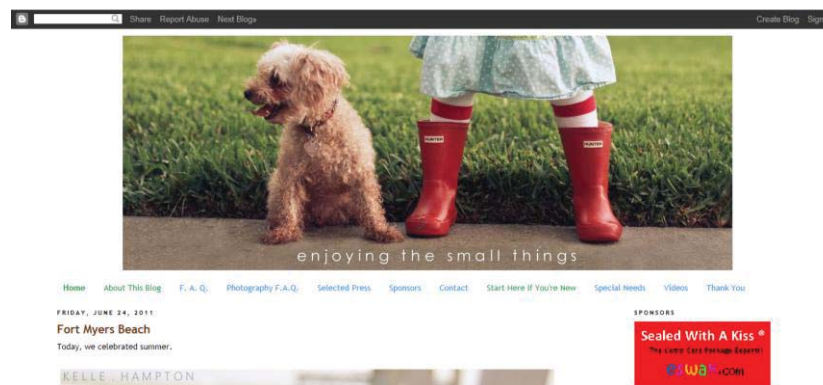


Figure 13 – Kelle’s blog

Kelle: I love my family. I love my friends. I love the little things in life that add up to one big huge thing. I'd rather be wiser than richer, and I want to be inspired every day to love better and live bigger.

Kelle’s blog’s features are: “home”, “about this blog”, “F.A.Q.”, “Photography F.A.Q.”, “Selected Press”, “Sponsors”, “Contact”, “Start Here If You’re New”, “Special Needs”, “Videos”, and “Thank You”. Her sidebar contains archives, followers, special archives, sponsor’s advertisements, and a brief profile of Kelle.

There were 256 since the birth of her daughter Nella who has Down syndrome. On 29th June 2011 5% of these posts were sampled. In “about this blog”, Kelle (31 years) introduces herself and her family (her daughters Nella 1.5 years, and Lainey 4 years, her stepsons Austyn and Brandyn, and her husband Brett). Under “FAQs”, Kelle answers questions, usually about her daughters and her everyday life. “Photography FAQs” consist of Kelle answering questions regarding her photography business and skills. Kelle posts many photos of her daughters on her

blog. Kelle's blog has had publicity, some of which she has provided links to under "selected press". "Sponsors" provides interested people with an opportunity to contact Kelle and advertise on her blog. Under "contact", Kelle has provided an email address for her readers to contact her. To ensure Kelle's new readers know about her story, Kelle has provided her daughter Nella's birth story under "start here if you're new". Kelle has listed some information and some links to Down syndrome websites under "special needs". Here she also writes about her personal feelings and experiences with Down syndrome. Under "videos", Kelle has published one video of Nella's birth story and life and another about her mothering focus. Under "thank you", Kelle shows a letter in the name of her family written to readers who have contributed to Nella's ONEder fund – a fund for the Down Syndrome Association in America.

Stay at home mum – Lisa

URL - <http://mum2mh.blogspot.com>

The blog featuring the key characteristic of "stay at home mum" is written by Lisa and is titled: "The adventures of a stay at home mum".

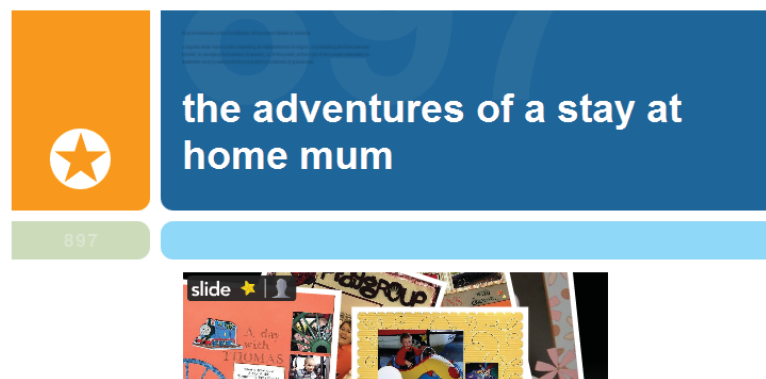


Figure 14 – Lisa's blog

Lisa introduces herself: *"I am a stay at home mum to three precious boys. Mitch & Harry born 15 weeks too soon. And Jack our big surprise. Life sure is busy!"*

Lisa has not categorized her blog; there are some add-ons on her sidebar: networked blogs, a "top preemie blog badge", a facebook badge, a brief introduction

to Lisa, a picture of her sons, links to videos of her sons, archives, a scrapbook badge, links to her favourite preemie sites, friends' blogs, and blogs and sites that she enjoys.

Lisa started her blog in 2006 and on 29th June 2011, there were 130 posts. Lisa's twins, Mitch and Harry were 6.5 years old when the data was collected and her "surprise" son Jack is nearly 2 years old. She blogs about being a mother and housewife; she occasionally puts up links to sites that she refers to in her posts such as immunisation policies. Lisa sometimes posts photos of her sons but not on a regular basis. She and her family live in Australia.

Working mum – Amanda

URL - <http://workingmomstirade.blogspot.com/>

The working mother's blog was written by Amanda and is titled: "Tales of a working mother: Ramblings from a thirty-ish, fairly- average, working mom."



Figure 15 – Amanda's blog

Amanda introduces herself: *"I'm a mother of one little 3 year old with a very big personality. I'm enjoying being a mother while still trying to be a good wife as I go. I was just promoted to a job I dreamed of having! I value my friends and family above all else."*

Amanda started blogging in 2009; her blog contained 100 on 29th June 2011; 10% were sampled. Amanda's blog is not separated into sections. On the blog's sidebar, Amanda has a small description of herself and her blog, a blog archive, and

some family photos. A strong focus in Amanda's blog appears to be her hobby of running and her family. Amanda sometimes posts pictures of herself, her daughter, and family. Amanda describes herself as being Christian; she and her family live in the USA.

Young mum – Michelle

URL - <http://www.earlymama.com/>

The blog written by a mum characterized by the keyword “young” is Michelle, author of the blog: “Early Mama – Redefining the Young Mom”.



Figure 16 – Michelle's blog

Michelle's blog is divided into “home”, “about”, “life”, “style”, “encouragement”, and “contact”.

Michelle started blogging in 2009. On 29th June 2011, her blog contained 95; 10% were sampled to provide data for this research.

Under “about”, Michelle writes about her life as an “early mom”. She sees her blog as an “experienced friend” for other early moms where she gives advice and shares ideas. Her sidebar contains recent comments, categories, archives, and advertisements. “Life” consists of those posts that Michelle has categorized under this heading; “life” appears to refer to Michelle's life. The posts located under the heading “style” contain reviews of baby, maternity, and mother products such as swaddles, prams, and car seats. “Encouragement” contains ideas and tips for “early moms”; there are some posts about the advantages, challenges, and joys of being a

young mom. “Contact” asks the reader to fill in name and email address and send a message to Michelle. Michelle is 24 years old now and married. Her son Noah is 2 years old. Michelle works from home for a parenting magazine and lives in the USA.

Description of the Blogs

The sampled blogs share the goal of personal expression, with a focus on mothering experiences. However some bloggers also write about other interests such as sports or religion (for example Amanda and Kathy). While most bloggers reveal considerable amounts of personal information, some chose to keep their identities and those of their family members anonymous, namely “The Feminist Housewife”, “Mary”, and “Sweets”. The authors express often intimate, and it appears uncensored, details of their mothering life; however some bloggers choose to only reveal little glimpses of their experiences.

Apart from the content, the complexity of the layout of the posts varies too. While Mary and Bridgette provide the reader with only the written word, most mothers chose to occasionally illustrate their posts with photographs. Photographs provide the reader with a more tangible and vivid description of their children, themselves, and the reported occupations. One blogger, Kelle, publishes photographs with every post, resulting in a rich and imaginative impression of her life with her children. Reading blogs that are created imaginatively and provide visual content is more appealing and provides a feeling of connection to the blogger. Kelle, not surprisingly, has the most followers, counting tens of thousands on the data collection date.

The following photograph was published by The Feminist Housewife showing her son H among his Christmas presents. H’s interest in and excitement of ripping the wrapping paper off the presents is more imaginable through the picture published in the post.



Figure 17 - The Feminist Housewife, p. 4, image 1

“2010 has wound down with lots of holiday happenings. H has had a ball tearing wrapping paper off many a gift, and as always, was a trooper when it came to being around a lot of people and kept up past his bedtime.”
(The Feminist Housewife, p. 3, ll.1-5)

As can be seen in the above example, a referencing system is used when referring to the data of this research. When referencing blog content in this thesis, the blogger’s name is followed by the word.docx page and line/image numbers. “p” refers to page number, “l” indicates one line, “ll” two or more line numbers on the page, and image refers to the image number on the page.

In total there are 362 word.docx pages of text in the data set. The largest blog sample is by Kelle which covers 136 pages and includes 257 photographs; the shortest consists of 3 pages without any photos, written by Mary. The median length of the samples is 36.2 pages. Sample pages are attached in Appendix D.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

For the remainder of the thesis, the term *event* is used when referring to mothering *doings* instead of occupation, activity, and other taxonomic terminology. This is due to the existing taxonomic issues in (co-)occupational contexts which were introduced in the literature review and are further explored in the discussion.

Analytical construct

The analytical construct is the ‘formula’ that the coder of the content analysis uses to include/exclude data segments of the text (Krippendorff, 2004). In comprehensive analyses undertaken by trained analysts, the formula is entered into a computer programme, enabling to quickly and consistently analyse a large amount of data. However, in this study the researcher was not trained in such analysis and due to the complexity of occupation (Hocking, 2009), the wide range of word use and writing styles of the bloggers, and inferred mothering events (such as: “*His in-progress Halloween costume laid out on my desk*”, Feminist Housewife, p.1, l.19, from which ‘making a Halloween costume’ was inferred), a pen and paper analysis was preferred over computer analysis.

To capture all ‘doings’ that the mother did related to her child, the analytical construct was defined as: Any form of ‘doing’, whether expressed through a verb or inferred through a noun if in context of the mother’s children; any pictorial presentation of her children to capture the mothering events reported in the posts.

Due to the subjective nature of blogging (Lewis, 2006) and the lack of any imposed structure and topic choice, the bloggers did not exclusively blog about mothering events. The samples also contained data that did not relate to mothering such as Amanda’s narrating about her running hobby:

“Back in say March, maybe February even, I started seriously training for this half marathon that I’d be running in the summer. It seemed so far away. My days and weeks of training went like this...” (Amanda, p.21, ll. 7-11)

Mothering unrelated events such as this were excluded from the coding process.

Data analysis

Prior to the official sampling and coding of blogs and posts, a preliminary sampling and coding was undertaken to provide an overview of the density and

occurrence of useful data; this informed both blog and post sample sizes. All data was collected on one day. To remain congruent with the methodology's unobtrusive nature and to aim for a high level of trustworthiness through randomness of data sampling, no further data was collected after the data collection date.

Recording units

The recording units of the analysis, which are the text segments to be analysed (Krippendorff, 2004), were defined as being 'any verb or noun that refers to an observable or audible event in the mothering context' in written text and as 'motifs of the child, or objects related to the child, with or without the mother' in photographs. Therefore any record that reflected mothering events was divided into segments. Each segment reflects only one event to provide a thorough and deep reflection of the qualitative data and to accurately mirror occurrences of events for a quantitative analysis of the data. An example taken from Kelle's blog follows:

"I cried while I nursed her. I cried while I held her. I cried while I pulled my nightgown off just so I could lie her body on my naked skin and pray that I felt a bond." (p.29, ll. 2-6)

Each "I cried" is a separate segment (there are three 'crying' segments), 'nursing', 'holding baby', 'pulling off nightgown', 'placing baby on naked skin', and 'praying' are all separate segments, separate recording units. This defining of the recording units is step one of Weber's eight steps to content analysis (Weber, 1990).

Defining categories

One sample document was read and re-read to become immersed in the context, an elemental process in qualitative research (Llewellyn, Cutler, & Stein, 2000; Merriam, 1998). The coding categories in this study were defined as 'doing with', 'doing to', 'doing for', and 'doing because of' as these original categories were the main focus and incentive of undertaking the study. Defining the coding categories is congruent with Weber's second step to content analysis. The sample document was coded using the four 'doing' categories 'with', 'to', 'for', and 'because of' (see Appendix E). This coding is congruent with Weber's (1990) third

step of content analysis, preliminary coding. Thoughts, arising problems or difficulties, and insights were written into a reflective diary throughout this process and discussed with the supervisor (for a sample of the reflective diary, refer to Appendix F).

After coding the first sample, it was evident that the four categories did not cover all mothering events. This checking of coding reflects what Weber (1990) describes as fourth step. An example of a mothering event in which all four categories (doing with/to/for/because of) were not relevant is that described by Karen:

“The playing with the water keeps the toddler occupied for a relative long period. Enough to get the dishwasher unpacked, and the dinner started...” (Karen, p. 20, ll. 11-13)

This example does not display ‘doing with’ as Karen and her daughter Mieka are not participating in the same activity. For the same reason, ‘doing to’ is not displayed either. Mieka and Karen are in the same environment and Karen is not particularly ‘doing for’ or ‘doing because of’ Mieka. Mieka and Karen are in a shared environment at a shared time, which has been briefly mentioned under ‘doing with’ as ‘being in a shared environment without a common occupational focus’. However, this example is one of many that displays and describes this ‘being together’ in detail, leading to a revision of the categories.

Data category revision

In accordance with Weber’s fifth step (1990), the coding rules were revised and further categories were defined. Data category revision was an essential part of this content analysis due to the goal of furthering the understanding of co-occupation. One spreadsheet was established for each blog sample to keep track of the recording units and their positions and code; this enables locating the recording unit in the text, referencing the units in the findings, and increases the validity of this study (see Appendix G for example). The referencing system of the recording units was outlined in the description of the blogs.

After completing these steps for one sample, all samples were coded and transcribed into spreadsheets. Due to the complexity and the variety of mothering events recorded in each sample, data category revision took place several times. During the coding process, categories were added, expanded, and collapsed. At one point, there were nine separate ‘doing categories’. Through restructuring the spreadsheet and re-defining categories, two preliminary categories were discarded and four categories were summarized (see Appendix H for example). This resulted in four categories, two of which had two subcategories each.

Different levels of ‘doing’

The mothering events were categorized not only into the different ‘doing categories’ but also into categories that reflect the level of complexity and size of the mothering event. These categories were named ‘compound activities’, ‘activities’, and ‘<activities’. ‘Compound activities’ (Polatajko et al., 2004) are defined as an accumulation of several activities under a summative heading. ‘Activities’ are an accumulation of several tasks; ‘<activities’ are, in this study, any doings that are less complex than ‘activities’. There were 24 different compounds, 68 different activities, and 296 <activities. The ‘activities’ are more specific than the ‘compounds’ and the ‘<activities’ are more specific and detailed than the ‘activities’. ‘Activities’ and ‘<activities’ appear repetitively under different ‘compounds’. For example the ‘<activity’ of ‘holding baby’ could appear under the activity ‘cuddling’ and, depending on the context, under the ‘activity’ of ‘putting to sleep’. The ‘activity’ of ‘putting to sleep’ would be under the compound ‘physical baby care’; the ‘activity’ of ‘cuddling’ could be under the compound of ‘emotional self- and baby- care’ or ‘emotional baby- care’, depending on the context of the data segment/the recording unit. These compounds and the assigned activities and <activities are illustrated in Visio-documents, attached as Appendix I.

An example from the data set was extracted from Karen’s post: “*we did a bit of local Zoo visiting today*” (p. 26, l.11). This was classified as an activity and allocated to the compound activity of ‘emotional baby and self- care’. A ‘<activity’ is evident in Lisa’s post: “*So next thing is to buy their uniforms and school bags...*”

(Lisa, p. 18, ll. 10, 11). This ‘<activity’ of buying specific items was seen as a part of the overall activity of ‘shopping’, which was allocated to the compound of ‘providing for’.

Exclusion criteria

Some events were written in insufficient detail and could not be coded and were therefore excluded from the coding process. These events were described as what could be referred to a ‘compound activity’. A quote of Kelle’s blog about her role as a mother illustrates the difficulty in coding:

“I will rely not on books or experts or doctors to mother these girls but on the most trust-worthy thing I have--my instinct. And I know how to love. Oh, do I know how to love.” (Kelle, p.57, l.7-10)

In this brief section, Kelle blogs about mothering her children but does not provide any information about her activities as a mother; what she writes about could be termed the ‘overarching compound activity of mothering’, or, in congruence with occupational science literature, her overall occupational role (Dunbar & Roberts, 2006). Although this quote is related to this research and summarizes Kelle’s mothering attitude, it is not a record of a code-able, separate activity that aids in answering the research question; it was therefore eliminated from the code-able data.

Analysis of the spreadsheet

Through continuous data category revision, a spreadsheet was established in which all code-able mothering events were accommodated. From the spreadsheets, it was possible to explore issues related to mothering events and categories. The aim was to interpret the data and present the interpretations in graphs and illustrations. To present the distribution of the events in the data categories, an excel pie-graph was created which is located and referred to in the discussion. For each ‘compound activity’, one Visio object was designed that illustrates the activities and <activities that are categorized under the compound; these illustrations can be found in Appendix I.

Having provided an outline of the data analysis, ethical considerations and trustworthiness/validity concerns are addressed in the following.

Ethical Considerations

The word “ethical” is derived from the Greek word “ethos” and refers to a community’s shared customs or an individual’s character (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 2008). Ethical issues considered in this research are discussed in the following paragraphs.

In this study, only publicly available blogs were analysed. This reduces ethical considerations to the process of handling and representing the data rather than the obtaining of it as publicly available information does not require the researcher to request ethics approval from a committee (Eysenbach & Till, 2001). In this academic piece of research without any “human intervention” (Polonsky & Waller, 2010, p. 54), ethical issues to be considered are (1) plagiarism, (2) academic fraud, and (3) misrepresentation of results.

(1) *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism refers to potential failure of acknowledgement of both the theoretical background of this study, for example in the literature review (Polonsky & Waller, 2010), and, in this case, to the research data itself (Snee, 2010). In both instances, sources of work must be referenced adequately (Eysenbach & Till, 2001). Snee’s guidelines for blog analysis state that public blogs were to be treated in the same way as journal articles or books would be treated. Sources should be acknowledged as per APA guidelines (Eysenbach & Till, 2001), as it is the blogger’s right to be recognised for their work. Failure to acknowledge the blogger’s work is considered plagiarism and would also conceal sources for those who attempt to investigate the research conducted (Booth et al., 2008).

To prevent plagiarism in this content, utmost care was taken to accurately reference both literature that informed this study and the blogs that provided the data. To reference literature, the 6th edition citation system of the American Psychology Association was adhered to (*APA style*, 2012). The blogs’ URLs are located in the

introductions of the bloggers to enable the reader to access to the blogs. When referencing data from the blog posts, a separate referencing system was established as described in detail earlier (refer to “description of the blogs”).

(2) Academic fraud

Academic fraud refers to misrepresentation or invention of data and to the failure to report all relevant data (Polonsky & Waller, 2010). Academic fraud is usually committed to fabricate new results or skew existing results. To show the absence of academic fraud in this study, great care was taken to reference the data sources (as above) and to accurately describe the sampling and coding procedures; an example of a spreadsheets is provided in Appendix J.

(3) Misrepresentation of results

This refers to intentional skewing of results to achieve a desired outcome (Polonsky & Waller, 2010). A possible misrepresentation of results was prevented through the guidance of two supervisors and extensively describing the research process.

Validity Concerns

Validity refers to the quality of research results; a study with high validity lets the reader accept the results as an accurate reflection of the data. A content analysis is considered valid if it withstands scrutiny on different levels: it should stay true when tested by independent sources and compared to new observations and competing theories or interpretations (Krippendorff, 2004).

There are several types of validity, including omnipresent face validity, which refers to whether a result appears to be accurate, and social validity, which reflects whether the general public rather than academic personnel find the results to be valid. However, in a validity appraisal, the researcher can only provide evidence of empirical validity to convey the validity of the study. In content analysis, there are three types of empirical validity that the researcher may address in their appraisal:

content, internal structure, and relations to other variables validity (Krippendorff, 2004).

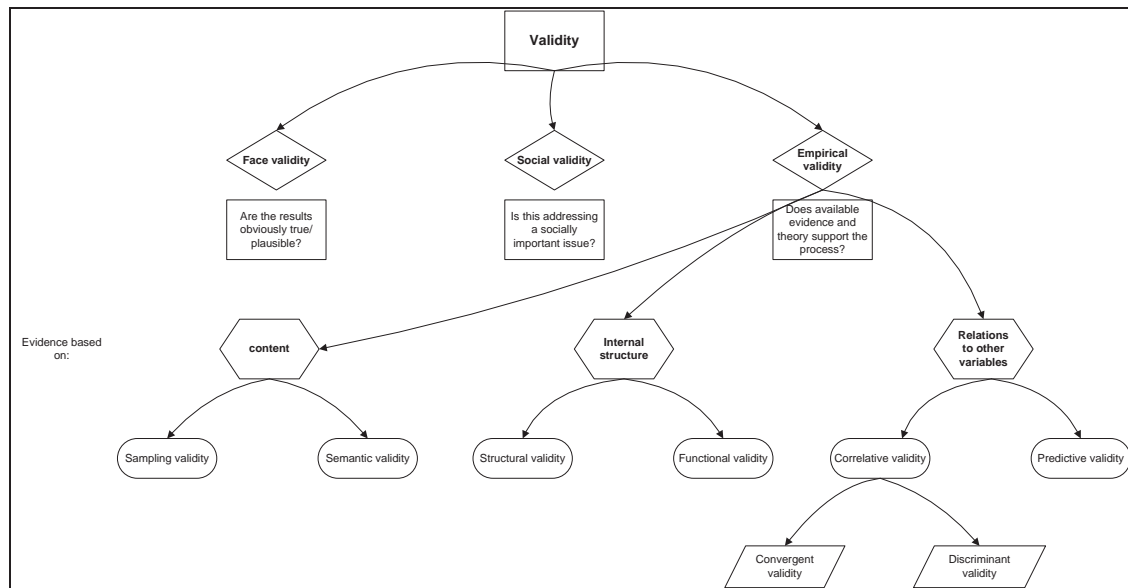


Figure 18 – “A typology of validation efforts in content analysis” (adapted from Krippendorff, 2004, p. 319)

Evidence based on content

The type of evidence that justifies the treatment of data includes the recording and sampling processes of content analysis and can be divided into sampling and semantic validity (Krippendorff, 2004).

Sampling validity is concerned with the extent to which the sampled data represents the overall population phenomena. In this study, the population was identified to be mothers of children aged under five. One acknowledged bias of this study is that the medium through which the data was communicated (blogs) can result in biased data. The mothers included in this data all own a computer and are interested in sharing their thoughts with others, resulting in exclusion of mothers that do not own a computer, have not internet access, or are not interested in public blogging.

However, in acknowledging this bias, there were some precautions taken to avoid further bias: To achieve a more accurate representation of a variety of mothers, several characteristics were searched for as described earlier (older/younger mother,

adoptive/birthmother, lesbian/heterosexual mother, working/stay at home mother, mother of a single child/mother of many children, mother of a child with Down syndrome/mother of a nondisabled child, and single mother/married mother).

Semantic validity reflects the level to which the categories established during the analysis mirror the meaning of the segments in context. To ensure semantic validity during the analysis process, the coding was undertaken by hand rather than using CATA (computer aided text analysis). Due to the highly humanistic context of the topic, CATA was assumed to be of little value as it might have unhinged the segments from their context. Using a pen and paper approach appeared more suitable to this highly humanistic and contextual topic. Through allocating the data segments not only to the imposed categories ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’ but also to compound, activity, and <activity, their context was preserved. For example by allocating the following quote not only to a ‘doing’ category but also to the <activity “being fed”, the activity of “feeding” and the compound of “nourishing”, the text segment of “try to feed some to me” remained in its context and leads therefore to increased semantic validity.

“He did stick his fingers in and try to feed some to me (he loves to feed others!), but he didn’t really eat any aside from a small taste of frosting”
(Feminist Housewife, p.13, ll.1-4).

Evidence based on internal structure

Evidence based on internal structure displays to what extent the analytical construct models what it claims to model. These types of evidence too can be divided into two categories: Structural validity and functional validity.

Structural validity is evident if the construct used to code the text represents what is already known e.g. stable meanings, language habits, signifying practices, and behaviours in the chosen context (Krippendorff, 2004). Structural validity is the most important validation of a content analysis if it is designed de novo (has never been done before).

This content analysis, being designed de novo, has analyzed blog posts about mothers' occupations that are related to their children aged 0-5. When comparing the results to existing occupational science literature, the breadth of mothering occupations found in the content analysis essentially mirror those described in Olson and Esdaile's "mothering occupations" (2004) albeit some in more and some in less detail. The occupational descriptors used to structure the dimensions of the mothering occupations that were identified in the analysis process can also be compared to existing literature on occupation.

Functional validity of an analytical construct can only be demonstrated if the analytical construct has been administered several times. In a de novo case such as this, there is no evidence of functional validity.

Evidence based on relations to other variables

Further evidence is based on relations to other variables, which is criterion based validity. This category is divided into two categories, correlative validity and predictive validity. Correlative and predictive validation efforts are made when large quantities of data can be compared with a) concurrent and b) future or past research. Again, due to the de novo design of this research, it is not possible to provide correlation and predictive validation evidence.

Summary

In this chapter, the ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions of the overarching pragmatism research paradigm were explored and found to be congruent with using a mixed methods content analysis of mothering blog posts. Pragmatists trust there is no one reality as reality develops through understanding. Understanding develops through posing and testing hypotheses that are based on a multitude of experience, expectations, and consequences. Under the pragmatism paradigm, the research question dictates the research context and methods and a mixing of methods is endorsed. Occupational science is concerned with understanding human occupation; it was therefore reasoned that an unobtrusive research approach is appropriate to not influence the topic of choice of the mothers.

Content analysis is a methodology that fits all criteria: mixed methods, approached with experience in the context, and unobtrusive nature. Mothering blogs are the chosen data source as their context is public and context relevant. Ten mothering blogs with different key characteristics were selected to allow for a wide variety of (co-)occupational experiences: adoptive, one child, many children, older, younger, stay at home, working, lesbian, having a special needs child, single.

Data gathering and analysis methods were outlined. The sample was obtained through multistage random sampling. The overall sample was described and each sample unit was summarized. The data analysis process was described. Ethical issues were identified to be limited to the handling of data rather than the obtaining of it as only public domain data was accessed. Trustworthiness and validity were addressed.

The findings that resulted from the processes described in this chapter are now presented.

Chapter 4 - Findings

Overview

The aim of this study is to validate or refute the four co-occupation categories ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’ through a content analysis of mothering blogs. In this chapter, the content of the posts is explored and illustrated and findings from post samples drawn from 10 random theoretically sampled mothering blogs explained.

The intention of this chapter is to present the many facets of the mothering blogs through providing a synopsis of the recorded events and the subsequent inferences. In the findings chapter, the bloggers’ words are directly quoted where possible, resulting in an authentic representation of their experiences. Due to the varying length, content, and quality of posts, some mothers’ experiences are referred to and quotes more often than others.

The findings are organised firstly to guide the reader through the blog content which is described in a structured fashion. Then the co-occupations categories produced in this study are described and defined. Finally, the primary research question is answered as a conclusion to the findings.

Mothering Events as Described by Bloggers

The mothering events in this study vary in regards to dimensions, complexities, and content. Polatajko’s (2006) occupational descriptors of ‘who, what, where, how, why, when’ and, contextually important in this research, ‘with whom’, help structure the dimensions of the events extracted from the blogs. The order of Polatajko’s descriptors is slightly varied to describe the events:

1. The way in which mothering events are described varies in regards to depth and complexities (what)
2. The participants in the reported events vary (who and with whom)
3. Mother and child may be involved in the same event with the same or with different occupational foci (what)

4. Spatially mother and child may or may not be in the same place (where)
5. The events are approached with different attitudes and expectations (how)
6. There are different reasons for the events (why)
7. The temporality of mothering events varies (when)

1. The events vary in the reported depth and complexity

There was an abundance of mothering events described in the blogs, referring to the ‘what’ in Polatajko’s (2004) descriptors. The mothers write about mothering events in a variety of depth. Some events are described in a very detailed fashion, such as Sweets describing her son’s nappy change nearly movement by movement:

“And I tossed the refuse in a trash bin and tried to wash my hands, while my screaming toddler was attached to my hip.” (Sweets, p. 14, ll. 20-22)

At other times, the bloggers might allow the reader only an overview of what happened in their mothering life, providing little to no detail. An example of this is an event recorded by Amanda:

“We just vegged all day long.” (Amanda, p.1, ll. 11, 12)

The described events vary in their reported complexity from very detailed micro descriptions (e.g. *“I tossed the refuse in a trash bin”*, Sweets, p.14, ll.20, 21) to very broad macro descriptions (e.g. *“our first family vacation”*, Sweets, p.8, l.6). An example of a mothering event that is larger than micro and smaller than macro is ‘shopping’. This level of activity could be named meso as it is between micro and macro levels. Kathy describes how her family handles grocery shopping. To start off her post, she introduces the reader to the topic of the post: *“This post is supposed to be about how our family handles grocery shopping and cooking.”* (Kathy, p.27, ll. 6, 7). She then delves into detail, describing various micro level events that make up this meso level event of ‘shopping’:

“I like to keep a running list on the kitchen cabinet of things I need at the store. I add to it until I decide to go shopping. I sometimes check their

sale ad in advance and plan according to what is cheaper this week. I take advantage of the many of the Buy One Get One Free deals.” (Kathy, p. 28, ll.12- 16)

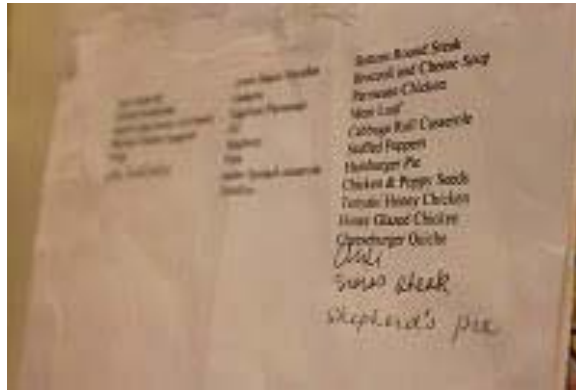


Figure 19 - Kathy, p. 28, image 1

She further describes:

“I invite one or two of the children to go with me and we tackle the shopping together. If it is very crowded and I don't need a whole cart-full, I will give out the little carrying baskets to my helpers. Skip the cart. They will go get half the list of items we need and then meet me when they are done. We get in and out faster this way.” (Kathy, p. 28, ll. 18- 23)

2. The participants in the reported events vary

The participants in the reported mothering events vary, referring to the ‘who’ and the ‘with whom’ of Polatajko’s occupational descriptors. The blogs are written from the mothers’ points of view; they are defined “mommy blogs” and are concerned with the mothers’ lives. All events are published by the mother; it is her choice which events she chooses to share with her readers. Although the mother is the active participant in the activity of blogging, she may not always be an active participant in the event that she blogs about. An example of such an event is The Feminist Housewife’s description of her son’s unwrapping Christmas presents, an event in which she is not an active participant.



Figure 20 - The Feminist Housewife, p. 4, image 1

"H has had a ball tearing wrapping paper off many a gift, and as always, was a trooper when it came to being around a lot of people and kept up past his bedtime." (The Feminist Housewife, p. 3, ll.2-5)

Some events do not include or imply the active participation or presence of the children. Kathy describes a conversation with her hairdresser in which she mentions, and therefore indirectly involves, her children:

"I got to laugh out loud today when I told my hairdresser that I wanted one of my children to learn how to do hair so I could get mine done every week. Her response was, "You're so good, I tell mine to become a plastic surgeon." (Kathy, p. 7, ll. 22-25)

The essence of mothering is evident even if the child is not present in the occupation.

Some mothers choose to write about their children's participation in an activity and describe themselves as the onlooker. Through watching her child's participation, the mother is involved in the events. An event that describes the mother as an onlooker is reported by Kelle who describes Lainey's ballet class and the way in which she laughs with other parents about their children:



Figure 21 - Kelle, p. 130, image 1

“She's graceful and poised, and she's enjoying pointing, flexing and stretching at the barre just like I would have enjoyed it too. I love the classical music, the reflection off the worn wood floors, the way the parents laugh when their child is making faces or hanging like a lemur off the barre when they're supposed to be in second position.” (Kelle, p. 129, ll. 10-14, p.130, ll.1-8)

In this example, Kelle's activity is to watch and laugh with other parents, who are, alongside Kelle, the participants in this mothering event.

Many reported mothering events involve the mothers and the children participating in the same activity. One such example is apparent in Mary's description of helping her children brush their teeth:

“I couldn't just send them into the bathroom, I would have to take them in, stop them from squabbling as to who stands where (each now has their own step stools - that was the answer!), who gets to use the toothpaste first (Mummy does it now because they can't squeeze the tube carefully), who turns over the timer (each take it in turn each day), showing each of them how to clean their teeth, stopping them from playing with the toothbrushes like swords or trying to clean the plughole with the toothbrushes or poking another's eye out, trying in vain to get them to spit out the toothpaste, showing them how to rinse the toothbrushes, reminding them to put the

toothbrushes in the pot rather than chuck them in the sink...the longest two minutes of my life!” (Mary, p.2, ll. 17-21, p.3, ll.1-9)

Overall, the mother is always directly, if not actively involved in the mothering events; this is to be expected as the mother, the blogger, is the narrator of the event.

3. Occupationally, mother and child may be involved in the same activity with the same, or with different, foci

Mother and child may be involved in the same activity and may or may not share the occupational focus. An example of sharing an occupational focus is shown in two photographs that make up one image (Figure 22), posted by Kelle. In these two photographs, her (older) daughter Lainey and she are cuddling and kissing the new baby girl Nella. In the first photograph, they are smiling at each other over Nella’s head, looking amused by staging for the photograph; the second photograph shows both Lainey and Kelle kissing Nella’s head with their eyes closed. In both photographs, a shared focus is captured: In the first photo the focus is each other and the amusement; in the second, it is baby Nella.



Figure 22 - Kelle, p. 36, image 1

A mothering event that has both mother and child in the same activity but with different occupational foci and different goals is evident in any photograph taken by a mother that displays her child/children participating in an occupation. The following photograph, also posted by Kelle, shows her daughter Nella eating a strawberry. Kelle writes about this:

“I was enjoying watching her eat it so much, I had tears in my eyes.”
(Kelle, p. 102, ll. 4-5)



Figure 23 - Kelle, p. 102, image 2

Kelle's focus is Nella who is focusing on her activity of eating strawberries. She is looking at her child's occupational focus of 'eating a strawberry'. Kelle is not an active participant in her daughter's activity but is an active observer: she is emotionally moved by observing her daughter's enjoyment of eating strawberries.

4. Spatially, mother and child may or may not be in the same place

There are several mothering events that, by definition, require mother and child to be in close physical proximity such as breastfeeding:

“But the nursing...oh, the nursing...how incredibly bonding it's been. The single most beautiful link I've had to falling in love with this blessed angel. And, look...I smiled. I don't remember smiling, but...I smiled.” (Kelle, p. 19, ll. 7-12)



Figure 24 - Kelle, p. 19, image 1

The caption of Kelle sharing her experience and the image of Kelle and Nella immersed in the event show just how close mother and child are when breastfeeding. As shown in the photograph, Kelle holds Nella close to her chest with one arm and appears to adjust the latch with her other hand. Breastfeeding seems to be the spatially closest occupation that mother and child participate in as they not only share space but the mother's body and its product, breast milk.

Other occupations require less physical contact and are therefore less proximate. Kathy describes her family's joint mini golf play. In the following images, the family members are situated to each other in varying distances:

"We also played miniature golf and participated in a family scavenger hunt." (p.14, ll. 3, 4)



Figure 25 - Kathy, p. 14, image 1

“Stevie, Steve, Stephanie, Carolyn and Matthew playing golf.” (p.14, l. 5)



Figure 26 - Kathy, p. 15, image 1

“Steph takes a swing.” (p. 14, l. 6)



Figure 27 - Kathy, p. 15, image 2

“Carolyn eyeing the hole.” (p. 15, ll. 1, 2)

Kathy describes the activity of ‘playing mini golf’ during her and her family’s holiday in a resort. The family members were playing together and interacting, posing closely together for a photograph, watching and observing each other when playing, sometimes closer together, sometimes further apart. However, there was no instance in which they were spatially as close as Kelle and Nella were when breastfeeding.

In comparison, mothering occupations also occur when mother and child are spatially much further apart and not interacting. An example of this is Sweets’ description of acquiring knowledge about settling her child to sleep at night. She describes how she has read articles online, bought a book, and started reading the book. In the context of the post in which she reports this event, it appears that she bought and read the book even before Little Man was born. Other ways in which she hopes to acquire knowledge about the mothering activity of settling her child to sleep are consulting health professionals at Little Man’s next well baby visit:

“I’m not sure if it’s because he’s too young (at 2-1/2 months) or if we’ve set into motion bad sleep habits. I’ve read online that you can’t spoil a baby before they’re six months old. I’ve also heard that, up to 3 months, a

baby is in the “4th trimester” and needs to be held a LOT. I’m going to have to ask about sleep (and feeding) habits at Little Man’s next well baby visit. I probably should have bought more baby books with suggestions on how to get your child to sleep. I got The Happiest Baby on the Block and never finished reading it!” (Sweets, p. 2, ll. 9- 17)

5. The events are approached with different attitudes and expectations

Mothering events are not always described as being a positive experience. While most of the bloggers report positive feelings about mothering in general, there appears to be a general sense of discomfort when reporting events that caused tensions between mother and child. The following paragraphs describe several mothers’ attitudes, changes in attitudes over time, and expectations when interacting with their children.

The Feminist Housewife’s struggles with her son’s response to food

The Feminist Housewife felt that baby-led weaning (BLW) was the “*perfect hippie-dippie, baby-led, right-on and groovy way for H to start eating*” (p. 8, ll. 4-6). Baby-led weaning has the child decide when and how much it wants to eat, the motto being ‘you provide and they decide’ (Reeves, 2008). However, The Feminist Housewife reported that this approach to introducing solids resulted in conflict with her child; her expectations of her son in baby-led weaning were not satisfied. She writes that BLW...

“...wasn’t the sunshine and rainbows, “fun and easy” experience that all of my reading had set us up for. In fact, it was kind of a royal pain in the ass!” (p. 8, 9, ll. 24- 26 & 1-3)

The way in which the Feminist Housewife’s attitude changed throughout the course of letting her baby wean himself can be inferred from the following examples. Firstly, the Feminist Housewife researched the topic of baby-led weaning and expected the process of weaning to be joyful.

“When you read about BLW there are lots of personal accounts from parents talking about how fun it was to watch their little ones explore solid

food at their own pace, and how much easier it was than dealing with making/buying purees (with BLW, there is no spoon-feeding – children eat with their hands or utensils when they are ready and able).” (p.7, 8, ll. 17-20, 1-3)

Once the Feminist Housewife and her wife felt that their son was ready they...

“started sitting him with us, sometimes in his high chair, sometimes in our laps during meals (about once a day, sometimes skipping days) and letting him grab hold of food as he desired. It was pretty laid back.” (p.10, ll. 8-10)



Figure 28 - The Feminist Housewife, p. 9, image 1

“The picture above is H at about 5.5 months old. His first taste of solid food, which I blogged about. C was holding him, eating an apple, and he just helped himself.” (p.9, ll. 1-3)

Her attitude in these quotes can be described as neutral and relaxed. This changed when her son’s reaction to the food changed: He was interested in the food, but rather than eating it

“he wanted to grab it and throw it on the floor. His interest in tasting things was diminishing, and his interest in destroying our meals was increasing exponentially.” (p. 11, ll. 7- 10)

The Feminist Housewife's son *"wasn't happily exploring and playing with food – he was getting very upset."* (p. 11, ll. 13-14), resulting in her making changes to her own eating habits as *"then the issue was that we could not eat anything anywhere within his sight."* (p. 12, ll. 1-3)

The Feminist Housewife experienced this period of time as very negatively: *"It was insane!"* (p. 12, l. 12)

After some further struggles in regards to eating and attempts from The Feminist Housewife to get her son to eat, not because she was *"worried about his nutrition, he was still nursing plenty and he's consistently been a very healthy weight, I was just so very annoyed at not ever being able to eat in peace!"* (p.13, ll. 18-21), her son finally did start eating and the relief in the Housewife's attitude is shown in the last sentence of her post about BLW:

"So we made it! Seven long months after he first reached for that apple, we have a real, live, snacking, eating toddler. Phew!" (p. 14, ll. 4- 6)

Michelle's changing feelings towards breastfeeding

Michelle is a breastfeeding mother who views breastfeeding as an important bond between herself and Noah; she also feels it is the best start in life for her son. Michelle had always planned on breastfeeding Noah; she even *"took a breastfeeding class [and] had regular phone convos with [her] lactation consultant"* (p.9, ll. 7, 8). Michelle's dedication and commitment to breastfeeding her son, and to provide breast milk for him when she was at work, is evident when she writes that she...

"pumped more often than he latched on — even (gasp!) pumping while driving on the rare oh-crap-I-don't-have-enough-milk-stored-and-I'm-late-for-work occasion. It wasn't fun and it wasn't always easy, but I did it. I survived the pumping-every-two-hour beginnings (thanks to my super understanding job.) I survived lugging that pump everywhere I went, including jobs in New York City where I had to sneak into public bathrooms and even got caught boob-in-suction a couple of times." (p. 9, ll. 9- 17)

Since Noah started teething, and *“now has two little bottom teeth, which would be utterly adorable if they weren’t vicious razors that regularly lingered around the most sensitive part on my body.”* (p. 5, ll. 7-10), Michelle’s feeling towards breastfeeding has shifted from ‘acceptance of inconvenience’ to ‘acceptance of pain’. Michelle writes that she would *“endure engorgement and bleeding nipples every day”* for her son (p. 8, ll. 2, 3); however, she also reports ambivalent feelings towards her son’s habit of biting while nursing:

“The absolute worst is when he’s sucking, sucking, sucking, slowly inching off of my nipple, and then out of nowhere he bites down — just on the tip. I swear if breastfeeding for eight months or pumping at work for six months doesn’t warrant an award, enduring this does” (p. 6, ll. 12-17).

Michelle describes the changing relationship between herself, her son Noah, and breastfeeding. She writes that she had been looking forward to *“have [her] body back, buy bras that weren’t stretched or stained, dye [her] hair, drink more alcohol than [she] should”* (p. 10, ll. 7, 8) after her planned 12 months of breastfeeding. However, when approaching the 12 months mark and the planned end of breastfeeding, Michelle *“started to panic”* (p. 10, l. 1). Their needs changed: Noah would now receive nourishment from solid foods, he was *“[not] an infant [anymore] that needed nourishment from [her] body”* (p.10, l. 12). However, now it was Michelle who needed the breastfeeding to feel she had not lost her baby: *“he didn’t need it from me, but I needed it from him — the closeness, the infancy”* (p. 10, ll. 15, 16).

Michelle further writes that once she decided to keep feeding Noah, *“only once in the morning, once at night [she] told [herself]”* (p. 10, ll. 18, 19), Noah wanted more to nurse more often. The resulting conflict led to Michelle’s wish to discontinue feeding:

“He went into crazy gimme-gimme mode. Tearing at my shirt, whining and crying, and then throwing himself on the floor when he didn’t get his milk. I tried to substitute with bottles — didn’t always work. I tried to distract him with toys — nice try, his eyes would say mockingly. And just like

that, I wanted it to be over. But it's not. Not even close." (p. 10, 11, ll. 20- 23, 1-4)

Michelle also feels that she and Noah are

"entering this iffy zone where it's starting to get weird. He's a fully walking, mouth-full-of-teeth toddler who still crawls into his mom's lap and latches on for milk. If I don't stop it now, when will I?" (p.11, ll. 8-11)



Figure 29 - Michelle, p. 11, image 1

Michelle writes that she feels *"defeated"* (p.12, l. 3) every time she gives in for an extra feed; however, she *"can't imagine passing that stage [of nursing] and losing a piece of my baby"* (p. 12, ll. 7, 8).

These conflicting quotes show Michelle's ambivalence towards nursing when it is no longer essential for the nourishment of her child.

6. Mothering events are motivated by different reasons

There is an abundance of reported reasons to participate in mothering events, answering the 'why' in Polatajko's descriptors. In the following, a few of the most explicit reasons are listed. Kelle, a mother of two children, the younger one of whom

has Down syndrome, reports that one reason for her to have enrolled her older daughter Lainey in ballet classes is to compensate for what she felt she had missed out on in her childhood and somehow live through Lainey:



Figure 30 - Kelle, p. 130, image 2

"I still may be loud and clompy, more of a gyrating modern dancer than the graceful arabesque-ing ballerina I always wanted to be, but the Ineke Rush [a dancer Kelle went to college with] inside me smiles when I watch my girl do that something I always wanted to do. I think we all want to give our kids that--the opportunities we missed out on. We want to gather all the good in our past--memorable vacations, cherished traditions, words of wisdom passed down from our parents--repeat it for our own kids and make up for all the regrets" (Kelle, p. 131, 132, ll. 4- 12, 1- 2)

Kelle further writes that although she would like for her daughters to *"travel overseas, speak a second language, and learn to play sports because [she] always wished [she] did"* (Kelle, p.132, ll. 4-6), her biggest motivation in mothering her children is love:

"I will support my girl no matter what. I will smile and nod if someday she ditches her tutu with a "Hey Mom, I want to play shot put." And

I will make sure she has the best damn shot put shoes they make. Because I love her.” (Kelle, p. 132, ll. 16-20)

Lisa, stay-at-home mother, lists ‘role modelling’ as a reason to craft trinket boxes for her twin sons as Christmas gifts. She writes that making her own Christmas presents rather than buying them *“is something [she] hope[s] to pass onto [her] beautiful boys as they get older”*. (Lisa, p. 1, ll. 6-7)



Figure 31 - Lisa, p. 1, image 1

Bridgette, single mother, writes about her reasons of enrolling her son Jack into day care which are financial reasons, the need for a break from active mothering, having time to run errands, and the perception that her son needs to interact with children his age and become more independent:

“I know in the end it will be good for me and him. I will be able to make a living for us, get a break/much needed rest and run errands. He will be able to gain a bit of independence and make new friends/be around people his age. Those are all good things right?” (Bridgette, p. 8, ll. 2-7)

7. The temporality of the mothering events varies (when)

Amanda writes: *“We went camping this weekend and had a blast”* (Amanda, p. 8, l. 6) and *“every time we go camping, I make a list”* (Amanda, p.8, l. 10). These examples, both related to ‘going camping’, show that the descriptions of the events

sometimes imply the duration. The actual ‘going camping’ event occupies much more time, a weekend in this case, than ‘making a list’. ‘Making a list’ is also part of the event ‘going camping’, which indicates that ‘going camping’ starts well before leaving for the camp ground.

Another temporal dimension of the mothering events is the frequency in which the events occur. Karen writes about her nightly routine with her daughter Mieka:

“After her bath time we “read” a story, and then I lie next to her on the bed while breast feeding. It sometimes takes me more than an hour to stagger out of the room, and after that it also feels as if my body has taken a knock. My back and my shoulders go all skew for lying with her in my arms. It is the same when I sometimes bring her to our bed at night when she wakes up.” (Karen, p. 6, ll.5-12)



Figure 32 - Karen, p. 6, image 1

Karen demonstrates the differences between her weekend and weekday breastfeeding and sleeping routines with Mieka:

“On a weekend we stretch the mornings in bed a little longer with the toddler snugly on the breast. She wakes anything from 5, but we are able to stretch sleeping well after 7 o’clock. This Monday was the last time in a very long time where I could sit a little bit longer with her. The schools start today, and because the traffic is going to be back to normal (hectic), I

stretched it until 6 while sitting with her on the breast.” (Karen, p.15, ll. 7-15)

Bridgette writes about her issues with finding a day care centre for her son Jack that she feels comfortable with. She reports repeated events of visiting day care centres to assess their suitability for her son:

“I decided to enrol him in day care. This is so fricken hard! First of all it’s hard to find one I feel comfortable with. One where the workers seem nice and the environment seems fun, safe and sanitary. I did 2 [day care] tours today, got one more in a couple of hours and another on Thursday then I will make my decision which will hopefully be the right one.” (Bridgette, p. 7- 8, ll. 24-28, 32 – 2)

A one-off event is described by Karen who writes about going to the zoo:

“Holiday at home does not feel like holiday (I have been complaining), but we did a bit of local Zoo visiting today.” (Karen, p. 26, ll. 6,7)



Figure 33 - Karen, p. 26, image 1

Temporal dimensions of mothering occupations therefore include time of day, repetition, duration, pattern, and routine.

In summary, this section has presented the ‘who and with whom, what, where, how, why, when’ of reported mothering events. The overall finding presented in this section is that mothering events have different contexts, dimensions, and facets. Mothering events vary in reported depth and complexity and that participants in mothering events vary: although mother and child often participate together, the child is not always included. Mother and child do not necessarily participate together in an event – they may have different occupational foci in a shared time and space or simply not share the time and space. The mothering events are approached with different attitudes and expectations that may change throughout the event and there are different reasons for participation. Lastly, taking a temporal stance, the frequency and duration of events vary; events can occur in one-off sessions or be repeated.

The following section presents four categories that describe the mothering events as reported in the blogs with varying occupational foci.

Four Categories of Mothering Events

The recorded, code-able mothering events can be described with 4 categories, namely ‘doing for’, ‘doing because of’, ‘doing alongside’, and ‘doing with’. In the following, each category is defined, illustrated with examples, and explained.

‘Doing for’

‘Doing for’ is a category of mothering events in which the child’s presence in the same time and space is not necessary. However, considering the children’s ages and needs, it can be assumed the children would frequently be in their mothers’ presence, even when the mother is participating in activities that do not require the presence of the child. In ‘doing for’ events, the mother is the actor and the child is excluded from the activity but is the immediate recipient of the activity’s product. ‘Doing for’ events are done to enable their child’s activity. An example of ‘doing for’ was reported by Amanda who talked about her daughter’s eating:

“[...] she can't eat huge bites of things, you have to chop them in little pieces.” (Amanda, p. 2, l. 19)

In this example, Amanda describes that she needs to cut her daughter Maddie's food into little pieces for Maddie to be able to eat. This is a 'doing for' activity, as Maddie is the immediate recipient of the outcome of her mother's activity. It is not necessary for Maddie to be present in this activity as she does not contribute to the activity.

'Doing because of'

Similarly, 'doing because of' mothering events do not require the child's presence in the activity; however, 'doing because of' activities have the child and the child's activity being the cause for the activity. Kelle describes her daughter Nella's birth and writes how she tried to communicate with her friends and the nurses 'because of' Nella:

“I kept asking if she was okay, and they told me she was fine. She was crying and pink and just perfectly healthy. I wanted to say the words, but couldn't. So, I asked why her nose was smooshed...why she looked funny. And because she came out posterior and so quickly, many people in the room honestly thought she'd look a little different in an hour or so. But I knew. I cried and cried while everyone smiled and took pictures of her, like nothing was wrong. I kept crying and asking, "Is there something you aren't telling me?" ...and they just kept smiling.” (Kelle, p.12, 13, ll.13-17, 1-8)



Figure 34 - Kelle, p. 13, image 1

In this example, Kelle writes about her emotional reaction to seeing her daughter for the first time. She did not know that Nella had Down syndrome prior to seeing her after her birth. Kelle is the primary actor in this event; Nella is the cause of Kelle's (attempted) interaction with the people surrounding her. As opposed to in 'doing for' events, Nella does not receive any outcome of this event.

'Doing alongside'

'Doing alongside' events occur when mother and child are located in a shared environment and time, but are essentially occupied with separate activities; they each have a separate occupational focus and are 'doing alongside' each other and are separate actors. There are two sub-categories under this category, depending on the mother's primary occupational focus. In both subcategories, the mothers described their children's occupations without their own involvement, observing their children, keeping them safe, and apparently consciously stepping back to facilitate learning and "*let the children go*" (Mary, p.2, 1.2); the difference is whether the child is the mother's primary or secondary focus:

The child as the primary focus

The primary focus being on the child is demonstrated by Michelle's description of watching her son Noah. In her post, she provides photographs of her son describing each photograph with a half-sentence as a photo caption.

"The most amazing part of motherhood has been watching him watch his brand new world." (Michelle, p. 23, ll. 2, 3)



Figure 35 - Michelle, p. 24, image 2

“Always curious. Always discovering.” (Michelle, p. 24, l. 1)



Figure 36 - Michelle, p. 24, image 3

“Always exploring.” (Michelle, p.25, l.1)



Figure 37 - Michelle, p. 25, image 1

“Dancing with shadows” (Michelle, p. 25, l. 2)



Figure 38 - Michelle, p. 25, image 2

“Kissing new friends.” (Michelle, p.25, l. 3)

Michelle is standing back in these brief descriptions and taking in her son’s development; she focuses on his actions and occupations and does not appear to have a different occupational focus than watching her son. In this category, mother and child are ‘doing alongside’: The mother’s occupational focus is the child’s occupational focus; however her role is an observer rather than a participant in the child’s activity.

The child as second focus

‘Doing alongside’ events also occur with unrelated occupational foci: Some mothers write about busy days and times in which they cannot solely focus on their children. Karen writes about what she names “*suicide hour*” (p.22, l.16) when she and her family return home in the evening after a day at work and daycare. Karen lets her daughter Mieka play with water on the kitchen floor while Karen fulfills other household chores; Karen describes this:

“I found myself last week ~~screaming~~ talking very loud when the toddler as usual was “washing dishes” with me. She was wet and the floor was wet... I saw the look of utter amazement of her face when I lost my cool! “What’s the matter, Mom?” or, more specifically “WTF?” “What is the BIG deal?” (Karen, p. 19, ll. 12-17)

“I did things differently from there! When the toddler wants to wash dishes with me, it is totally okay. I have decided not to freak out! What is a bit of water in the greater scheme of things? We take off her clothes for the duration of the washing session, and put it back on afterwards. And then dry the floor as well! It is not a train smash! The biggest bonus! The playing with the water keeps the toddler occupied for a relative long period. Enough to get the dishwasher unpacked, and the dinner started...” (Karen, p.20, ll. 5-13)

In these two extracts of her post, Karen is conveying her and Mieka’s presence in a shared environment (the kitchen) with different occupational foci – Karen focuses on washing the dishes, Mieka focuses on playing with the water on the

floor. Additionally, this exemplar shows how a mother changes her attitudes towards ‘doing alongside’ events in order to achieve results, in this case to get dinner organised.

Although a mother’s main focus in this subcategory is on a different subject than her child, she still attends to her child by frequently changing her focus and checking on her child out of safety concerns, or, as the following example shows, out of interest in her child(ren)’s activity:

“And I loved glancing over to check on them on the tumble mat and seeing this completely unscripted moment.” (Kelle, p. 109, ll. 2-4)



Figure 39 - Kelle, p.109, image 3

‘Doing with’. The participants in ‘doing with’ events can be described as ‘co-actors’. They all contribute to the event, if not always equally. However, each participant’s contribution (or lack thereof) changes the event. ‘Doing with’ events do not require the participants to have the same intent; ‘doing with’ are those events which have the participants interact with or beside each other in the same event. Some ‘doing with’ events are more interactive than others. In cuddling, for example, the focus is more directly interactive than for example making waffles together, in which event the focus is the actual making of the waffles. In all ‘doing with’ events of the data set, the participants are located in the same time at the same place, whereby the definition of place is important: the ‘same place’ can mean that the participants are in immediate proximity to each other as was described in Kelle’s

breastfeeding Nella or the participants may be further apart as was described in Kathy's playing with her children.

Some differences in the highly interactive 'doing with' events were found, depending on the degree of equality of mother and child and the level to which the mother executes her authority. In the following, three examples of different attitudes in 'doing with' events are described and quoted.

Neutral attitude

The first example is illustrated by a photograph without caption that was published in Kelle's blog showing Kelle breastfeeding her daughter Nella. As this photo is not a close-up shot, both co-actors faces are hidden from sight. However, their bodies are relaxed which lets assume that the nursing is taking place in a peaceful, struggle-free, apparently neutral manner:



Figure 40 - Kelle, p. 113, pic. 3

Positive attitude

Michelle writes about a playful interaction with her son Noah. She writes about 'biting' her son out of love, the biting stems from a positive feeling. Noah's response to Michelle's 'bites' is also positive. He laughs.

"I have a confession: Sometimes I bite my child. It's true. I do. I can't help it; it's the way that my love manifests itself. That sweet smile, those squishable cheeks — I need a nibble! There were a lot of silly things I

imagined saying to my baby before he got here, but I could eat your face off and Let me bite that belly just weren't on the list. It's not like I break through — or even sink in — but there's definitely teeth-to-skin contact. And he laughs, so we're cool.” (Michelle, p. 4, ll. 4-13)



Figure 41 - Michelle, p. 4, image 2

Negative attitude

Another attitude towards a ‘doing with’ event can be seen in Karen’s description of her daughter Mieka’s bath time:

“She used to love her bath time, and we are always very careful not to use the word “bath” if we are not ready to go and bath her. Because she starts climbing the stairs as soon as we announce it’s time for her bath. Not now! All of a sudden she is afraid it is going to be too hot, and she doesn’t want to get into the bath. When I put her in, she doesn’t want to sit down. And washing of hair has become a big screaming session!” (Karen, p. 28, 29, ll. 16, 1- 7)

This example shows how Mieka reacts negatively to her mother’s efforts of bathing her which is evident in Mieka’s attempts to get away from the bathroom by climbing the steps, her refusal to get into the bath and not wanting to sit down, and her screaming when her hair is being washed. Mieka’s response to bath time appears to have changed her mother’s attitude and expectations of bathing her which is apparent in the negative connotation in the following quote:

“The past two weeks have been a bit of a struggle with regards bath time.” (Karen, p. 28, ll. 10, 11)

Having outlined several interactive ‘doing with’ events, an example of a less directly interactive, more activity focused ‘doing with’ event is evident in Kelle’s brief mentioning of making waffles and illustrating this activity with pictures of Lainey stirring the batter (Figure 42). Kelle does not further describe this activity or how or if she interacts with Lainey.

“We bummed around the kitchen in jammies, sipping coffee, making waffles, watching movies...” (Kelle, p. 86, ll. 6-8)



Figure 42 – Kelle, p. 86, image 2

‘Doing with’ can contain ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’

When considering the occupational focal length through which the events are seen and the reported by the mothers, it becomes evident that the highly interactive ‘doing with’ events are a multitude of reciprocal ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’ events. Often ‘doing to’ events were followed by a reaction of the child, which makes the ‘doing to’ event become part of a bigger ‘doing with’ event. The reaction of the child was coded as a ‘being done to’ event to stay congruent with viewing the events from the mother’s perspective. In the following, ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’ are defined and their inextricability is explained.

‘Doing to’

In this study, ‘doing to’ events were never described as a complete, complex activity, rather as some sort of *smaller, less complex, and less complete doing* than an activity. ‘Doing to’ events require both participants to be in the same space at the same time; a physical proximity was always reported. ‘Doing to’ events are any actions that the mother ‘does to’ her child/children. In Sweets’ description of a “*messy diaper change*” (Sweets, p.13, ll. 15, 16), she describes several ‘doing to’ events:

“In the bathroom, the changing table was in the handicapped stall. I got Little Man situated, putting a disposable pad under him, and I pulled off his shorts (left his shoes on) and opened the diaper to one of the biggest poops I’ve seen!” (Sweets, p. 14, ll. 1-4)

In this example, Sweets ‘does to’ Little Man by placing him on the changing table, putting a pad under him, and pulling off his shorts.

‘Being done to’

The child’s ‘doing to’ the mother was coded as ‘being done to’ to keep in line with the study’s occupational focus being on the mother. As in ‘doing to’, ‘being done to’ events are also always *smaller, less complex, and less complete* doings than activities.

In her description of the “*messy diaper change*” (Sweets, p. 13, ll. 15, 16), Sweets also demonstrates how she is ‘being done to’ by Little Man:

“I had to pull away the dirty diaper, because he began kicking and put his shoe IN some poop. Ack! Got more wipes and put the dirty diaper and used wipes in a plastic bag (for used diapers, Munchkin brand). Then he PEES all over himself and his clothing. Starts SCREAMING!” (Sweets, p.14, ll.9-14)

In this quote, Sweets describes how she is ‘being done to’ by Little Man. He is kicking and screaming at her, showing his dissatisfaction as a direct reaction to Sweets’ ‘doing to’ him.

‘Doing to’ and ‘being done to’ result in ‘doing with’

As can be inferred from the above example, ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’ events result in interaction, a ‘doing with’ event. ‘Doing to’ and ‘being done to’ events are splinters or components of an interactive ‘doing with’ event.

The mother never does an activity ‘to’ her child. In ‘doing with’ events, no single co-actor ever solely controls an event due to the other co-actor’s response. This is evident as when the mother ‘does to’ her child, the child responds and ‘does to’ the mother. The child therefore interrupts, aids, and overall influences the flow of the event, resulting in an interactive ‘doing with’ event.

Mothering Events

Overall, the coded mothering events of this study fit into four categories: ‘doing with’, ‘doing alongside’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’. This order of the categories is followed through the remainder of this thesis and is based on how the co-actors and their activities are situated toward each other regarding distance between and presence of the co-actors in each other’s activities: ‘Doing with’ is the category that has the co-actor’s events follow each other the most immediately; the co-actors in this study were always in each other’s presence. ‘Doing alongside’ has the events of the co-actors not being immediately related but their presence in the same time and space is required. ‘Doing for’ events are done for the other’s benefit and therefore appear to related more directly to the other participant than ‘because of’. The four categories are illustrated in Figure 43 which displays that there are two categories of mothering occupations that are done together and two that are done alone. It is further shown that ‘doing with’ consists of two subcategories: primarily interactive and primarily non-interactive. The primarily interactive ‘doing with’ events consist of ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’ events, the primarily non-interactive

ones have no specific sub-events allocated although it could be assumed that they would contain several events from each of the other categories.

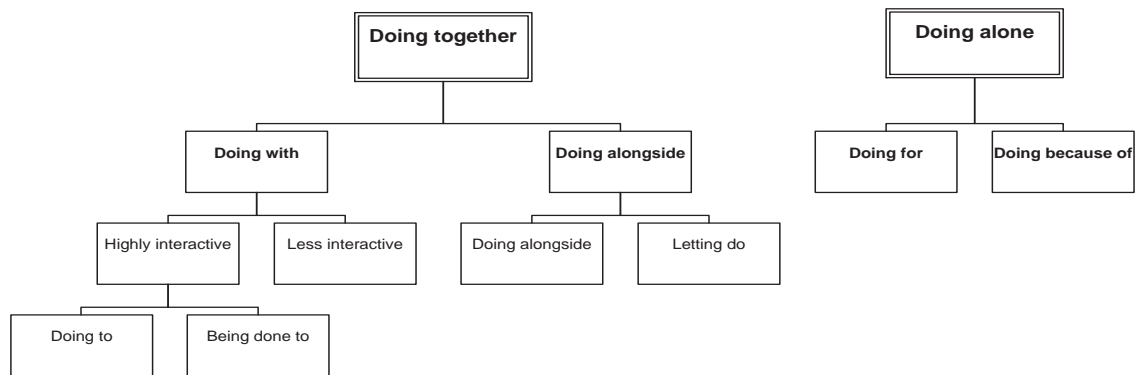


Figure 43 – Mothering events

Four refined categories. In addressing the quantitative aspect of this research, the following chart illustrates how the mothering events were distributed to the four categories ‘doing with’, ‘doing alongside’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’.

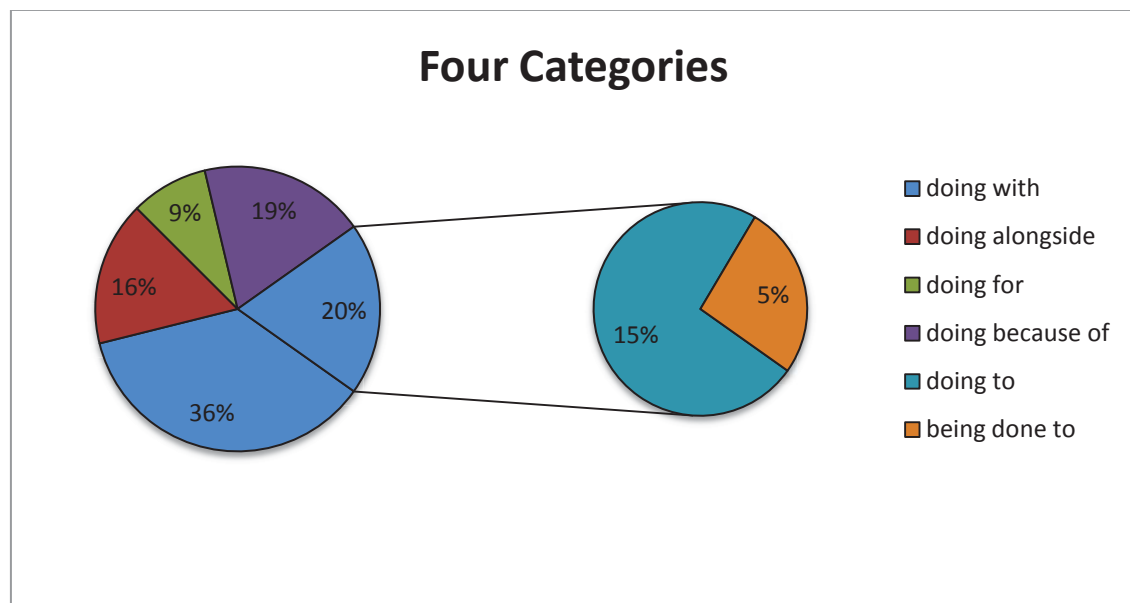


Figure 44 – Four categories

Figure 44 illustrates the distribution of the coding of 990 mothering events; an additional 19 mothering events were not coded due to reasons outlined in the

methodology chapter. The chart consists of two pies: The left pie shows the entity of coded mothering events and the right pie shows that some ‘doing with’ events are split up into ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’ events.

The left pie contains all (100%) of the coded mothering events and illustrates the percentages of each of the events that were allocated to the four categories ‘doing with’ (56%), ‘doing alongside’ (16%), ‘doing for’ (9%), and ‘doing because of’ (19%). ‘Doing with’ events make up 56% of the entire coded mothering events but are split up into 36% and 20% as the 20% were further described by the bloggers and could be identified as having aspects of ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’ events. The events of ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’ are shown in the right-side pie; 15% of the events were coded as ‘doing to’ and 5% were coded as ‘being done to’ events. The other 36% were not further described such as Kelle’s example of making waffles with Lainey. There may have been components of other events in the activity of making waffles together as will be reasoned in the discussion. These hypothetical components were not described in the data and therefore not coded.

The distribution of the extracted and coded mothering events suggests that more than two thirds of all the reported mothering events in this study are done together in the same time and space (‘doing with’ and ‘doing alongside’ events); only less than one third of the mothering events were reported as events in which the child’s presence was not required (‘doing for’ and ‘doing because of’). However, due to the age of the children and their need to be supervised, it is likely, although mostly unknown, that they were also present in ‘doing for’ and ‘doing because of’ events.

Summary and Answer to the Primary Research Question

The aim of this study is to answer the research question: *‘do the four co-occupation categories describe the mothering occupations of mothers of children aged 0-5 years?’* in the context of mothering blogs. This chapter has systematically described the data set starting with a description event structured under the occupational descriptors ‘who, what, where, how, why, when, with whom’. Following these descriptions, four event categories that describe the mothering events of the data set are presented and examples are provided. The categories are

named ‘doing for’, ‘doing because of’, ‘doing alongside’, and ‘doing with’. ‘Doing with’ events can be made up of smaller ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’ events.

In answer to the primary research question, considering the data presented in this chapter, the conclusive answer is: ‘no, the four initial co-occupation categories only describe 78.5% of the mothering events reported in the blogs.’ Additionally to providing an answer to the primary research question, it was identified in the study that there are different dimensions, contexts, and facets of mothering events. 100% of the code-able mothering events of this study can be divided into doing with’, ‘doing alongside’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’. It was suggested that the most interactive ‘doing with’ events are split into two sub-categories: ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’ which lead to the intense and highly interactive nature of these mothering events.

There are several issues with the research question such as the word ‘co-occupation’ and the meaning it entails regarding scope, complexity, and completeness, all of which are addressed in the following chapter. The findings are also considered in the context of relevant literature in the next chapter, the discussion.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

Introduction

This study set out to validate or refute the four categories ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’ that were proposed by Doidge (2011). This chapter addresses five discussion topics that are based on the findings and the research methodology:

Firstly, the categories defined in the study undertaken by Doidge (2011) are considered and similarities and differences between the previous and the current categories are discussed. For clarity reasons, the 2011 study by Doidge is referred to as the ‘dog-study’ in this chapter. The current understanding of concept ‘co-occupation’ based on this thesis is then outlined and discussed in context of relevant literature; the key components of co-occupation are compared to differing definitions of co-occupation. Hypotheses about the reasons for differing understandings of co-occupation are posed. The individualist view on occupation is then explored and discussed; its implications on occupational science’s understanding of co-occupation are considered. A discussion on taxonomic issues that were encountered during data analysis follows, including an exploration of the terms activity, occupation, and co-occupation. The theory practice divide between occupational science and occupational therapy is then addressed. Finally, the usefulness of content analysis for occupational science research and the appropriateness of using blogs as a data source are asserted.

Prior to concluding this discussion with the research recommendations for occupational scientists and practice implications for occupational therapists, the strengths and weaknesses of this study are outlined. A brief summary highlights the main points discussed in this chapter. For occupational terms as used in this discussion, refer to Appendix K.

Comparing two Studies

The four initial categories ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’ were developed when the occupations that dog owner Lucy participated in related to her dog Oscar were explored (Doidge, 2011). In the dog study, it was hypothesized that all relationships have aspects of ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’ occupations. That hypothesis provided the grounds for this thesis in which the four co-occupations categories ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’ were tested. In the following section, similarities and differences between definitions in the current and the dog study are discussed.

In the dog study, every doing that was related to someone other than the active participant (i.e. Lucy’s doing related to Oscar) was referred to as a ‘co-occupation’; every category was described as a ‘co-occupation category’. In comparison, the current study highlights that not every ‘doing’ is a whole occupation, for example the Amanda’s chopping food for her child. Therefore, not every mothering event is a ‘co-occupation’. The term ‘event’ as used in this study refers to any reported or inferred doings. This term was chosen when the taxonomies were found to be ill-fitting. To avoid confusion, each doing, no matter what size, is termed event.

Comparison of the definitions of ‘doing with’

The current study adds to and expands on existing themes that were described in the dog study’s definition of ‘doing with’. These changes are explored related to the themes of time and place, participant involvement, relationship between doing to and being done to, and finally the quality of the experience.

Time and place

‘Doing with’ events, as defined in both studies, occur when the co-actors, the participants, share time and place and are present in each other’s activities. The current study adds that the extent of time and space may vary i.e. the co-actors may be in bodily contact or be situated further apart; they may engage in the co-occupation continuously or not. These components possibly influence the intensity of

the experience. An example of these varying dimensions in ‘doing with’ events is described when Kelle’s photo and description of breastfeeding Nella are compared to Kathy’s description of playing a game of golf with her children.

Kelle and Nella are spatially the closest they could possibly be: Nella is lying in Kelle’s arm, held close to her chest. Nella and Kelle are not only sharing Kelle’s breast but Kelle is also sharing the product of her body, her breast milk. Temporally, Nella and Kelle are simultaneously and continuously engaged in this event as Kelle is holding Nella at the same time as Nella is sucking on Kelle’s breast.

In comparison to Nella and Kelle’s physically close ‘doing with’ event, Kathy and her children also share a space but are further apart: While their body contact is less intense than that of Kelle and Nella, they may occasionally pat each other’s back or give each other a hug; the distance between them may vary throughout the event as they step closer together to talk after having taken a golf swing or to pass the golf club on to the next player. Kathy, the mother, stands back every now and then to take photographs, changing her occupational focus, but is still actively involved in cheering on and therefore in playing with her children. Kathy and her children are engaged in different actions such as taking a swing, looking on, or giving tips; hence they are engaged in a ‘doing with’ event at the same time in the same place. Temporally, Kathy and her children are taking turns in playing mini golf; they are simultaneously but not continuously engaged in the event of playing mini golf. This suggests that participant involvement, even within a game of mini golf, may vary.

Participant involvement

In the current study’s definition, each co-actor is active in ‘doing with’ events and the extent to which each co-actor contributes is of little significance as each contribution changes the ‘doing with’ event. This is an essential difference between the current and the previous definition: Under the previous definition, both participants were required to equally participate and contribute to the ‘doing with’ event and have a shared goal. If one participant contributed less to an event and was

therefore identified as the non-dominant actor, the event was described as a ‘doing to’ event.

‘Doing with’ contains reciprocal ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’

The ‘doing to’ category in the dog study was described as being similar to ‘doing with’: ‘doing to’ events were described as occupations done together although Lucy was the participant holding and executing authority. Oscar the dog was dependent on Lucy, the dominant actor, in these occupations; Oscar is a participant but contributes less to the occupation than Lucy.

In comparison, the current study defines ‘doing to’ more literally: it refers only to the action that the mother does to her child rather than the activity of which the action is part. ‘Doing to’ events are always smaller, less complete, and less complex than an activity; they are any action that a mother ‘does to’ her child such as wiping a child’s bottom in the process of a nappy change. ‘Doing to’ events are followed by the passive reversal, ‘being done to’ events. In the process of a nappy change, a ‘being done to’ event is when mother Sweets is kicked by her son Little Man in response to her wiping his bottom. Rather than describing ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’ as two separate categories, the closely linked interplay of ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’ is acknowledged as resulting in the relational event of ‘doing with’. Although Sweets and Little Man work against rather than with each other, this is a ‘doing with’ event.

This deconstruction of a ‘doing with’ event shows the importance of recognizing the varying occupational focal length when analysing an occupational event. In the overall event of “changing a nappy”, Sweets and Little Man interact through ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’. However, in her very detailed description of this event, Sweets writes how she places the dirty nappy and diaper in plastic bags and wipes the changing mat clean – this shows that she also ‘does because of’ Little Man.

As described, the co-actors in ‘doing with’ events sometimes share a common goal and sometimes they have opposing goals. The compatibility of their intentions directly influences the quality of their experience of ‘doing with events’.

Quality of the experience of ‘doing with’

‘Doing with’ events may be experienced as negative, positive, or neutral and the co-actors may not always have a shared interest or goal in the event. This differs to the definition of the dog study where negative events, in which one participant executed authority, such as in claw clipping, were defined as ‘doing to’.

In the current study, it is acknowledged that ‘doing with’ events are not always desired by the participants and that even the slightest contribution of both participants results in a ‘doing with’ event. In the dog study only a few ‘doing with’ occupations were described as negative or undesirable by Lucy. The current study’s data set is much more detailed about the interactions between mothers and children that encompass negative feelings. An exemplar of negative feelings in a ‘doing with’ event was described by Karen whose co-actor, daughter Mieka, had negative feelings towards bath time, resulting in Karen’s dislike of this time of day also. It was evident in this study that when the co-actors have opposing goals, the overall experience of ‘doing with’ is negative.

Positive feelings towards ‘being with’ events were reported in both studies although in the ‘dog study’, positive feelings were a requirement of ‘doing with’ occupations. In the current study, positive feelings towards a ‘doing with’ event were found to stem from sharing a goal in the interaction or from the mother’s adjusting of carrying out the event. An exemplar of a ‘doing with’ event that was reported as being positive for both participants was described by Michelle who writes about loving to play-bite her son Noah and his positive response of laughing.

‘Doing alongside’ as a new category

‘Doing alongside’ was mentioned in the dog study as “*being in each others’ company without any other focus*” (Doidge, 2011, p. 44) under the ‘doing with’ category. In the current study, ‘doing alongside’ is a separately named category of

events due to its frequent occurrence in the blogs and the detailed descriptions provided by the mothers. There are two types of ‘doing alongside’ event described in the data set: those that have the child as the only or primary focus and those that have the child as second focus when the mother is busy with household chores and keeps an eye on the child.

‘Doing alongside’ events are important events for the mothers to fulfil household chores and are developmentally important event for the child to master their skills (Davis & Polatajko, 2010). The mothers decide which task is more relevant at that specific time: Karen prioritises making dinner over playing with her daughter Mieka. She keeps Mieka safe by letting her play with water on the floor, enfolding this childcare event in her household chores to “*get the dishwasher unpacked, and the dinner started*” (Karen, p.20, ll. 12- 13).

In summary, when comparing the current study to the dog study, there are several similarities and differences apparent: The current study has substantially differentiated and refined the ‘doing with’ category in several aspects. Temporal and spatial dimensions were clarified, occupational roles were refined, building blocks of some ‘doing with’ events were named as being ‘doing to’ and ‘being done to’ events, and the quality of the co-actors’ experience of a ‘doing with’ event were described as positive, negative, and neutral. Furthermore the category ‘doing alongside’ was described as a mothering event category that appears to be implicit to any mother managing household tasks or other commitments alongside childcare. ‘Doing alongside’ was previously observed in the dog study, although it was not extracted and identified as a category. The ‘doing for’ and ‘doing because of’ categories remain unchanged.

Comparing the nature of the current study with that of the dog study, there may be several reasons for the differences in the findings that are related to the research context and size of study: Firstly, the current study explored a different research context, inter-human rather than human-dog. Interpreting a child’s *doing* and reporting this is essentially different to interpreting a dog’s actions. Although owning a dog is a profound experience and dogs are frequently compared to family

members (Cohen, 2002; Walsh, 2009), the bond between a child and its mother is usually stronger and she is more adept at reading and interpreting the child's body language, facial expressions, and reactions. While dogs are important to their owners, they are a pet that is trained rather than a child whose development is supported and closely observed and may be reported in a blog. Secondly, this study had ten participants who each provided data without any interference or imposed structure from the researcher. They could provide as little or as much detail about any kind of mothering event that they felt like sharing, resulting in a more complex and detailed data set as opposed to having one participant whom the author met with face to face and asked specific questions.

Having compared two different understandings of co-occupation and considered possible reasons for these differences, the following section compares and contrasts the categories from this current study in the context of relevant occupational science literature.

The Essence of (Co-) Occupation

As outlined in the literature review, co-occupation is understood differently by different scholars. While there is little empirical research on co-occupation in general, definitions and understandings of this concept are based on scholars' practice experiences and recollection, and on their expert opinion; their understandings are not based on empirical data or research and have not been empirically validated.

From this empirical study, it is now proposed that co-occupation is the interplay of the occupations of two or more people. Co-occupations can further be described as being either 'doing with', 'doing alongside', 'doing for', or 'doing because of'. Co-occupations have many components that vary, depending on the relationship between the occupations; they may or may not occur in the same time and space. Sometimes, the participants are present in each other's activities, sometimes not. Sometimes, the participants have a common goal in their co-occupation, sometimes not. Sometimes, co-occupations are experienced as being positive, sometimes as

negative, and sometimes as neutral. In co-occupations, neither participant has sole control over the outcome of the co-occupation.

Co-occupations are the interplay of the occupations of two or more people

Co-occupation is a concept first named by Pierce in 1990 (Pierce & Marshall, 2004) that describes the phenomenon of highly interrelated occupations. This definition appears vague; however in delving into the subject of co-occupation, it is clear why: co-occupations encompass many components that vary depending on the kind and intensity of the co-occupation, and on the relationship between the occupations that are intertwined. Occupation is a complex matter (Christiansen & Townsend, 2010), even being described as a “process[...] too complicated to explain” (Dickie, 2010). Given the difficulty to define occupation, it could be easily inferred that defining co-occupation is at least twice as complex.

Since Pierce’s original definition, several occupational scholars have described their understanding of co-occupation. The definition most different from Pierce’s original description of co-occupation is that by Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow (2009a) who describe that co-occupations entail certain levels of shared physicality, shared emotionality, and shared intentionality, depending on the complexity of the co-occupation. Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow define shared physicality as reciprocal motor behaviour, shared emotionality as being emotionally responsive to each other, and shared intentionality as having mutually established goals, sharing roles, and understanding each other’s behaviour as goal directed. Temporal concurrence, the direct result of these three aspects, refers to “two or more agents who are acting within the same time frame” (p. 153). Based on the findings of this study, Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow appear to be describing successful interaction and shared activities of humans, rather than interaction of human occupation. Considering their definition, very few events described in this study fit their criteria of co-occupation. An example of what Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow would describe as co-occupation is Maddie praying with her parents. She participates in this ‘doing with’ event by interrupting and contributing her wishes. As Maddie and her parents share a goal, their motor behaviour is reciprocal, and as certain levels of emotional responsiveness

are obvious, this is a co-occupation according to Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow. While this is also a co-occupation under this study's understanding and Pierce's original definition, Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow's definition appears to imply that interactions between people who have opposing activity goals are not co-occupations. In comparison, this study found that not only all interactions are co-occupations, even if the co-actors have differing goals, but that some co-occupations do not contain this type of human interaction.

Pierce similarly asserts that all the aspects of shared emotionality, intentionality, and physicality may be evident in co-occupation; however that co-occupation is a broader concept than this. Co-occupation refers to the interdependence and interaction of occupations rather than the interaction of humans. This suggestion was also affirmed by the data: all occupations occurring in the mother-child relationship relate to each other and influence each other to varying degrees; they are therefore all co-occupations. The relationship between the occupations of mothers and their children becomes more obvious when sorting them into the four categories 'doing with', 'doing alongside', 'doing for', and 'doing because of'.

Four categories of co-occupation

Co-occupations are described in the four categories 'doing with', 'doing alongside', 'doing for', and 'doing because of'. 'Doing with' events involve various levels of the human interaction. Some 'doing with' events are the reciprocal 'doing to' and 'being done to', resulting in immediate interaction of the co-actors such as having a conversation, changing a nappy/having the nappy changed, or play-biting; other 'doing with' events have the co-actors connect through a shared activity such as making waffles, throwing sticks, or playing mini-golf. 'Doing with' events are the most obvious co-occupation due to the immediacy of the co-actors' actions and the observable features of shared time and space.

These observable features of 'doing with' events may be the reason why the literature on co-occupation is largely based on 'doing with' events. Occupational therapists writing about co-occupation report, and are influenced by, their

experiences. Young children, especially those that have developmental problems or physical disabilities and are seen by paediatric occupational therapists, heavily rely on their mother's, or other caregiver's, support and guidance in their "essential co-occupations" (Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow, 2009a). They do not yet participate in therapeutic occupations, or any, *without* their mothers, which may be why most scholars describe interactions as co-occupations.

However, considering the empirical data collected for this study, interlinking and interdependent interactions of occupations that do not involve this type of human interaction were also evident throughout the study and were categorized into 'doing alongside', 'doing for', and 'doing because of'.

Understanding the events that were sorted into these categories as co-occupation is congruent with Pierce's original definition (2000). She stresses that it is not necessarily the participants engaged in the co-occupation that are interacting but their occupations. Here she describes what is defined as a 'doing because of' event in the current study:

"[Co-occupations] also occur in alternations linked only in time and space, such as the daily pattern of the toddler carrying toys from the toy box all over the house and the mother returning them to the toy box at the end of the day." (Pierce, 2000, p. 297).

The mother's tidying up is interlinked to the child's making a mess. Neither event could exist without the other: if the toddler had not strewn the toys all through the house, the mother could not tidy up; if the mother had not tidied up the toys, the toddler could not scatter them again the next day.

Through examining the links between the events in each category, it is clear that Pierce also includes 'doing for' events in her co-occupation definition: In 'doing for' events, the mother 'does for' her child so that her child can (successfully) participate in an occupation. An example of this is Amanda reporting that "*Maddie can't eat huge bites of things; you have to chop them in little pieces*" (Amanda, p. 2,

ll. 18, 19). Amanda cuts the food for Maddie, so that Maddie can eat – Maddie's eating and Amanda's cutting food are interlinked and interdependent.

'Doing alongside' events encompass the engagement of both participants in separate events: For example Karen's participation in household chores depends on Mieka's participation in her water games. Without Mieka participating in her own game, Karen would not be able to "get dinner started" (Karen, p.20, ll. 12- 13). It appears that, if Pierce's definition of co-occupations is applied, mother-child 'doing alongside' events are one-sided co-occupations, as the mother's event depends on the child's, but the child's event does not necessarily depend on the mother's. It is therefore unclear whether 'doing alongside' events can be referred to as being 'co-occupations'.

The nature of 'doing alongside' events is similar to that of parallel occupations and shared occupations described by Clark and Zemke (1996). In parallel and shared occupations, the participants share time and space but are essentially engaged in different activities and not intensely interacting. However, the dependence of the mothers' occupations on those of their children makes it questionable whether 'doing alongside' events should be described as parallel or shared occupations.

Temporal and spatial dimensions in co-occupation

Time and place are abstract concepts that encompass a wide range of variability as described by Zemke (2004). Stating that people occupy the same time and space when participating in a 'doing with' and 'doing alongside' event obscures the range of temporal and spatial dimensions as does stating that temporal concurrence (Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow, 2009a) is a result of co-occupation. Temporal and spatial dimensions are extensive and have begun to be described more precisely in this study. Considering the spatial and temporal factors in more details helps define the term 'co-occupation' and is certainly of importance when describing the intensity of a 'doing with' event.

The current study delves into deeper layers of time and space and examines different temporal and spatial focal lengths. Temporally, some ‘doing with’ events occur synchronously and continuously such as Kelle’s and Nella’s breastfeeding event; Nella drinks and Kelle holds her; there is no change in either participant’s event in this co-occupation. Spatially, Nella and Kelle share Kelle’s body and are physically the closest they could be.

On the other hand, participants may be taking turns such as in the example of Kathy and her children playing mini golf. They are not synchronously and continuously engaged in the co-occupation but are taking turns, changing their event from swinging the golf club to watching each other play. Kathy is interrupting her engagement in this co-occupation by standing back and taking photographs; however, she is still part of the game and interacts with her children. Spatially, Kathy and her children are not necessarily in bodily contact with each other. The distance between the participants changes throughout the game.

When comparing Nella and Kelle’s ‘doing with’ event to that of Kathy and her children, the variation in the intensity of the implied experience stands out. It seems as though ‘doing with’ events lead to the development and deepening of a relationship. Kelle has described nursing as “the single most beautiful link [she’s] had to falling in love with this blessed angel [Nella]” (Kelle, p.19, ll. 9, 10). Breastfeeding in particular stands out as a mother-child co-occupation. Research has shown that it now only provides good and essential nutrition but also helps mother and child bond (Dermer, 2001). While from a medical perspective it has numerous long and short-term benefits for both mother and child, from an occupational perspective too there are advantages. The intensive skin-to-skin contact and the frequent day and night feedings make breastfeeding a unique co-occupation that is difficult to replicate. Three mothers in this study reported to be breastfeeding their children and while some reported struggling with the commitment at times, each of them appeared to have positive feelings of pride, usefulness, and a sense of achievement.

Other ‘doing with’ events that were not extracted from this study’s data set are easily thought of as more extended and not requiring all participants’ presence in one place at the same time. Examples may be writing a letter or an email to someone and receiving an answer a couple of days later. Similarly, playing online chess or scrabble can be interrupted and the game (while in ‘reality’ would last a few hours at the most) may take days or weeks.

While more intensive ‘doing with’ events may lead to a faster bond, repeatedly experienced, less proximal ‘doing with’ events, such as the example of playing golf, also contribute to develop and define relationships. ‘Doing with’ events, in contexts other than mother-child, result in other forms of relationships for example working with a client leads to a client-therapist relationship and talking to a stranger may lead to friendship, depending on the quality of the interaction. This suggestion is similar to Hinde’s (1997) assertion that interactions are building blocks of relationships.

However, this notion of co-occupation occurring in pre-existing relationships or helping develop relationships is not limited to ‘doing with’ events, or interaction. All other co-occupations help define relationships such as stooping down to pick up some dropped change *for* someone will be a determinant in the relationship between two strangers; a relationship of some kind may develop. Based on Hinde’s (1997) statement, from an occupational perspective, it appears that co-occupations are not only the building blocks but also the essence of relationships. Accepting that a person’s identity depends on their occupations (Abrahams, 2008), it can be concluded that “the things people do” (Hocking, 2009, p.140) in their relationships define their relationship.

Other ‘doings’ in the mother-child context include ‘doing alongside’ events, in which shared time and space are essential; again the proximity of mother and child can vary between and throughout the events. The child may be close to the mother, sitting next to the mother on the floor and play with water or mother and child may be further apart such as Kelle and Lainey in the ballet class: they were separated through a wall with a window through which Kelle could watch Lainey. The

activities that the participants are engaged in relate to each other, although to an extent only. Especially as part of mothering co-occupations, ‘doing alongside’ events may be interrupted due to the mother’s interest in and concern about the activities and safety of her children: she may “glanc[e] over” (Kelle, p. 119, l.2) to check up on her children and change her occupational focus from her event to that of her children. As discussed earlier, it is not clear whether ‘doing alongside’ events ought to be described as co-occupations because they appear to largely be one-sided.

Although shared time and space are often part of mothering co-occupations, more than two thirds of the coded events of this study took place in a shared time and space, they are not essential components for occupations to relate to each other and therefore be defined as ‘co-occupation’. Similarly, Pierce writes that co-occupations do not require temporal concurrence, as long as the occupations of the participants are interlinked. ‘Doing for’ and ‘doing because of’ events are co-occupations that do not require the presence of both participants at the same time and place. An example is Amanda’s chopping food ‘for’ her daughter Maddie so that Maddie could eat. Although Maddie would probably be sitting at the table with Amanda, her presence in Amanda’s task of chopping food is not necessary. The chopping of food results in Maddie’s eating of the food – their activities are inter-related; Maddie and Amanda therefore participate in a co-occupation as defined by Pierce (2004). Similarly, the Feminist Housewife read articles about baby-led weaning *because of* her son; his presence in the same time and space is not a requirement. Her reading of the articles influenced how she introduced solid foods to her son and therefore the foods he ate, how the food was presented, and how he approached the task of eating it (using his hands or utensils when he was ready rather than being fed by his mother).

Presence in each other’s activities

Being present in the same time and space does not necessarily require the participants to be present in each other’s activities. As opposed to ‘doing with’ events in which the participants are present in a shared time and space and each other’s activities, ‘doing alongside’ events require the participants to share time and space although they are not part of, or present in, each other’s activities. ‘Doing

alongside' events are evident when the mother reports to engage in household chores and look after her child at the same time. Her child is the secondary focus in such events.

In the occupational science literature, these 'doing alongside' events are referred to as "enfolded activity" (Griffin, 2004). Enfolded activity was first described by Bateson (1996) who proposed that mothers are productive because they enfold childcare activities within household chores. Griffin (2004) suggests that mothers enfold childcare within household chore activities depending on the importance of either activity. If a meal needs to be cooked, the mother is likely to focus on the meal and let the child occupy itself. If a childcare task with special meaning is required, the mother is less likely to also engage in a household task. Griffin's suggestion of these priorities is validated in the current research as can be seen in the 'doing alongside' exemplars such as Karen's participation in household chores alongside Mieka's water games.

It is unclear from this study and the literature whether 'doing alongside' events truly are co-occupations. They appear to be one-sided co-occupations as the mother's ability to participate in her primary task (e.g. household chores) depends on the child's participation in their own event (e.g. playing on the floor with water). Therefore, these 'doing alongside' events may well be described with a term other than 'co-occupation' as 'co' implies interdependence which is not evident in these events.

A presence in each other's activities is, by definition, impossible when the co-actors are apart. Therefore, in 'doing for' and 'doing because of' events, only the primary actor is present in the activity.

Co-occupations can be experienced as positive, negative, and neutral

Co-occupations can be experienced as positive, negative, and neutral. There is little occupational science literature around negatively experienced occupations in general, leading to Pierce's statement that occupational scholars tend to "glorify occupations" (Pierce, 2009, p. 205). Some co-occupations that were experienced as

being taxing by parents were described in vignettes by Olson (2004) such as feeding difficulties and problems around settling the child to sleep. Olson is drawing on her work as an occupational therapist rather than undertaking empirical research on (co-)occupations. In this current study, positive, negative, and neutral ‘doing with’ co-occupations were all identified. It is likely that co-occupations from the categories ‘doing alongside’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’ also encompass negative, positive, and neutral feelings or associations; however, this was not evident from this data set. More research is required to explore this possibility.

Expanding on the exploration of Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow’s description of co-occupation, it appears that their understanding of co-occupation is congruent with what is described as ‘positive doing with’ events in this study. Positive co-occupations occur when at least one participant is emotionally responsive to the other as in Michelle’s reported play-biting with her son Noah. She “nibbles” (Michelle, p. 4, l. 5) on his cheeks and his reaction is laughing. This could be seen as reciprocal motor behaviour, using Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow’s terms. Michelle interprets this cue of laughing and assumes that this play is accepted by Noah by reporting “so we’re cool” (Michelle, p.4, l.12). She implies in this sentence that if his response was negative she would not repeat nibbling on his cheek. Again, using Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow’s terms, shared intentionality can be assumed as both participants positively engage in play.

While this ‘doing with’ event of play-biting also shows shared emotionality in the way that the mother responded to the cue of the child, it is uncertain and not obvious from this study’s data set that the child is emotionally responsive to his/her mother’s “emotional tone” (Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow, 2009a, p. 152). This may well be due to the developmental stages the children were in when the mothers reported ‘doing with’ events. The ‘doing with’ events that were reported in sufficient detail were all written by mothers of infants and toddlers, all of whom were supposedly either dependent on getting their needs met at once (infants) or in a stage of developing a sense of self (toddlers). Early childhood has been described as the “social domain” (O’Brien, 1996, p. 247). Considering children’s development of self, it is quite possible that ‘doing with’ events diminish as the child grows older and

becomes more independent. Later still, when becoming socially adept, ‘doing with’ events are likely to become more common again; however, the co-actors are likely to be a friend, partner, spouse, or own children. This proposition could be further researched to examine the varying distributions of the four categories.

Equal importance of participants’ contributions

Recognising each participant’s engagement in a co-occupation is consistent with Zemke and Clark’s (1996b) description and appreciation of what they describe as “active agents” (p. 213) in a co-occupation. Zemke and Clark report that the child in a mothering occupation could easily be dismissed as a passive recipient of care. However reciprocal involvement is a requirement in interactions between two humans. Clark and Zemke’s description that “even in the newborn infant-mother occupations of feeding, diapering, dressing, and playing” (1996a, p. 213) the infant is an active agent implies that the mother holds the authority. It should be noted that the mother’s role in these occupational events is obvious, probably because she is considered more active and holds the authority, and that the infant’s role is highlighted, probably because the infant is in a way the recipient of care.

In this study, it was identified that in co-occupations each participant is of equal importance as each contribution markedly changes the flow of the event. For example Kathy writes that bath time has been a struggle due to Mieka’s running away from her mother, screaming because she was fearful that the water was too hot. Mieka’s contribution changed the bathing event although it can be argued that she did not contribute to the outcome (being bathed and clean). However, without her contribution, the event would not be as it was.

Kelle and Lainey’s waffle making

While the importance of each participant’s contribution was mainly described in interactive ‘doing with’ events, it is also true for other co-occupations as co-occupations are the interplay of two or more participants’ occupations. One created example, while theoretical and hypothetical, is an expansion on Kelle’s brief mentioning of making waffles. While acknowledging that the following example

exposes taxonomic issues surrounding occupation and co-occupation, it also illustrates the equal importance of each participant's contributions and the interplay, resulting in the activity of making waffles:

“We bummed around the kitchen in jammies, sipping coffee, making waffles, watching movies...” (Kelle, p. 86, ll. 6-8)



Figure 45 – Kelle, p. 86, image 2

Making waffles was coded as a ‘doing with’ event at an activity level. The event took place between Kelle and her then three year old daughter Lainey. Considering Lainey’s physical, cognitive, social, and behavioural skills, and paying attention to the pictures Kelle has provided, there are several assumptions that can be made:

- Lainey wanted to make waffles with her mother, hence Kelle and Lainey had a shared goal, a shared intent of participating in this activity.
- Lainey’s grip strength and co-ordination were sufficient to stir the batter. This assumption, and the photograph provided, leads to the assumption that Kelle let Lainey stir the waffle batter; she was doing alongside Lainey and Lainey’s occupational focus was her focus, sometimes through the lens of her camera when she was taking photographs.
- Lainey’s cognitive skills would not allow her to measure flour and milk independently. Therefore Kelle would either do this ‘for’ Lainey or tell

her ('doing to' her) up to which mark on the cup Lainey should fill the milk and the flour to.

- Lainey's hands' dexterity would not allow her to crack the eggs. Kelle would do that for her.
- Lainey may not be interested to wipe away the flour that is spilled on the bench top (see Figure 44) as this is not an integral part of making the waffles or she may not see the need for this task. Kelle would wipe away the flour 'because of' Lainey's spilling of it.
- Because of her concern that Lainey might burn herself, Kelle would either pour the dough into the waffle iron 'for' Lainey or supervise her very closely. This would also be true for removing the waffle from the iron.

This breakdown of tasks has not only shown how complex a co-occupation is but also how Lainey's skills influence her actions and the actions required by her co-actor Kelle. Kelle, being an adult and willing to support her daughter in making the waffles, is happy to compensate and fulfil the tasks that Lainey cannot yet do. This supports Olson's (2004) assertion that each participant brings their own skills to the co-occupation that determine the flow of the event (refer to Figure 3).

Control in co-occupation

In the physically closest co-occupations of this study, the 'doing with' events, the interdependence of occupations is more noticeable than in other events, as the frequency of each participant's contribution is much more immediate: one participant acts and the other participant reacts. In Michelle's well planned co-occupation of breastfeeding, it is evident that when in participating in a co-occupation, neither participant has sole control over the co-occupation and its outcome.

Breastfeeding Noah

Michelle planned to breastfeed her son Noah for one year and then discontinue – which changed when she felt the bond between her and Noah and their relationship identity relied heavily on this co-occupation. She decided to continue twice daily, however Noah wanted to nurse more and thus influenced the course and

outcome of this co-occupation. His wish to nurse manifested in what Michelle describes as tantrums; he would throw himself on the floor, tear on her shirt, and cry. This suggests that in co-occupations there are at least two people who influence the course and the outcome. In solitary occupations, the sole participant can decide and change their mind as they hold the control over their occupation. In co-occupation, the participants relinquish this control through co-creating the experience with their co-actor; in this case, Michelle's co-occupation was co-created with Noah and therefore part of the control was set within Noah. Mothering 'doing with' occupations, and potentially all co-occupations in general, require the participants to be emotionally responsive and to share physicality and intentionality (Pickens & Pizur-Barnekow, 2009a) if they are to be successful and positive for *all* participants. In mothering young children, it is usually the mother who frequently compromises, putting her needs and wants second, and accommodating her child's wellbeing as she knows that it is part of the child's developmental stage to behave what could be described as egocentrically (Erikson, 1950).

It would be interesting to examine whether the extent to which control is shared or relinquished in co-occupation differs between the four categories identified in the findings. It is evident that in 'doing with' events the participants largely share the control over the co-occupation, its flow, and its outcome. This may be due to the immediacy of the co-actor's actions. Furthermore, each co-actor appears limited to an occupational level that is well below the activity level (i.e. task or below) in a 'doing with' event. It appears as though the size and complexity of events that can be done 'for' and 'because of' someone else is much larger and therefore the occupation in itself is still in the primary participant's control (e.g. Lisa made little trinket boxes 'for' her twins). Because there is no interaction at all in the 'doing for' event, the occupation is not influenced. However, the twins' occupations that include the boxes may influence whether Lisa repeats crafting toys for her sons.

In summary, when defining the term 'co-occupation' and comparing it to other authors' understandings, the many changing components that are evident in the co-occupations of this study's data set were presented and discussed. By dividing co-occupations into 'doing with', 'doing alongside', 'doing for', and 'doing because of',

Pierce's definition of co-occupation was elaborated upon and made more accessible and easier to understand.

By Pierce's original definition, co-occupation is a very versatile and extensive concept. The data set of this research validates this understanding and shows that in the mother child context there are many more co-occupations than interactions: Yes, a co-occupation is playing with the child, bathing it, feeding it, and settling it to sleep. However, a co-occupation is also the mother's chopping of food for her child; it is her washing the laundry and tidying up the play area when she has put the child to bed. It is consulting a doctor about physical concerns and educating herself about how to settle her baby to sleep through reading a book. From the child's perspective, co-occupation is any activity at all as the child relies on the parent to watch over them and keep them safe, to help or guide them when they cannot continue in their activity, and to interact with them. Co-occupation is also not always positive. It can be changing the child's nappy when they refuse to having their nappy changed, it can be wiping the changing table after a messy diaper change.

Co-occupation is not merely "interaction between humans"; it is argued that co-occupation is the interdependence and interplay between occupations of two (or more) people; in this study, mother and child. Possible reasons for neglecting to empirically researching co-occupation are now explored.

Co-occupation and Occupation

Western individualist view

Occupation, in the Western occupational science literature, is primarily described from an individualist and solitary perspective. The literature on occupation does appreciate the varying social component of occupation, the "with whom" (Hocking, 2009); however, the individual is largely presented as being separated from the context (Dickie et al., 2006; Fogelberg & Frauwirth, 2010). Such focus on individual experiences of occupation may be rooted in the overall Western hallmark of individualism.

According to Oysermann, Coon, and Kemmelmeier (2002), individualism has its origins in the American values of being independent individuals that are separate from others. Individual rights, personal privacy, and personal freedoms are expected with the chance to create a unique and interesting self being a privilege that everyone ought to be entitled to. European Americans are said to being the prototype of the individualist culture; however it appears that individualism is overall linked to urban, industrialized, Western European areas (Oyserman et al., 2002). As opposed to a more Eastern collectivist perspective, the Western Individualist view tends to separate individual and context. This is also evident in occupational science literature: In Western occupational studies, such as a study on cake decorating, occupation is described as a solitary occupation, separate from the contextual background (Scheerer, 2004). A comparable food-related study, undertaken in Thailand, reflects the Eastern collectivist perspective in that social surroundings are inextricably intertwined from the occupation. This study by Wright-St. Clair and colleagues (2004) heavily focuses on the sociality of preparing the food, on the passing on of recipes, on the co-occupations, although this term was not used in the study.

Given that most occupational science literature is written by authors with a Western cultural background, it comes as no surprise that the focus is on the individual experience of occupation and that research on co-occupation has largely been neglected. It appears that for most authors to acknowledge co-occupation, these must be obvious direct interactions between an authoritative figure (e.g. mother) and their protégé (e.g. child). This is evident in that most co-occupation literature is based on paediatric vignettes (e.g. Esdaile & Olson, 2004), on client and caregiver experiences (Mahoney & Roberts, 2009), and on handicapped spouse and spouse in the care giving role (van Nes, Runge, & Jonsson, 2009). Occupational therapy's goal of enabling people with disabilities to participate in life is quite possibly the reason for focusing on (parts of) co-occupation in pathological contexts. To achieve occupational scientists' goal of understanding occupation, research on co-occupations in non-pathological contexts without interfering in the co-occupation is required. There appears to be only one published empirical study on elements of co-occupation. Said study examined how physiological responses, facial and verbal

expressions, and the heart rate changed between solitary engagement and interaction in playing a game of basket ball (Persch et al., 2009; Pizur-Barnekow & Knutson, 2009). However, this study examines only parts of co-occupation as defined by Pierce (Pierce & Marshall, 2004).

Pierce's concept of co-occupation might be misunderstood because as Westerners, people like to think of their complete independence and the independence of their occupations when in fact, people live with each other in society and their occupations influence each other. Interaction (doing with) is a concept easier to grasp as it can be observed and experienced every day, everywhere. As Westerners, it is an integral innate trait to view not only oneself but also others as separate, individual beings. While this is a desirable trait when working with individuals as it makes the client feel recognised as an individual, not a statistic (Tickle-Degnen, 2003), the reality is that most occupations do not exist separately. They are influencing, and being influenced by, other people's occupations making the interplay a valuable and necessary concept to explore to more fully understand occupation.

Transactional view on occupation

In contrast to the idea that the Western Individualist view influences occupational science's view on occupation, Dickie and colleagues (2006) assert that occupational science examines the individual because of its roots in occupational therapy in which therapists mainly focus on the individual. Dickie and colleagues write that individual and context are seen as two separates, either as individual within a context, or that occupation is a mediator between individual and context. According to Dickie and colleagues, this "implied duality" of context and individual (Dickie et al., 2006, p. 84) is false and leads research to be focused on either context or individual, but not the relationship. In their article, Dickie and colleagues write that this individualistic view is problematic as it simplifies occupation. They too refer to Wright-St. Clair and colleagues' (2004) work which they describe further highlights that an individualistic view on occupation is a start to understand occupation, but not sufficient.

Dickie and colleagues adopt Dewey's transactional view which is based on holism. Dewey describes person and environment as being in a transactional, intertwined, inextricable relationship; person and environment are part of each other, and thus exist "co-defining" and "co-constitutive" (Dickie et al., 2006, p. 88), meaning that person and environment define each other and exist with and because of each other. Dickie and colleagues extend this notion to other contextual factors such as social, political, and cultural aspects.

While this blog study is not concerned with the transaction between person and (physical) environment, co-occupation is also a transaction: The idea of person and social context being described as co-defining and co-constitutive appeals as the data set of this study shows that co-occupation is co-created. Therefore, in co-occupations the co-actors are co-defining and co-constituting their experience as their occupations exist with and because of each other.

In the current study, it is also demonstrated how co-occupation is neither a discrete nor a rare event – co-occupations are universal and omnipresent. A surprising number of occupations, when seen in the social context and exploring them beyond the individualist view, are in fact co-occupations. Truly solitary occupations seem to be rare. Co-occupations occur in everyday life, in every relationship and are not limited to intimate relationships between mother and child, brother and sister, husband and wife. Co-occupations occur in every inter-human, and maybe human-animal, relationship for example between employer and employee, occupational therapist and client, waiter and customer. Obviously, a universally accepted definition of co-occupation and the splinters thereof needs to be established to describe these co-doings.

In summary, occupational science's individualistic approach to a person's occupation was discussed and critiqued and the differences between Western individualist and Eastern collectivist views were explored. Other authors' perspectives on the individualist view on occupation were considered. The transactional perspective on occupation sees the individual and context as a whole; context and individual transact rather than interact. However, to fully understand

how co-occupation is situated in everyday life, more empirical research on co-occupations needs to be done, both to clarify concepts and to develop some agreed universal language around those concepts. Currently the discipline's language appears confusing.

Taxonomic Issues in (Co-) Occupation

In planning and undertaking on this study, there were several stages in the process in which taxonomic issues arose which appear to be inter-related and depend on the definition of and distinction between “occupation” and “activity. Taxonomies written for solitary occupations are challenged in terms of applicability and suitability to all occupations that have a social aspect.

What is “occupation”?

Occupation has been defined as “chunks of activity that can be named in the lexicon of the culture” by Zemke and Clark (1996c, p. ix). This definition implies a conceptual difference between occupation and activity that is an important aspect when considering occupational taxonomies. In occupational therapy's history, the term *occupation* often led and still leads to misunderstanding due to its other meanings such as work or employment (Dunlop, 1933). In Canada, the term *activity* was used in place of *occupation* to describe the profession's practice goal and intervention; ‘occupation’ only appeared in the name ‘occupational therapy’. However, this too was critiqued as being too vague or broad (Nelson, 1996), and was perceived as lacking meaningfulness in its description. Since then, there has been much discussion around the two concepts of activity and occupation.

Pierce (2001) untangles activity and occupation through addressing two major differences: subjectivity and context. Subjectivity refers to the individual's experience of the occupation; without experience, this occupation would be an activity. The context refers to the spatial, temporal, and social setting of the occupation stating that without the context, this occupation would be an activity. A similar conceptual difference between occupation and activity was also asserted by Christiansen (1999) who describes occupation as being “goal directed activity in the

context of living” (p. 558) implying that activity is occupation stripped of context and goal.

Therefore it can be argued that activity and occupation are two essentially different concepts where occupation is a subjective experience of an activity in the specific person’s specific context. This argument lets imply that an occupation cannot be re-experienced, only remembered with every occupation being unique. By changing any contextual factor in an occupation, the experience, and therefore the occupation, is changed.

Considering the differences between activity and occupation, several philosophical questions come to mind:

Can a bystander/observer talk about someone else’s occupation? If an occupation is a subjective experience then maybe the bystander talks about observing the participant engaging in an activity in context (since this is usually the observable component). A closely related question is: Can a bystander talk about someone else’s co-occupation? Or is the bystander observing a co-activity in context? Even having examined the mother-child co-occupations and having literally read the mothers’ thoughts, this is a philosophically difficult question to answer. Each person’s worldview and therefore perception and associations differ, making each person’s occupation their own, personal, non-repeatable experience (Pierce, 2001). Observing two people being co-occupied encompasses the same issue. What people observe is, arguably, a co-activity in context.

A further interesting question is: Does the bystander become part of the co-occupation/co-activity through watching and thus having their occupation influenced by the co-occupied people? In this research, this ‘doing alongside’, for example when observing a child dancing with its own shadow, was defined as a co-occupation or splinter thereof. However, given that co-occupation is defined as the interplay of occupations, not one-sided influence on occupation, this is a question that needs to be given further thought and consideration and may need more enquiries.

Scope of occupation

Aside from appreciating the differences between occupation and activity, the scope of an occupation is another issue in occupational science that has, despite extensive publications, not been agreed upon. How complex is an occupation? What is the duration of an occupation? Is mothering an occupation, an occupational grouping (Polatajko et al., 2004), or an occupational project (Bendixen et al., 2006)?

Through extracting and coding “the things people do” (Hocking, 2009, p. 140) that are described in the mothering blogs, the importance of defining activity ‘splinter’ sizes, complexities, and specific terms for these sizes became evident. It was found that mothers described mothering events on different levels from little movements, such as opening a nappy, to large groupings such as mothering. In occupational science, several frameworks were developed in an attempt to size and name “the things people do”. “The Taxonomic Code of Occupational Performance” (TCOP) was developed by Polatajko and colleagues (2004) to enable occupational therapists to communicate about their practice rather than using the term ‘occupation’ for each single ‘doing’. This framework describes different levels of observable ‘doings’ from one single voluntary movement around one joint through to occupational groupings as is described in the literature review. While this motivation to develop a language and grammar for occupation and its components is shared by other occupational scholars (e.g. Pierce, 2001), there appear to be no empirically tested and widely accepted frameworks available.

Applying the TCOP to the data set of the current study

Polatajko and colleagues (2004) developed the “Taxonomic Code of Occupational Performance” (TCOP) to provide taxonomy for the observable components that build up from a single movement to an occupational grouping level. A conceptual issue in the TCOP is that only motor behaviour is described up to the activity level; after the activity level, there appears a conceptual switch to occupation – context is added rather than further motor behaviour. This taxonomic framework, the TCOP was attempted to be applied to the data of the current study; however, this was unsuccessful. The reason for this non-applicability appears to be that the TCOP was developed for solitary occupation rather than co-occupation. Apart from the

absence of a code in the TCOP that describes or is termed co-occupation, sociality or influences from other people's occupations are not mentioned either.

An example from Mary's description of helping her children brush their teeth helps explain the differences between taxonomies for solitary occupation and co-occupation.

Mary writes about the *activity* of cleaning her children's teeth as part of the *occupation* of her children's ADLs which is part of her *occupational role* of being a mother. She describes the *tasks* of "taking them into the bathroom" and "stopping them from squabbling" (Mary, p. 2, l. 18), the *action* of "squeezing toothpaste onto the brushes" (Mary, p.2, l. 21), and the *compound task* of "buying a stool for each child to stand on" (Mary, p. 2, l. 19). However, the responses from the children are missing in this coding process: they are squabbling and fighting, they use their toothbrushes as swords or to clean the plug hole; the influences of their actions on the co-occupation of brushing teeth and being taught remain unacknowledged when applying the TCOP. The TCOP acknowledges tool use but not the interlinking of occupations/tasks/actions. Therefore, while the TCOP may be a useful tool when deconstructing solitary activities and communicating their components in practice situations, it is not applicable when attempting to describe the complexities of co-occupations.

Can occupation be deconstructed?

While attempting to reason for the non-applicability of the TCOP, the question arose whether occupation can be deconstructed and whether it is appropriate to challenge occupational scholars to develop an occupation based rather than activity based taxonomy. Theoretically, occupation can be deconstructed in a sense that the physical motor behaviour displayed in occupation can be analysed similar to Polatajko and colleagues' TCOP. However, the context and the experience of these events must be acknowledged in the taxonomy so as to not transform 'occupational splinters' into 'activity splinters'. An example of an occupational analysis could be describing the occupational splinters that a girl participates in when sitting at the kitchen table, eating a banana, experiencing this "task" (Polatajko et al., 2004). This

eating in itself is less than an occupation; however it may be part of a *whole occupation* such as eating lunch which occurs on a regular basis. It is not a “task” as described by Polatajko and colleagues (2004), as a task is defined as being two levels below an activity (refer to Table 1). Activities though are not experienced but abstract general ideas of occupations. Therefore, rather than describing the eating of the banana as a task, it is an occupational splinter so as to appreciate the girl’s experience and specific context.

Humans frequently participate in smaller-than-occupation-events, or what could be termed occupational splinters. These occupational splinters can be described and potentially arranged in taxonomy for occupation. However, a common language among occupational therapists and occupational scientists is needed to avoid confusion between motor behaviour levels, as described by Polatajko and colleagues, and occupational splinters. A common occupational taxonomy is needed to communicate occupational and co-occupational levels or splinters.

Given that occupational therapy is a profession that has existed for well over 100 years, and that it is influenced by an academic discipline that has researched and philosophised about occupation for over two decades, it is surprising that there is no definite language or grammar around occupation, activity, and co-occupation. This may not only hinder undertaking and communicating about research, but hold back the occupational therapy profession. This discussion therefore calls for empirical research to be done around the terms activity, occupation, and co-occupation and taxonomies for each concept.

Theory-Practice Divide

The occupational science discipline works towards understanding human occupation both to understand humans as occupational being and to inform occupational therapy practice. While studying human occupation does not always influence occupational therapy, it appears that there are always be some practice implications. Co-occupation is a concept original to occupational science (Pierce, 2009) and was firstly developed in 1990 in the context of mothering. The concept of co-occupation and its implications for facilitating mothering occupations, for

paediatric occupational practice, and for family centred practice are obvious and therefore important for practice approaches. It is surprising that this term does not appear in any general paediatric occupational therapy textbook about working with children and their families. Seeing that these textbooks are the medium from which most occupational therapy students gain their knowledge (Stronge & Cahill, 2012) and established therapists further their understanding and inform their practice (Copley, Turpin, & King, 2010), this lack of communication between occupational science and therapy leads to practice that is not as well informed as it could be.

Evidence-based practice largely relies on empirical research (Law & Bennett, 2010). As established before, co-occupation concepts have not been empirically researched but are based on practice vignettes and anecdotes. This conceptual discrepancy between occupational therapists' requiring evidence-based practice guidelines and occupational scientists' philosophical and theoretical approach to the concept of co-occupation may be the reason for the absence of the term co-occupation in occupational therapy textbooks.

In this study, the concept of co-occupation was empirically researched through content analysis, a methodology that is now appraised.

Content Analysis in Occupational Science Research

Content analysis is a methodology commonly used by linguists and journalists to make valid inferences from existing text (Krippendorff, 2004); although it can be used in other research contexts (Neuendorf, 2002). 'Text' in content analysis refers to not only the written word but also other visual or auditory data such as photographs, videos, and voice recordings. Content analysis is unobtrusive in nature as the researcher does not interact with any participants and therefore structure the text as is usually the case in research. Inferences from text can be made through using either or both qualitative and quantitative methods (Elo & Kyngaes, 2007; Herring, 2010; Herring, Scheidt, Kouper, & Wright, 2007).

Content analysis has been a very interesting and novel methodology to guide the current research. Its unobtrusive nature enabled the generating of mostly

unanticipated results from the data; the topics that appear in the text are of sincere interest and importance to the research subjects (the mothers in this study). Through not imposing structure on the data set, the text, and therefore preventing the Hawthorne effect (Jones & Alony, 2008), the study is more rigorous and reliable.

In occupational therapy and occupational science, possibly due to the focus on understanding the individual experience of occupation, most studies are qualitative and are commonly ethnography or case study (Frank & Polkinghorne, 2010). In qualitative research, the researcher delves into the context and interacts with the participants, looking for themes and aiming to let the participants talk about their experiences and interests (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Salminen, Harra, & Lautamo, 2006; Yin, 2004). However, through their mere presence, the individual is influenced; through questions and pointers, the researcher's interests prevail and structure the topics, guide the themes, and may obscure the outcomes (Krefting, 1991). These qualitative methodologies obviously have their well deserved place when aiming to deepen the understanding of an individual's perspective on occupation. However, as pointed out previously, this individualist perspective may miss large, integral components of the hugely complex concept occupation.

Content analysis as an occupational science research methodology appears to be useful in general and in particular when researching topics that are yet to be understood more thoroughly. Rather than reflecting on past clinical experiences, which surely would influence the understanding of the topics, researcher should seek empirical data to understand concepts yet unknown. The data sourced accessed for this study, blogs, provides copious amounts of potentially empirical data.

Blogs as a Data Source in Occupational Science

Blogs are frequently modified web pages in which the entries, or posts, are displayed in reverse chronological order, i.e. the last entry is displayed first (Jones & Alony, 2008). Blogs are often seen as a form of online diary, although it is argued that they are more sophisticated than that. Bloggers of public blogs allow their readers to comment and blogs may contain links to other web pages, photographs, videos, and more. Bloggers chose what they write in their blogs and whether to make

the blogs public or restricted and by invitation only. Blogs are written with different intentions and backgrounds. While some bloggers write about their everyday life, others have a special topic such as politics, sports, cooking, or crafting.

Having used blogs as the sole data source in the current research has been a fascinating research experience: Knowing that what the mothers blogged about was sincerely important to them and discovering how sincerely the bloggers wrote about their frustrations and negative experiences, about how different occupations have different meanings for different people, has been enlightening. Researching co-occupations in the mother-child context would have been possible using other data sources, but the honesty that existed possibly due to the semi-anonymity of the internet, appears to be unique to blogs.

In occupational science, especially in the mother-child context, much emphasis is put on reflecting on clinical experience, which clearly is an important part of occupational therapy. However, potential empirical data of which there is an abundant amount on the internet, especially on blogs, is a more every day, common, and un-glorified way of researching occupation and its meanings and contexts. Occupational scientists should utilize this invaluable data set, the blogosphere, to deepen their understanding of occupation.

Limitations of the Research

A definite strength of this research is the researcher's absence in the data gathering process: the data gathering methods were unobtrusive and the data source was not influenced by the researcher's presence, resulting in virtually researcher bias-free data. To select blogs, a variety of key terms associated with the mother's characteristics was entered to ensure a wide breadth of mothering co-occupations. While this is strength, it is also a potential weakness as the search terms were formulated by the researcher; different wordings may have produced different results. This is especially apparent when two searches for blogs written by an older mother and a mother of a child with special needs failed to yield any results. Alternative terms (blog, mother, 40+; and mother, blog, Down syndrome) were used which were, although informed by literature, specific to the researcher's subjective

understanding of older mothers and mothers of children with special needs. The research was limited to ten blogs, which when compared to the blogosphere, is a miniscule proportion. However, a representative sample was assured through using a random number generator to select blogs and posts. In analysing ten mothering blogs written by mothers from different countries (UK, USA, Australia, and South Africa), one type of triangulation was applied. In every blog, events of the categories ‘doing with’, ‘doing alongside’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’ were evident (refer to Appendix L).

The distribution of the four current categories may be seen as indicative of the mothers’ perception of their mothering events. Clearly the mothers did not report every mothering event every time i.e. Sweets did not report every diaper change and Kelle did not report every ballet class that she took Lainey to. Similarly, there was no mentioning of tidying up the play rooms or making up a bed, installing a car seat or washing dirty clothes, all of which are co-occupations that commonly occur in the lives of mothers. However, the distribution appears to represent the mothers’ perceptions of the distribution of their mothering occupations.

Recommendations for Further Research

The four categories

This research has established four categories that describe 100% of the code-able mothering events of the data set that appear to mirror Pierce’s (2004) original definition of co-occupation. A response from Pierce to this research would be a useful way to determine the congruence between the four categories and her understanding of co-occupation. While the four categories have high face validity, empirical research needs to be done to test the validity and applicability of the four categories in the mothering context as well as other co-occupation contexts. It would be interesting to compare the distribution of ‘doing with’, ‘doing for’, ‘doing because of’, and ‘doing alongside’ in dependent relationships, such as that of mother and child or therapist and client, to more equal relationships such as friends, spouses, and colleagues.

‘Doing with’ diminishes

Early childhood has been described as the social domain in life (O'Brien, 1996). It is evident that intensive co-occupation occurs between mother and child especially during the first few years of the children's lives. Then, due to the developmental stages children go through, it is suspected that 'doing with' events between mother and child lessen as the child gains a sense of self and independence; 'doing with' is likely to increase as the child develops other relationships and the co-actor would be a friend, partner, colleague, spouse, and later their own child. This change may differ in 'doing with' events between a mother and her developmentally delayed or disabled child. Testing this hypothesis would enable occupational scientists to further their knowledge about humans as co-occupational, social beings; it would furthermore help occupational therapists understand the discrepancies between co-occupations in families with normally developing children and those that have children with developmental delays.

Co-occupations define relationships

Through the co-creation of experience, co-occupations define, develop, and create relationships. Whether participating in doing with, for, because of, or alongside events, the co-created experiences create a link between people and are the essence of relationships. Physically and temporally very close co-occupations, such as some 'doing with' events are believed to be the most bonding co-occupations, especially between mother and newborn. This hypothesis was supported with Hinde's (1997) notion of interaction being the building blocks of relationships. Breastfeeding in particular was mentioned as its bonding qualities between mother and child are well researched; from an occupational point of view, these bonding qualities are obvious too. Co-occupations shape the relationship between any two or more people. This hypothesis needs to be tested.

A taxonomic code for (co)-occupation

During the process of this research, it became apparent that despite much discussion, occupational therapists and scientists are still unsure about the differences

between activity and occupation with the definitions of occupation also varying between scholars. Occupational scholars need to come to an agreement on language around occupations, possibly by establishing a taxonomic code for (co-) occupation.

Taxonomic codes as they exist, for example that by Polatajko and colleagues (2004), appear useful for communication in occupational therapy practice. In Polatajko's code developed for occupational taxonomy, it seems that activity taxonomies are described ranging from a single movement to an activity level, and then a conceptual leap occurs, adding context to describe occupation. When deconstructing occupation into variously sized splinters, the context cannot be left out and included only after the activity level. Rather the context ought to be considered and included from regarding the most miniscule voluntary movement to occupational groupings or roles. In appreciating the context, partial passivity, such as in 'being done to', ought to also be considered. When interacting, or as Dickie and colleagues describe (2006) transacting with one's surroundings, be they social or environmental, the apparent passivity of 'being done to', such as listening or observing, is a major part that has been neglected. A taxonomic code for (co-) occupation, not for activity, ought to be developed.

Having provided theoretical research recommendations, largely for occupational science, the next section outlines the implications that this study has on occupational therapy practice.

Implications for Practice

Due to the context of the study, the implications are limited to paediatric occupational therapy practice and maternal mental health although these may also be relevant for other occupational therapy areas of practice.

Co-occupation to facilitate the maternal occupational role

As occupations define a person's identity, co-occupations shape the identity of mother-child relationships and are the essence of being a mother. This study has validated Pierce's (2004) definition of co-occupation and established that co-occupation is more than just interacting with the child: it is also 'doing for', 'doing

because of', and 'doing alongside' the child as these activities also positively or negatively influence the child's occupations. Especially in maternal mental health, when the mother may be struggling with her identity as a mother (L. Olson, 2006), it appears important not to ignore things done 'for', 'alongside' or 'because of' the child as these occupations are also mothering occupations; they may also be part of the bonding process, if less obviously so than the direct interactions. While it may make sense to apply for home help, engaging in all four categories of co-occupation could provide the mother with a sense of accomplishment and mastery: by being encouraged to look after and provide for the baby she immerses herself in her occupational role as a mother. Folding washing, making photo albums, tidying up, creating toys all influence the maternal occupational role.

Breastfeeding as a bonding co-occupation

Occupational therapists could encourage breastfeeding from an occupational perspective: The naturally occurring skin-to-skin contact of the day and night feeding is a co-occupation that is not easily duplicated. It may give the mother a sense of competence and help mother and child bond. Through the skin-to-skin contact of breastfeeding, the child experiences a multitude of tactile sensations with physical proximity giving the child a sense of security (Parham & Mailloux, 2010). Especially in the first months of life, in Erikson's first life stage of trust vs. mistrust (Erikson, 1950), such a proximate, security-giving co-occupation is not only beneficial for the mother-child relationship but may help the child to develop trust in relationships (Parham & Mailloux, 2010). While sensation providing is not limited to breastfeeding, breastfeeding is unarguably one of the closest, and therefore most sensation providing co-occupations mother and child participate in.

In stating that breastfeeding is a beneficial co-occupation, not only from an occupational, but also from nutritional, medical, and psychological perspectives, breastfeeding is not always a positive experience for mother and/or child. As found in this study, while all mothers who started out breastfeeding were reportedly determined to continue even when problems arose, breastfeeding is a personal decision and sometimes, due to disabilities or medical conditions, is impossible. In

some instances, for example as described by Olson (2004), breastfeeding is a struggle that may lead to the mother and child being unsatisfied. The bonding experience that is often described, for example in this study by Kelle, does not take place. Rather the breastfeeding sessions may be dreaded and be associated with pain on the mother's side and with lack of sucking reflex, ability, or control from the baby's side which result in irritation and insatiable hunger and therefore a negatively experienced, and probably unsuccessful, co-occupation.

Occupational therapists therefore ought to be careful not to assume meaning and quality of others' experiences. While some co-occupations may be beneficial to mothers and children in general, in specific situations, as described above, these co-occupations are not co-created as beautiful experiences. Consulting with the mother about positively experienced, physically close co-occupations and encouraging and utilizing these for the child's sensory stimulation would be more beneficial to both the relationship between mother and child and therapeutic goals than advocating for uncomfortable and unpleasant ones.

'Doing with' instead of 'doing to'

A quite important change made to the dog study's definition 'doing to' is that 'doing to' is never an occupation. 'Doing to' is one component of 'doing with', and the acknowledgement of this may help therapists facilitate therapy and support parent-child co-occupation in a considerate manner that helps the bonding, development, and therapy process. Not surprisingly, the difference between 'doing to' and 'doing with' is also acknowledged by Hunter (2010) who writes about infant massage in a neonatal intensive care unit. Hunter states that rather than doing a massage 'to' the baby, it should be done 'with' the baby through examining the infant's physiologic and neurobehavioral responses during the massage and changing the massage accordingly. This again highlights that it is important to provide very young children with a positive experience of co-occupation so as to not upset or stress them which may cause them to anticipate unpleasant experiences when interacting with the mother or therapist. Experiencing co-occupations positively enables the child to develop trusting relationships and facilitates positive

development. When supporting parents to participate in ‘doing with’ co-occupations with their child, the therapist ought to place emphasis on the differences between ‘with’ and ‘to’, explaining why a positive experience on both sides while not always possible, is preferable, and thus help define a trusting and positive relationship between parent and child.

Stepping back and letting the child grow competent

While many co-occupations require the mother’s presence in the child’s activity, there are also other (co-)occupations that require the mother’s absence, or at least passivity. ‘Doing alongside’ is a co-occupation category that appears to be important for the child’s development and mastery of skills; a secondary benefit is that the mother is enabled to accomplish other tasks such as household chores (Bateson, 1996). Occupational therapists can make the mother aware of resisting the temptation to interfere in their children’s activities unless they are engaged in harmful activities. Children are surprisingly competent and unconsciously knowledgeable about choosing to participate in activities that enable them to master the next developmental hurdle (Humphry & Case-Smith, 2005). ‘Doing alongside’ events are valid, beneficial, and necessary mothering occupations.

Some children cannot ‘do alongside’

The mother-child relationship is defined through the types of co-occupations occurring between them. Some children, due to disabilities or developmental delays, struggle or are unable to participate in activities of their own (Hoogsteen & Woodgate, 2010), which results in more ‘doing with’ co-occupations that are unlikely to diminish as they would in the mother-child relationship with a normally developing child. Children with special needs therefore often cannot ‘do alongside’ their mother, resulting in occupational understimulation and deprivation on the child’s side or occupational overload on the mother’s side. Recognizing the additional stress that the lack of ‘alongside co-occupations’ has on the mother (or other primary caregiver), the occupational therapist needs to consider strategies that may enable both mother and child to not only achieve occupational balance and

satisfaction, but also help them develop a relationships that is largely experienced as positive by both mother and child.

Acknowledging the maternal role

Additionally to the previous issue, mothering co-occupations are specific, normal, everyday life ‘doings’ that define the relationship between mother and child. While occupational therapy goals are important, they also take time to achieve and may interfere with family life and routines (Gevir et al., 2006; Kyler, 2008). Occupational therapists may ask the mother, or other primary caregiver, to actively work towards practice goals at home. Not only does this place a huge amount of additional responsibilities, commitments, and activities on the mother, but it also potentially prevents mother and child to develop a normal mother-child relationship. All the additional activities, coupled with responsibilities and pressure to achieve and provide her child with the best possibly therapies, can strain the mother’s emotional, mental, and often physical health (Lawlor, 2004). Occupational therapists should consider these strains on the mother when developing a home program and, while practice goals are unarguable important for the child, therapists should also consider the quality of the mother-child relationship.

Family centred practice

While paediatric occupational therapists primarily work with the child that was referred to them, the child’s family context is one of the main issues to consider (Kyler, 2008). This study has investigated co-occupation between mother and child only; considering that many families consist not only of mother and child, but also of father and siblings, maybe other relatives, it is easy to imagine that a family is a tightly knitted construct of co-occupation. Acknowledging these co-occupations, the occupations from the family members that influence the child’s day-to-day life and therapy, is an important step to set realistic practice goals. While for the occupational therapist their client is the priority, in the child’s family the child is one part, one co-actor, of the complexities of the family’s co-occupations.

Summary

This chapter contains a discussion of the findings in context of relevant literature, limitations of the research process, recommendations for further research, and finally implications for occupational therapy practice.

Firstly, the findings of the current study were compared to the dog study (Doidge, 2011). It was established that the current study provided a deeper analysis of the factors evident in co-occupation. Reasons for the differences were suggested to be the different research context and size of the studies. A second discussion topic was to situate the findings in the context of other scholars' understandings of the concept of co-occupation. It was discussed that the four categories appear to cover Pierce's original description of co-occupation; however it is uncertain whether one category, 'doing alongside', is a true co-occupation as it appears one-sided with the mother's occupation depending on the child's but the child's occupation being largely independent of the mother's. A third discussion point addressed taxonomic issues that became evident through the research process. The ramifications that an individualistic worldview has on the profession's understanding on (co-)occupation were addressed. The term occupation was then revisited and the differences between occupation and activity were considered. Taxonomic codes were critically appraised and content analysis methodology was suggested as being a suitable and unobtrusive methodology in occupational science; blogs were discussed as an easily accessible window into people's daily occupations without the researcher's interference.

Limitations of the study were outlined which were limited to the data analysis process as the methodology and the nature of the data source are virtually researcher bias-free. Several recommendations for future research included a validation of the four categories in several contexts and an exploration of the aspect 'doing with' of co-occupation and whether it diminishes over time in a mother-child relationship. Another suggestion was to examine whether co-occupations define relationships. Finally, a recommendation was made around the development of a common occupational language.

The implications for practice focused on maternal mental health and paediatric occupational therapy. Recognizing that co-occupations are not only interactions, mothers that struggle to settle into their new role should be encouraged to not only interact but to also do ‘for’, ‘because of’, and ‘alongside’ their child to gain confidence in their occupational role. Breastfeeding ought to be encouraged from an occupational perspective as this is the closest co-occupation between mother and child and has the potential to form a strong bond between the co-actors. Letting the children grow competent by stepping back and allowing them to learn and explore by themselves ought to be stressed by paediatric occupational therapists. This gives the children room to grow and provide the mothers with time to interweave ‘looking after the children’ with looking after themselves.

The final chapter acts as a conclusive summary of this thesis; it highlights the noteworthy aspects and finishes with a hypothesizing statement about the core-concern of this study.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to validate or refute the four original categories ‘doing with’, ‘doing to’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’ in the context of mothering children under the age of 5 years. The primary research question ‘*do the four co-occupation categories describe the mothering occupations of mothers of children aged 0-5 years?*’ was answered with ‘*no, in this study, only 78.5% of the code-able mothering events can be assigned to these categories.*’ The original categories were refined and re-defined; the new categories are ‘doing with’, ‘doing alongside’, ‘doing for’, and ‘doing because of’; 100% of the code-able mothering events fit into these categories which can now be tested in order to validate, refute, or refine them.

Three key issues were addressed in this study: Firstly, occupational therapy and occupational science are confused and unclear around the topics of activity, occupation, and co-occupation. In this study, the differences between occupation and activity were explored and discussed and the complexities associated with the original definition of co-occupation were clarified. The need for occupational therapists and occupational scientists to come to an agreement on a universal occupational language was identified.

Secondly, the need to move beyond the individual when studying occupation was asserted. By focusing on one individual’s occupation, although in context, much of the meaning of this occupation may be missed. Focusing the way in which one human’s occupation is situated to other people’s occupation, more about occupation and its meanings in relationship could be explored. From an occupational therapy point of view, by appreciating co-occupation, and therefore appreciating the occupational influences on an individual’s occupation, practice could be improved, primary health issues can be addressed from an occupational perspective, and society’s occupational needs may be met.

Thirdly, based on this study and supported by Hinde’s (1997) claim that interactions are the building blocks of relationships, from an occupational

perspective, co-occupations, and not only the interactive kind, are the essence of a relationship.

As a result of this study, considering that humans live in and are occupied within a society, it may be that occupation is the essence of being human, but that co-occupation is the essence of living as a human.

Postscript

After having completed this study, I thought it appropriate to let you, the reader, know how the bloggers' lives have moved on. As described, I have saved their address in my RSS feed and have received notifications when they updated their blogs. To be honest, it quite became part of my routine to have a read of their blogs with my cup of coffee in the mornings before starting to work on this thesis.

So here goes: Some blogs have not had any more posts since the date of the data collection, such as the ones written by Mary (adoptive mother) and by Lisa (stay-at-home mother). Kathy published one more post after the collection date in which she appraised fruit smoothies and posted some pictures of her twins Matthew and Mark drinking the smoothies.

Young mum Michelle's son Noah is now three years old; for this landmark, Michelle organised a 'Wizard of Oz' party for him. Michelle still regularly blogs and encourages other 'early mamas' to be proud and assertive of their choices.

"The Feminist Housewife" still posts about life as a stay-at-home mother and all the joys and challenges she experiences. In her last post about New Year's resolution, she vowed to be a better mother and wife as she felt she had been too impatient with her family.

Sweets (mum of one) has been updating her blog regularly. Her son Little Man has been diagnosed with developmental delays and speech problems. He receives early intervention and has just had myringotomy to improve his hearing. Since this ear tube surgery, his language has vastly improved. Sweets often writes about worrying her mother who has Parkinson's disease and now has to be fed through a tube. This displays how mother-child co-occupations change over time and a role-reversal may take place – yet another area of investigation that could be addressed?

Karen writes nearly daily about Mieka and Arnia. Arnia is at a university now and has been experiencing some problems at the initiation process that is still practiced at this particular university. Karen has been advocating for Arnia's

wellbeing. Mieka is now three years old and goes to Kindergarten which she enjoys although Karen has reported some issues on how the teachers treat the toddlers. Karen now posts pictures with nearly every post, making her blog more interesting to read.

Bridgette appears to be not a ‘single mama’ anymore as she is tentatively writing about getting back together with Jack’s father. Bridgette reported having trouble with ‘punishing’ her son when she feels he needs punishing.

Working mother Amanda is expecting her second child. Her daughter Madison is now four years old. Amanda does not often describe mothering occupations other than reporting little conversations she has had with Madison.

Nella is now just over two years old and is walking and saying a few words. Kelle still blogs very regularly and illustrates her posts with photographs. She is publishing a book based on her experience of having a child with Down syndrome: “bloom – finding beauty in the unexpected”.

From the beginning of working on this thesis, I have thought of whether or not I should tell the bloggers about this study. I put myself in their shoes and asked myself whether I’d want to know if someone has taken my writings, pulled it into little pieces and coded it, analysed whether I was ‘doing with’ or ‘for’. I decided to resist the temptation of telling them. Most of the blogs are so personal and honest that I sometimes felt like an intruder to the bloggers’ lives. Getting to know the mothers through the virtual reality of the internet, and getting to know their children, developments, frustrations, joys, concerns, and occupations has been a privilege. Literally reading their thoughts has been a great experience and I feel that I have somewhat lived through some issues with Sweets whose mother has Parkinson’s disease and is being fed through a tube now; I have celebrated Nella’s birthday and first steps with Kelle and her family (the look on my husband’s face was priceless when I said: Nella is finally walking!). How could I tell one of the mothers: “oh and by the way, your blog was part of my study on co-occupation. Did you know that 38% of the time you report that you are ‘doing because of’ your child?!”

Having undertaken one study using blogs, I am convinced of the value of using blogs as a data source. The posts felt honest, there was meaning behind every word, and occupation was omnipresent and reasserted my belief that occupation really makes us who we are. I did not influence the data or the blogger, resulting not only in more valid findings but also in me believing that although the outcome was not what I wanted it to be it is an actual representation of the bloggers' lives and their experiences. There were frustrations too, for example when the random number generator produced the number referring to the blog that I disliked from the start.

For my next study – I am not sure when and where it will take place but am quite convinced that it is about 'when' not 'if' – I am sure I will use blogs as a data source again.

On a personal note, my own daughter Anika is turning two in a few weeks' time. Now, having finished a year of studying other mothers' perceptions and experiences of their co-occupations with their children, I am looking forward to having more time and opportunity to observe Anika's growth, development, and lovely personality. Anika is looking forward to becoming a sister (I think). She points at my growing belly and says "Mummy, big baby tummy!" I look forward to being co-occupied with them both and am excited about seeing the co-occupations in my family change.

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Appendix A - Distribution of Characteristics

CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT

Key Characteristic	Name of Blogger	adoptive	birth-mother	lesbian	hetero-sexual	many	one	older	young	single	in a relationship	special needs	developing normally	SAHM	work
adoptive	Mary	x			x	x					x		x		x
lesbian	Feminist Housewife		x	x			x				x		x	x	
mum of many	Kathy		x		x	x		x			x		x	x	
mum of one	Sweets		x		x		x	x			x	x			x
older mum	Karen		x		x	x		x			x		x		x
single mum	Bridgette		x		x				x	x			x		x
special needs	Kelle		x		x						x	x		x	
stay at home	Lisa		x		x	x		x			x		x	x	
working	Amanda		x		x		x				x		x		x
young	Michelle		x		x		x		x		x		x		x

Appendix B – Blog Jargon Glossary

Blog Jargon Glossary

As this thesis focuses on bloggers, blogs, and blog content, a terminology base was established. The following terms are defined as they are used in this thesis.

Add-ons	different features that a blogger may chose to pin on the sidebar of the blog such as archives, links, badges
Archives	reverse chronological arrangement of posts – usually arranged by month or year
Badge (of Affiliation)	an add-on, a feature such as the fish below
Blog	originally weblog – the website that the author/blogger publishes their posts on
Blog Template	raw background for bloggers to base their blog on – several template providers exist e.g. wordpress.com, blogspot.com
Blogger	the author/keeper/owner of a blog
Blogosphere	the blog entity/population on the internet
Categories	topic assigned interlinks that lead to posts that the blogger has arranged under the category
Comment	written by a blog's follower
Followers	subscribed reader of the blog
Home	shows latest posts
Mommy Blog	blog devoted to family life, written by mothers
Post (also "Posting")	an entry written by the blogger
Profile	a short introduction of the blogger/blog
RSS	originally RDF site summary, often called "really simple syndication", a site feed used by a frequent reader of a frequently updated sites such as blogs, that alerts the reader when the blog has been updated
Sidebar	a bar, which can be on either side of the main part of the blog, on which add-ons are pinned
Special Archives	see 'categories'
Tags	see 'categories'

Appendix C – Sampling Log

1

**TAKE THIS ONE OUT AND
REPLACE WITH LARGE
SPREADSHEET OF SAMPLING
LOG!**

Appendix D – Sample Pages

Mary (adoptive mother) p. 2

1 ...finding one of those soft play children's centres and
2 being able to 'let the children go' in the safe environment.
3 Took me several visits to relax for even just a few
4 minutes; even now, months later I'm still on tenterhooks if
5 I haven't seen them for a while. It has given me a chance
6 to do some reading - yes a book, with words and
7 everything! I now read a book in 5-6 weeks instead of a
8 day (pre-children) lol

9 14/02/2011

10 **Being an adoptive Mum is...**

11 ...'G' word warning!: feeling guilty over just thinking about
12 taking an adoptive child out of school for a holiday

13 01/03/2011

14 **Being an adoptive Mum is...**

15 ...having to think for the children. What I found the most
16 mentally tiring was having to think for the children when I
17 asked them to do something. For example, cleaning their
18 teeth, I couldn't just send them into the bathroom, I would
19 have to take them in, stop them from squabbling as to who
20 stands where (each now has their own step stools - that was
21 the answer!), who gets to use the toothpaste first (Mummy
22 does it now because they can't squeeze the tube

The Feminist Housewife, p. 13



Image 1

- 1 That didn't happen. He did stick his fingers in and try to
- 2 feed some to me (he loves to feed others!), but he didn't
- 3 really eat any aside from a small taste of frosting.



Image 2

- 4 Finally, at some point in May, he turned the corner, and
- 5 since then has been eating more and more consistently. He
- 6 now sits in his high chair three times a day and eats at
- 7 least a little something. He is also very interested in

Kathy, p. 21



Image 1

- 1 The ubiquitous bloomin' onion. It was a little too much this
- 2 year because we
- 3 got two and couldn't finish them.



Image 2

- 4 A bunch of my children were on this caterpillar roller
- 5 coaster when it broke down. In this picture, the
- 6 employees are helping the children out of their seats to
- 7 walk down the ramp along the track.

Sweets, p.3

1 I wish Little Man would sleep through the night. I want to get about 5-6
2 hours myself!
3 But he wakes up at least once, sometimes twice, a night and he's
4 REALLY hungry. So I give him a bottle and he chugs it down and goes
5 back to sleep for a few more hours.
6 I really need to ask about this. I have SO many questions for my
7 pediatrician and I feel like I can barely get them in.
8 But, for now, he's sound asleep in his sling and that's a good thing.

9 January 1, 2010

10 **New Year's Reflections**

11 Posted by sweetnjmom under [All About Me](#)

12 [Leave a Comment](#)

13 Last year, on New Year's Eve, I was newly pregnant—only 8 weeks
14 along—and so tired from the early pregnancy symptoms.

15 This year, on New Year's Eve, I'm a tired mom of an active infant. I'm
16 in bed, typing away on my blog, just before 11 pm. And I hope to be
17 going to sleep BEFORE the ball drops and it's 2010.

18 Overall, it was a great year. The most amazing one of my life. In 2009 I
19 went through most of my pregnancy and delivered a beautiful, happy
20 baby boy. I shouldn't complain about anything... though there were
21 ups and downs. Money woes. Little Man's brachycephaly and the
22 helmet. My feelings of guilt.

23 And now as this year ends, so will my grandmother's long life. She
24 fought to be around, with her family, even though she would have liked
25 to have followed my grandfather when he died in May of 2007. But she
26 was here to see me marry. To see me FINALLY become a mother.
27 Momma has been such a huge influence in my life. And soon she will
28 no longer be there for me to talk to. I have

Karen, p. 36



Image 1

- 1 Friday, May 27, 2011
- 2 **Stuff you allow your toddler to do**



Image 2

- 3 For the sake of a few minutes of peace... The things you
- 4 thought that you would never allow!

Bridgette, p. 4

1 I'm in a total nesting mode. My apartment is so cluttered
2 and unorganized. It's making things feel so cramped so
3 I'm working on this now, then I plan to redecorate. Arrgh.
4 Back to it before Jack wakes up!
5 So Much For Frugal Living ..

6 **Posted on** | September 14, 2009 | 3 Comments

7 Is this not the cutest thing ever?



Image 1

8 Seriously. How could I withstand the urge to buy an
9 abundance of BabyLegs when leg warmers on my son's
10 little muscular legs just so happen to be the cutest thing
11 I've ever seen in my life? And you know cold weather is
12 just around the corner ...

13 So I reasoned with myself and I splurged ... my clicky
14 finger got happy, I pressed "Check Out" and in the end I
15 ordered \$72 worth of legwarmers for Jack.

16 **\$72.**

17 **On legwarmers.**

18 **Fuck me.**

Kelle, p. 27

1 things no one else will ever know, but I could have
2 never made it through the night without them.
3 I think I cried for seven hours straight. It was gut-
4 wrenching pain. I held Nella and I kissed her but I
5 literally writhed in emotional pain on that bed in
6 the dark with our candles and my friends by my side
7 until the sun came up. I remember trying to sleep
8 and then feeling it come on again...and I'd start
9 shaking, and they'd both jump up and hug me from
10 either side, Nella smooshed between the four of us.
11 I begged for morning, even once mistaking a street
12 light for sunlight and turning on the lights only to
13 find it was 3 a.m. and I still had to make it through
14 the night.



Image 1

15 I can't explain that evening. And I suppose it's
16 horrible to say you spent the first night your
17 daughter was born in that state of agony, but I

Lisa, p. 15

1 Sunday, September 27, 2009

2 Heading into hospital...



Image 1

3 Well after a long (thankfully) and eventful (not so
4 thankfully) pregnancy I am heading into hospital today
5 for two days of work up including steroid shots before
6 our little man is delivered on Wednesday at 37 weeks.
7 This pregnancy has been SO different and I am hopeful
8 that our little man will only have a short hospital stay,
9 although I realise that he will be in special care for a
10 few days until his sugar levels stabilise (due to my
11 gestational diabetes). I have been so grateful for the
12 support I have received from friends and family, even
13 though as my Dad

Amanda, p. 24

1 *Last week was all about sports! Our best friends Matt and*
2 *Teresa had two extra tickets to the Red Sox for*
3 *Wednesday night... well, here's the long story:*
4 *Matt's parents (My Aunt Wendy and Uncle Art - they're*
5 *honorary Aunt and Uncles, close enough!) both have*
6 *cancer. His mom is doing quite well right now after going*
7 *through rough chemo but his dad has been feeling pretty*
8 *lousy lately. So on Monday morning, Matt called and*
9 *basically said, "my dad isn't sure he'll be well enough to*
10 *go on Wednesday night, so if he isn't, could you guys get*
11 *a sitter to go?"*
12 *Well, we have this great friend, she's actually a resident in*
13 *my building and my office assistant, who is so good with*
14 *Maddie and is great with last minute sitting... so I asked*
15 *her and she could if we needed her!*
16 *I told Matt to wait until the last possible moment and then*
17 *have his dad decide, because I didn't want him to give us*
18 *the tickets and then feel good enough to go...*
19 *Well, Wednesday morning, Matt let us know that his dad*
20 *was still not up for going - which was bitter sweet, for*
21 *obvious reasons... so that afternoon Matt and Teresa*
22 *came here and we headed into Boston.*
23 *We ate some greasy food outside of Fenway and then*
24 *headed inside. After getting some Oktoberfest *my*

Michelle, p. 25

- 1 Always exploring.



Image 1

- 2 Dancing with shadows.



Image 2

- 3 Kissing new friends.

- 4 xo

- 5 Happy Weekend!

Appendix E – Sample of Coding in Text

SAMI ✓ USA

1 Friday, December 15, 2006

2 Xmas is almost here



image 1

3 Well Xmas is almost here and the next few weeks
 4 will no doubt pass in a flurry of eating, drinking and
 5 socialising. I am still trying to complete some of my
 6 Xmas presents. Decided I would try for the personal
 7 touch and make some of my gifts this year. Actually
 8 it has been a lot of fun and it is something I hope to
 9 pass onto my beautiful boys as they get older. I
 10 already have some ideas of what we can do. I am
 11 trying some OTP (off the page) projects - this is an
 12 area of scrapping I haven't really gotten into, but
 13 since I made little trinket boxes for the boys I have *for*
 14 become inspired to try my hand at a few more
 15 objects. So now all I need is some time and
 16 hopefully I will create some works of art. By the way
 17 I have become addicted to some of the groovy
 18 website tools - check out my Xmas banner below.
 19 Sending lots of love to all of our friends and family,
 20 Lisa

Appendix F – Reflective Diary Sample

Random thoughts – 23 December 2011

Breastfeeding most intense co-occupation? Sharing of mother's body and milk
→ closest possible → is it duplicable?!

Lots of writing about breastfeeding! Is it because of its intensity and time requirements? Is bottle feeding less intense? Are bottle-fed children missing out on something because of this?

Introduction of solids gets lots of description → because it is a milestone?
Because it is difficult? Messy? Lots of work? Takes a long time? Is scary?

When do children become emotionally responsive?! Pickens and Pizur-Barnekow! Age limit? Developmental limit/requirement?

Focus of the research: activity or occupation? What is the difference? How big is an activity? Is one breastfeeding session an activity? Is 'breastfeeding' an occupation? Or a repeated activity? When does breastfeeding become an occupation? After 5 times? Is activity and occupation the same concept? Is activity smaller than occupation? Is there a conceptual leap in the TCOP?

What are the differences between Mary showing her children how to brush their teeth and Mary and her children brushing teeth together? → co-occupational focus rather than solitary focus. TCOP not applicable to co-occupations? How do you code co-occupations? Reactions?

Appendix G – First Spreadsheet Lisa

CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT

Lisa

quote	cluster	with	to	for	because of	other	page	line
I made little trinket boxes for the boys	making sth			X			1	13
we got back from our Easter holiday	going somewhere	?X				alongside?	3	1
we left early	going somewhere	?X				alongside?	3	2
we all had a really relaxing time at the beach	spending time	?X				alongside?	3	7
we wandered off to check out the garage sales	going somewhere	?X				alongside?	3	12,13
picked up some jam	buying sth					alongside?	4	1
and we ate like kings	eating					alongside?	4	2
Mitch proffered lots of kisses and hugs to Uncles...	receiving					letting do?	4	8,9
we had breakfast	eating	?X				alongside?	4	21
the Easter bunny visited	pretending		?X	X?	X?		4	22

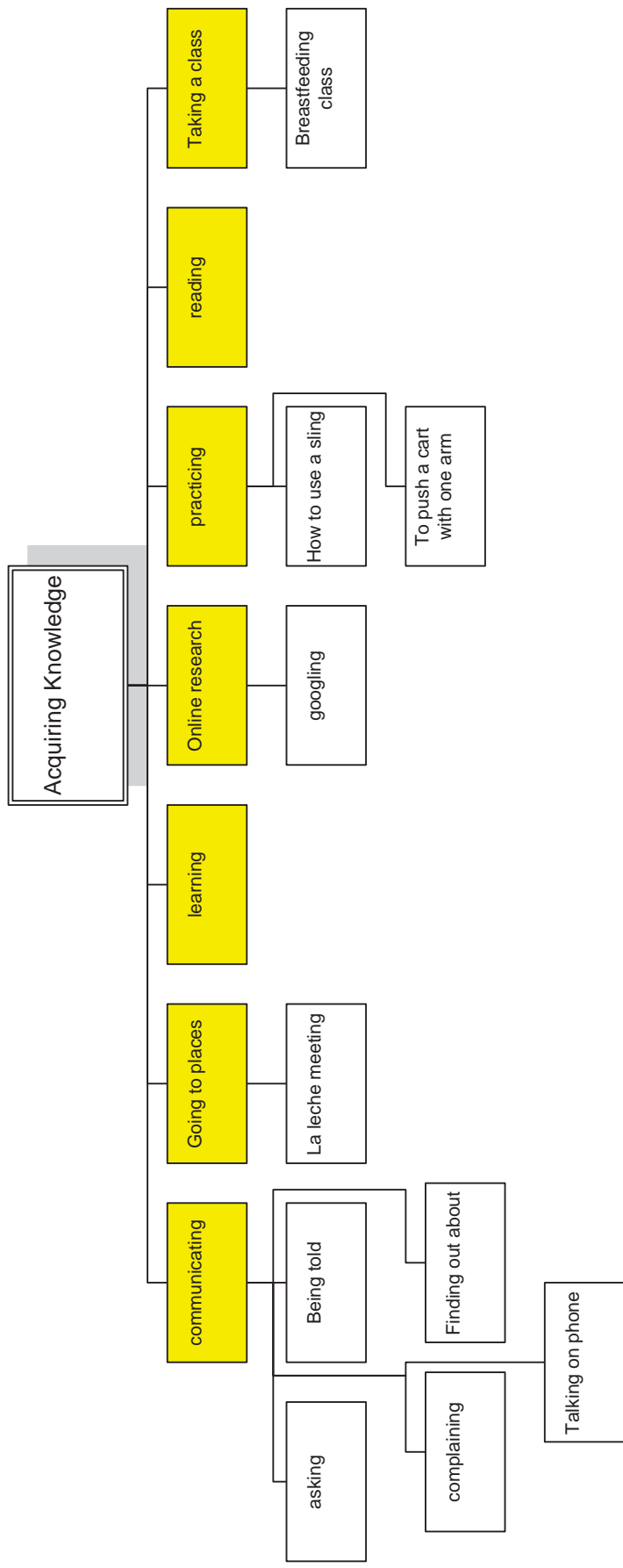
Appendix H – Restructured Spreadsheet Lisa

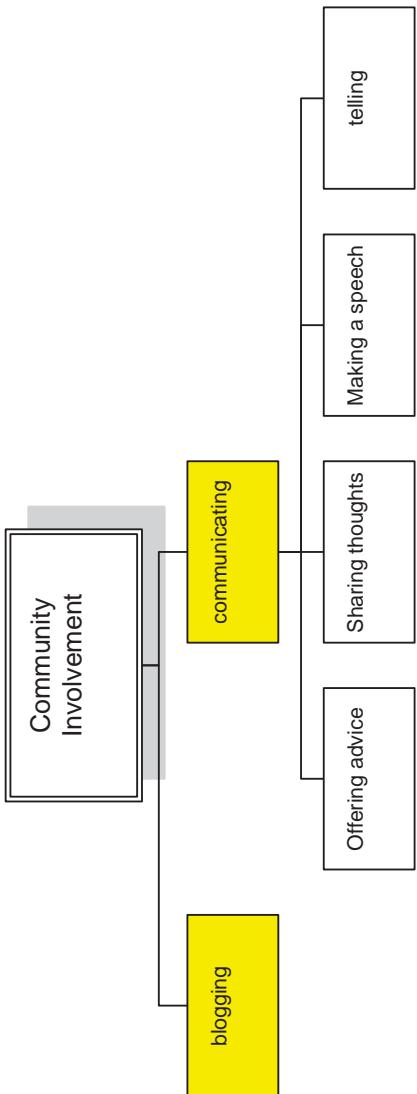
CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT

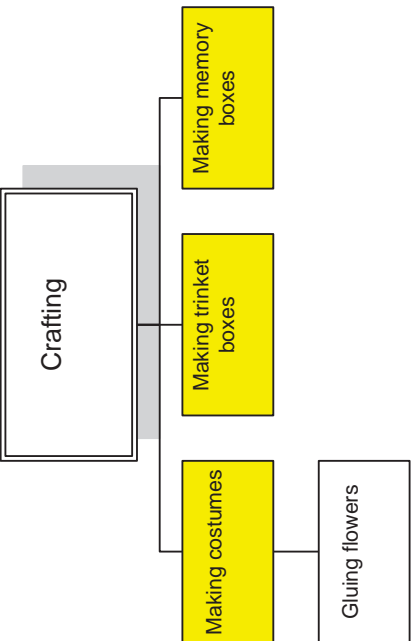
Blogger	Quote	Page	Line	code-able?	Task/ action	overall activity	with	to	for	because of	alongside	letting do	b d to	b d for	b d because of
Lisa	I made little trinket boxes for the boys	1	13	yes	making trinket boxes	crafting			X						
Lisa	we got back from our Easter holiday	3	1	yes	getting back	holidaying					X				
Lisa	we left early	3	2	yes	leaving early	holidaying					X				
Lisa	we wandered off to check out the garage sales	3	12,13	yes	wandering to check garage sales	walking						X			
Lisa	picked up some jam	4	1	yes	buying jam	shopping					X				
Lisa	and we ate like kings	4	2	yes	/	eating					X				
Lisa	we had breakfast	4	21	yes	having breakfast	eating						X			
Lisa	I just wanted to share my last layout of Harrison	8	1	yes	sharing	blogging				X					

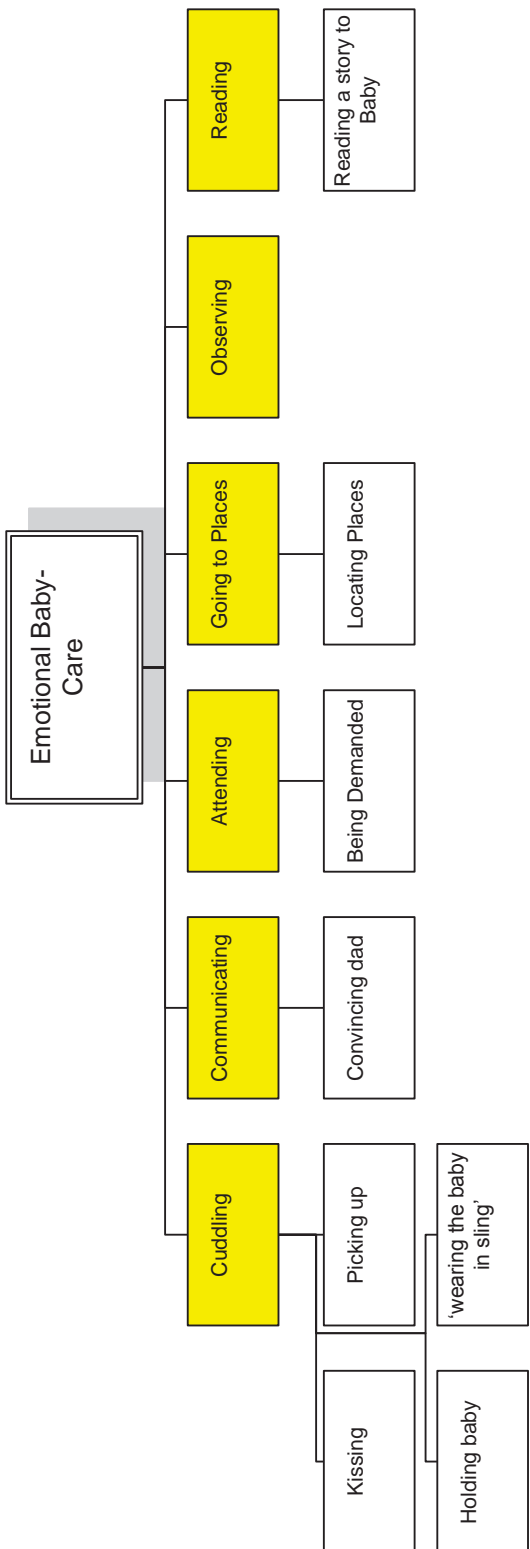
Appendix I – Compound Activities

CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT

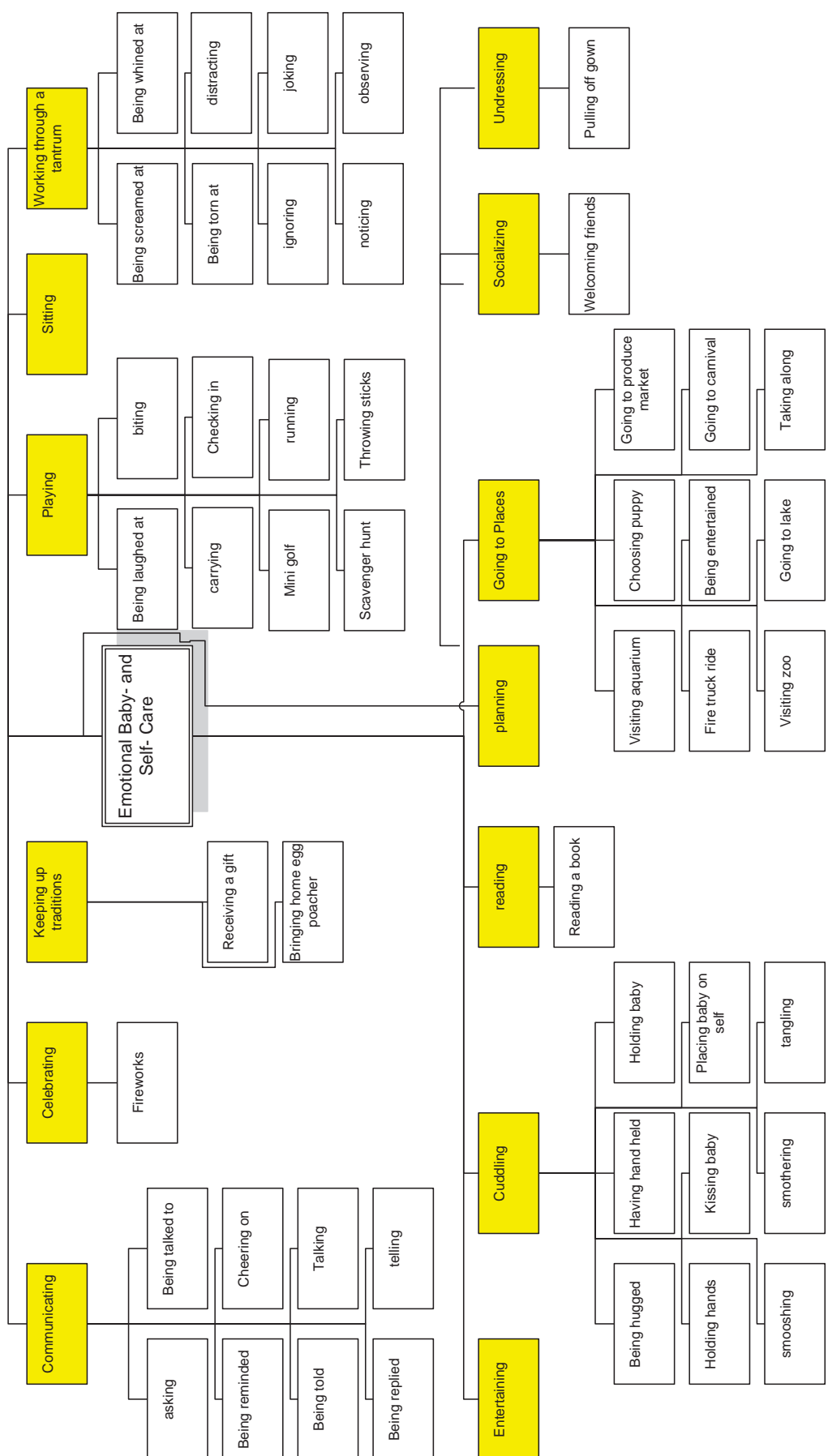




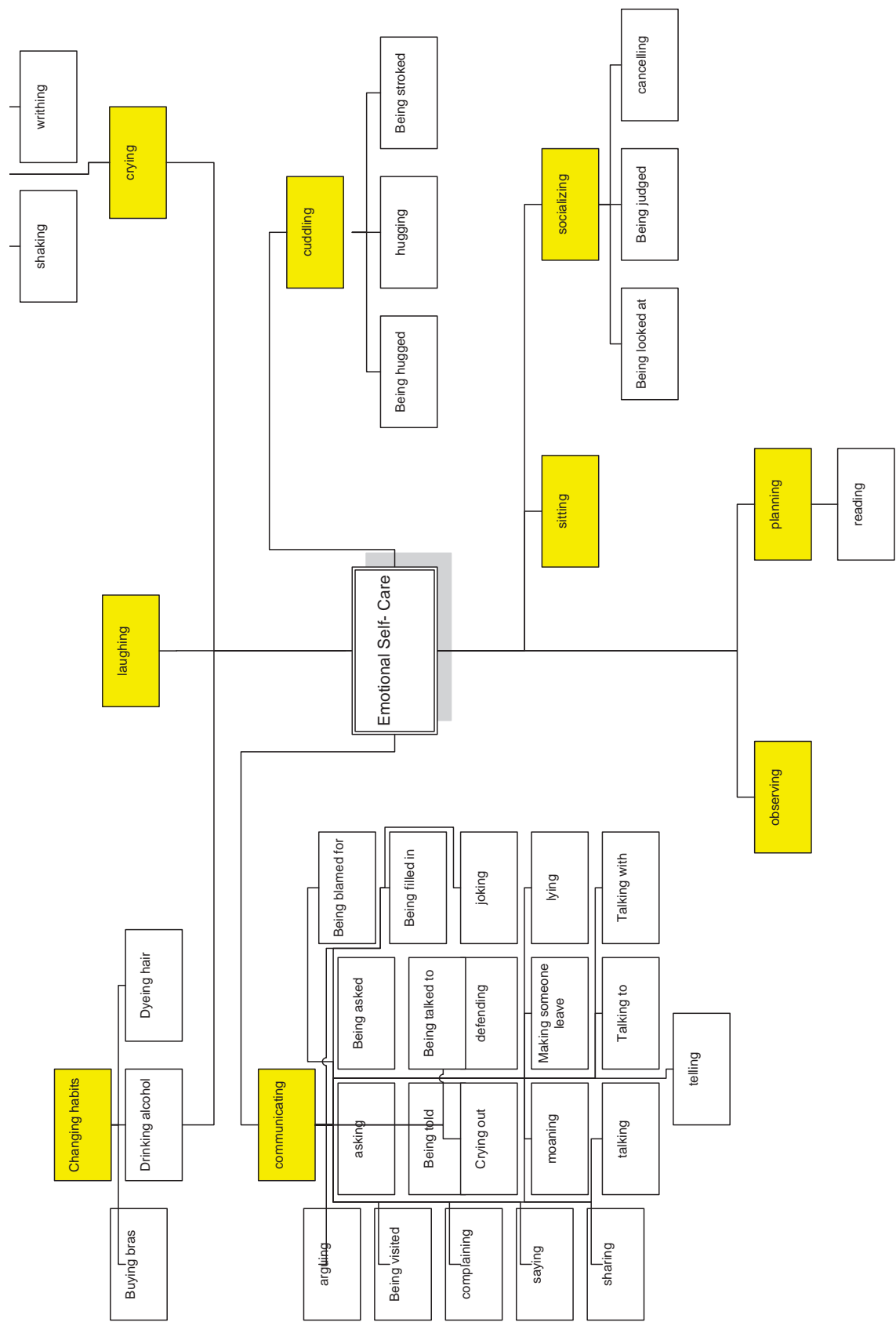




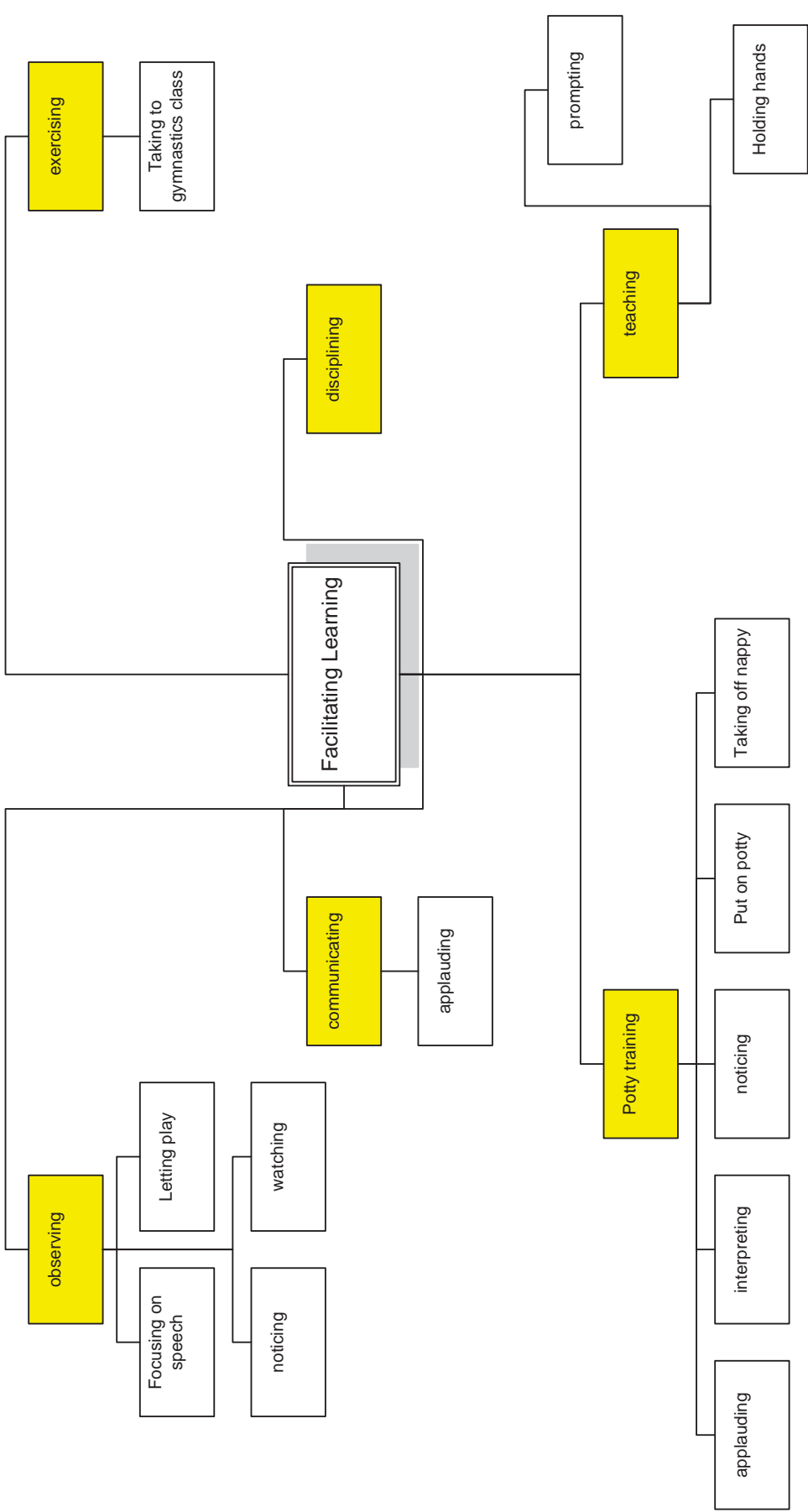
CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT



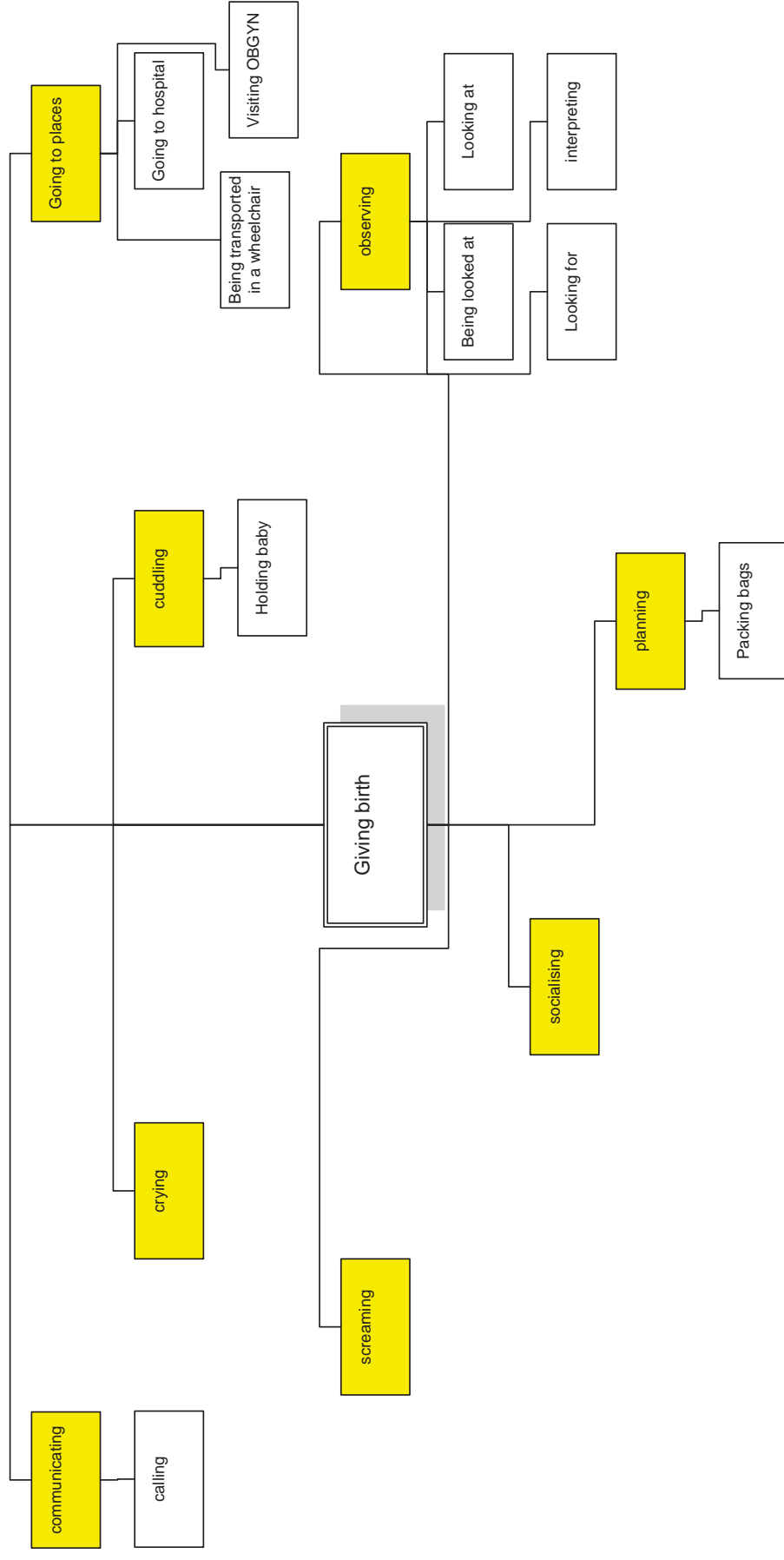
CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT



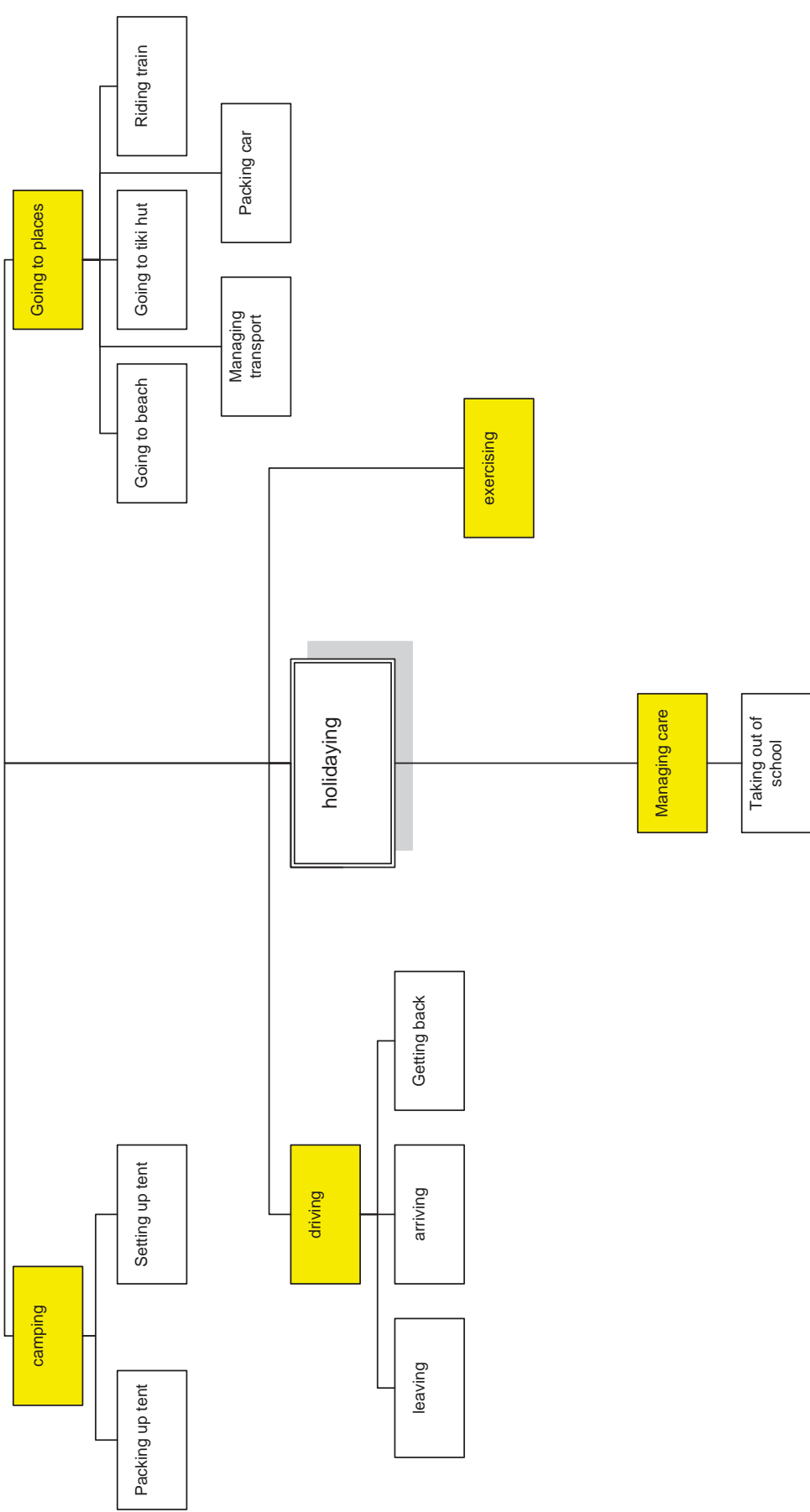
CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT



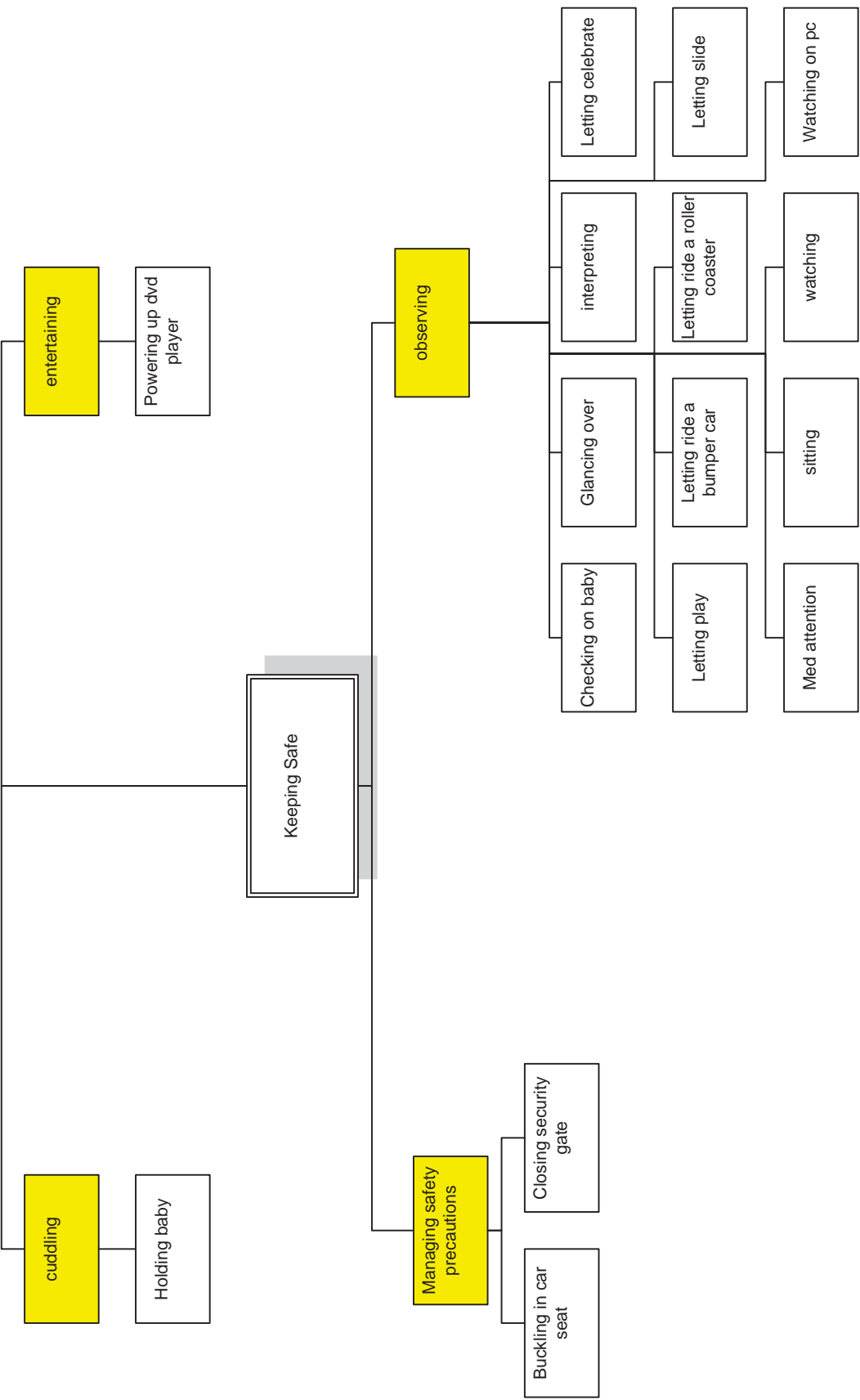
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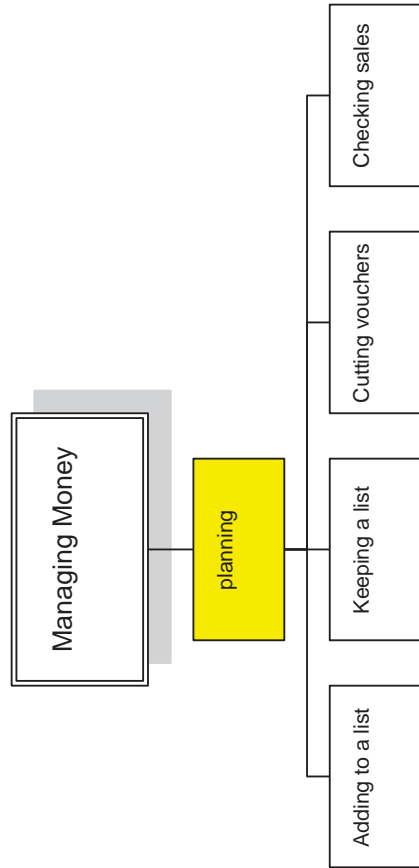


CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT

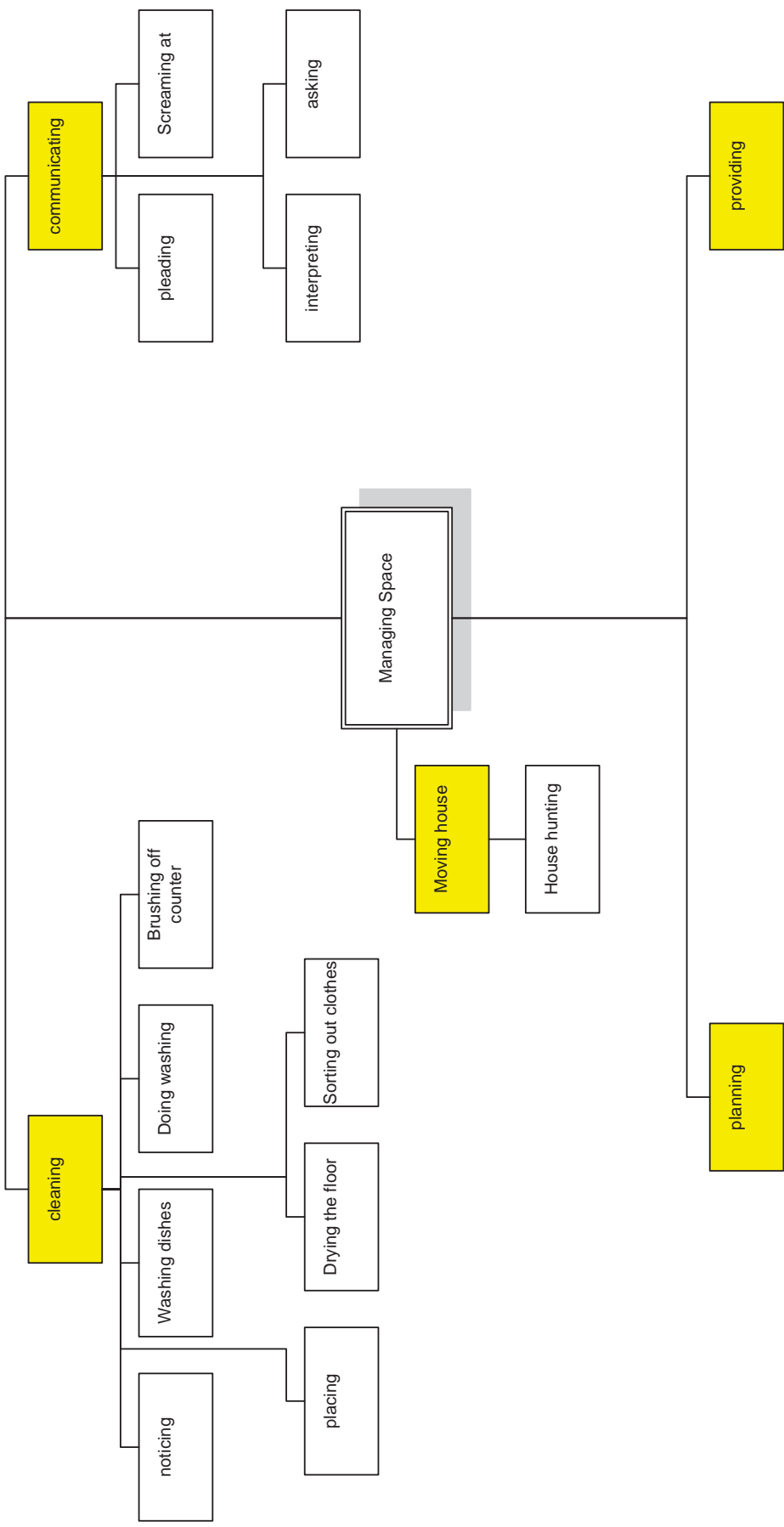


CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT

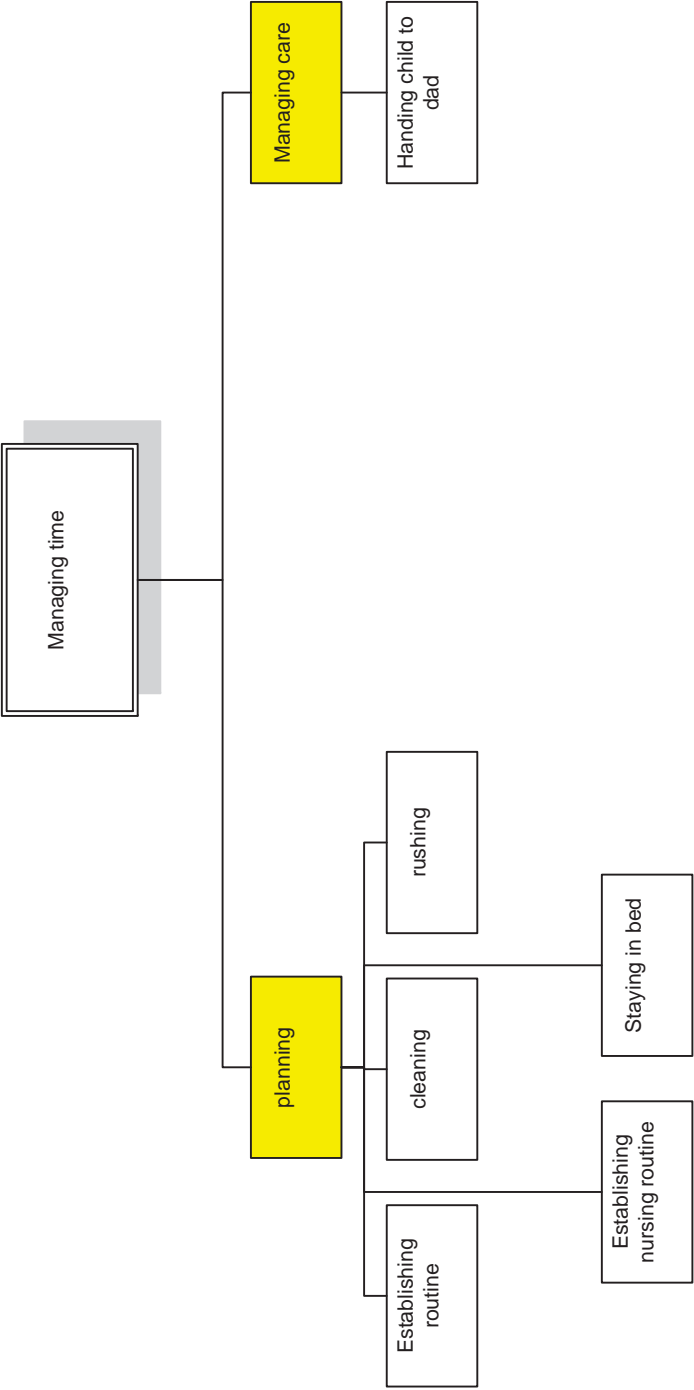




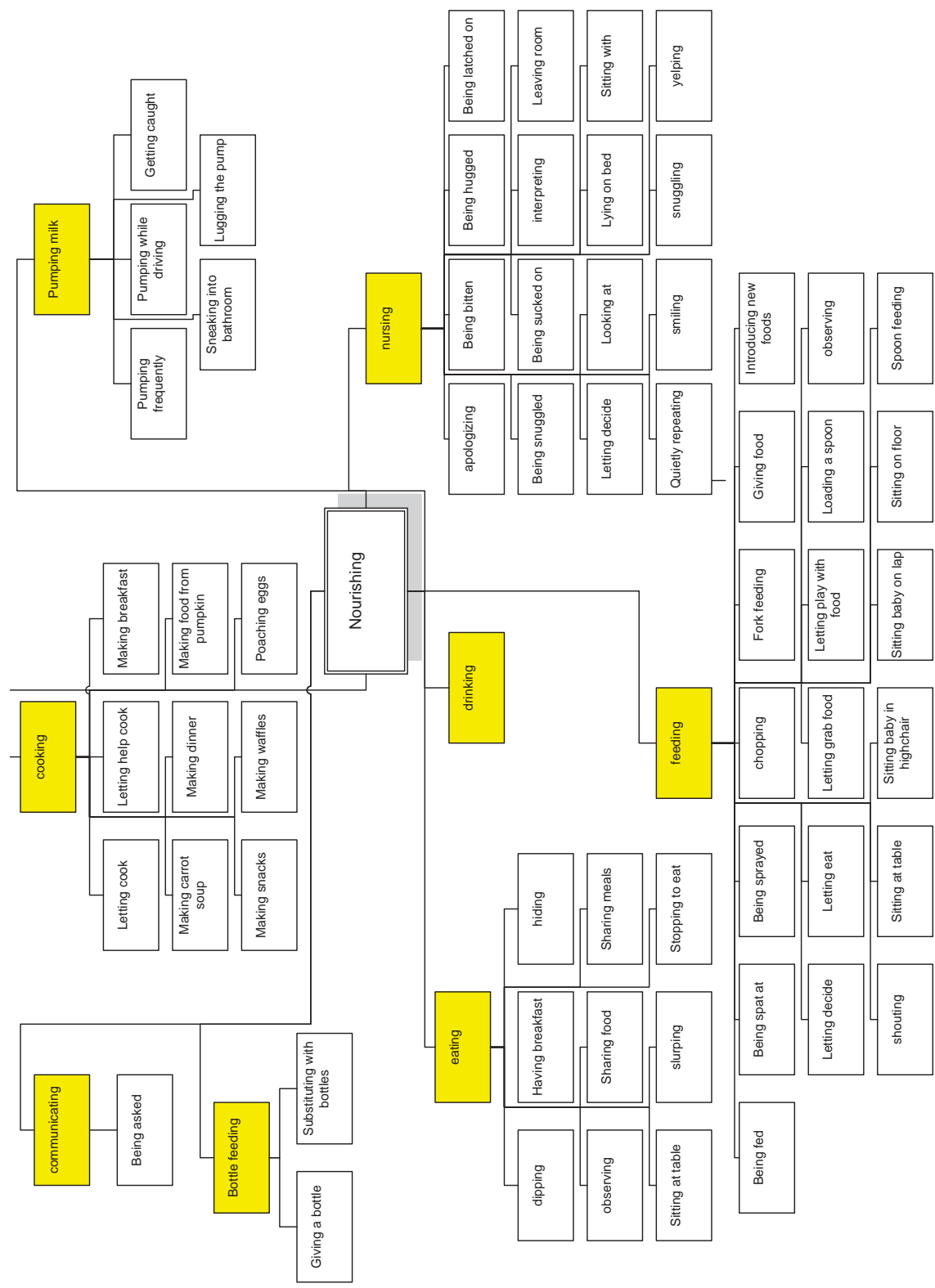
CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT



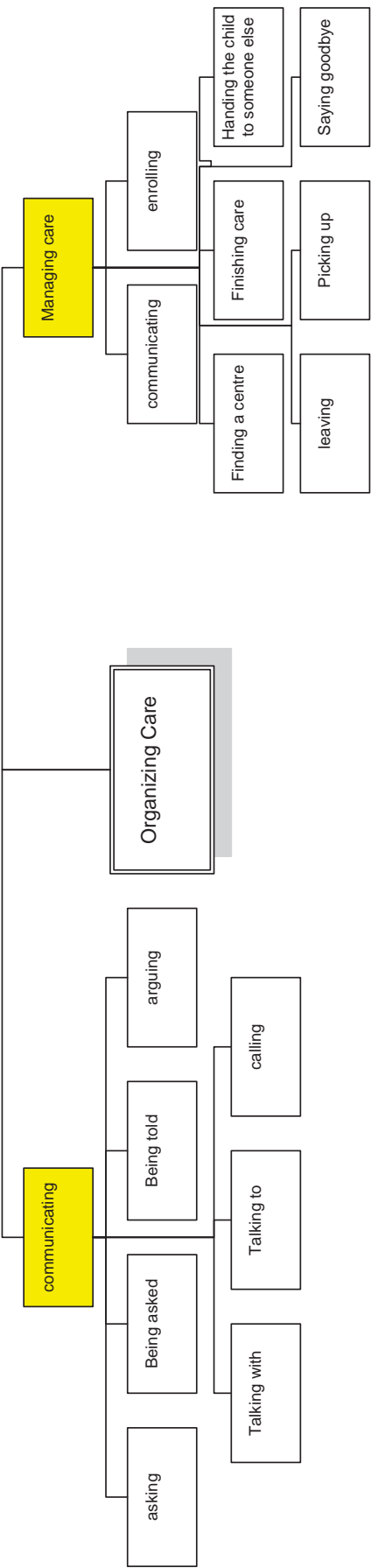
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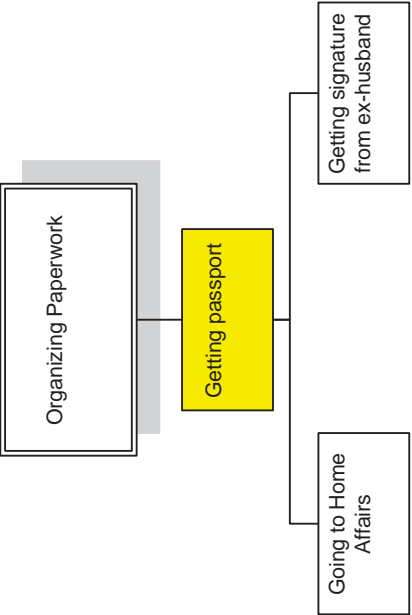


CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT

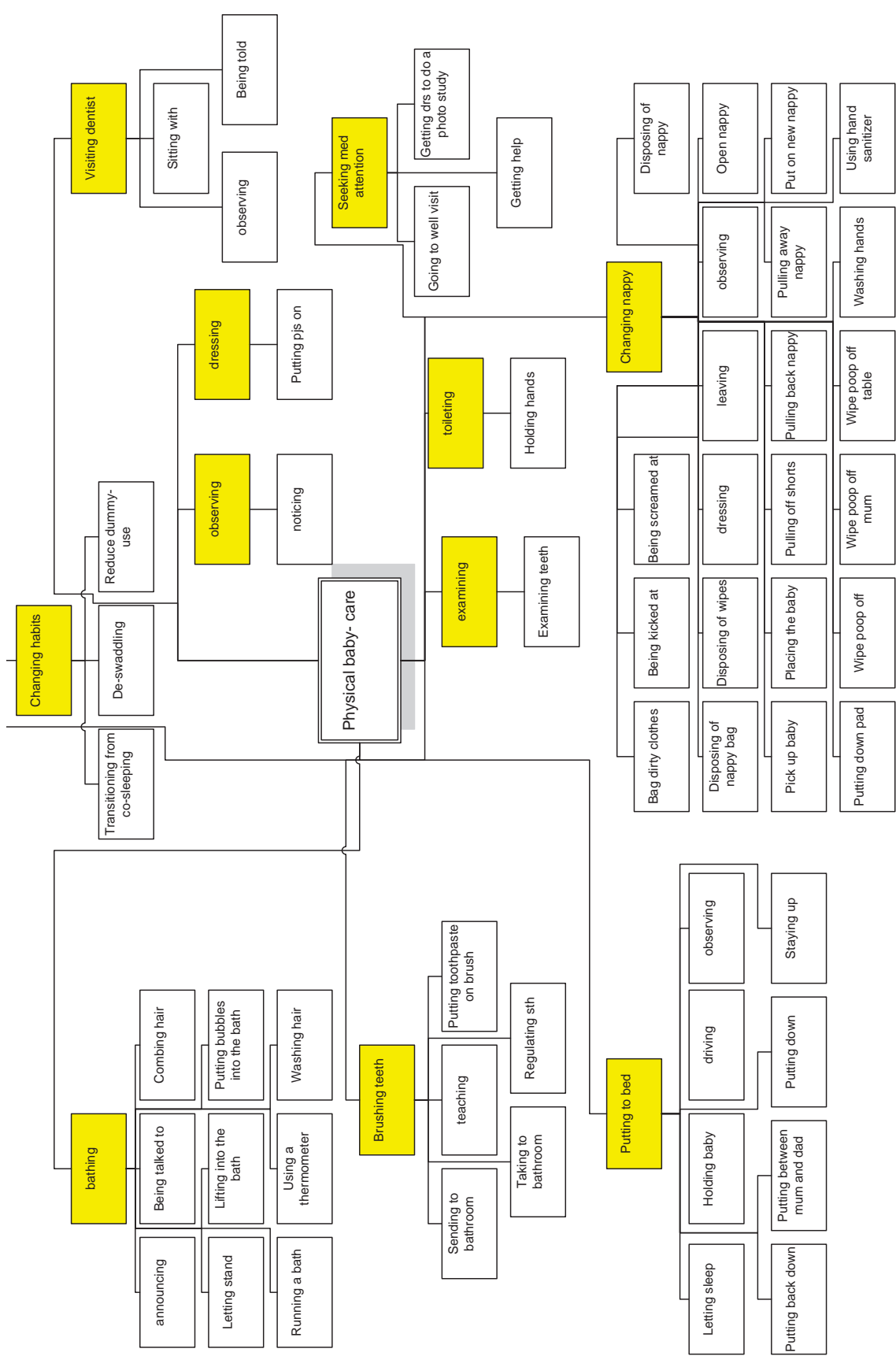


CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT

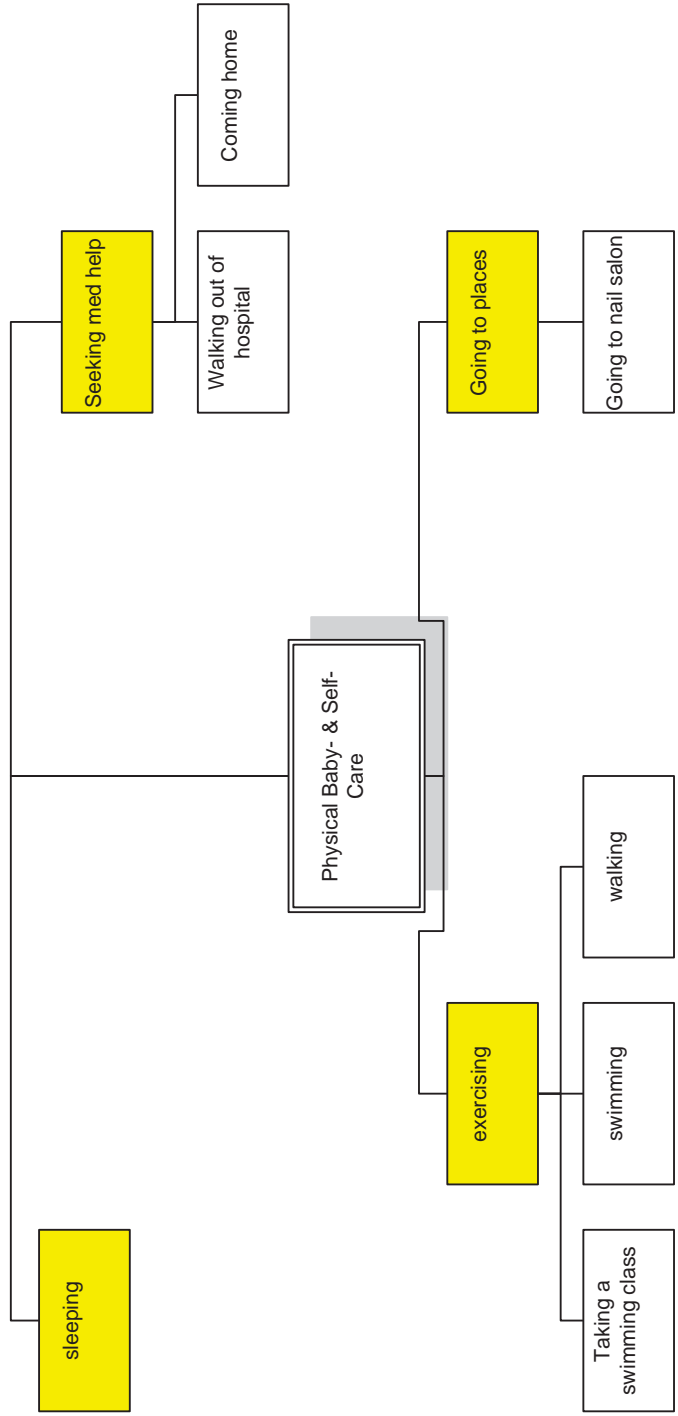




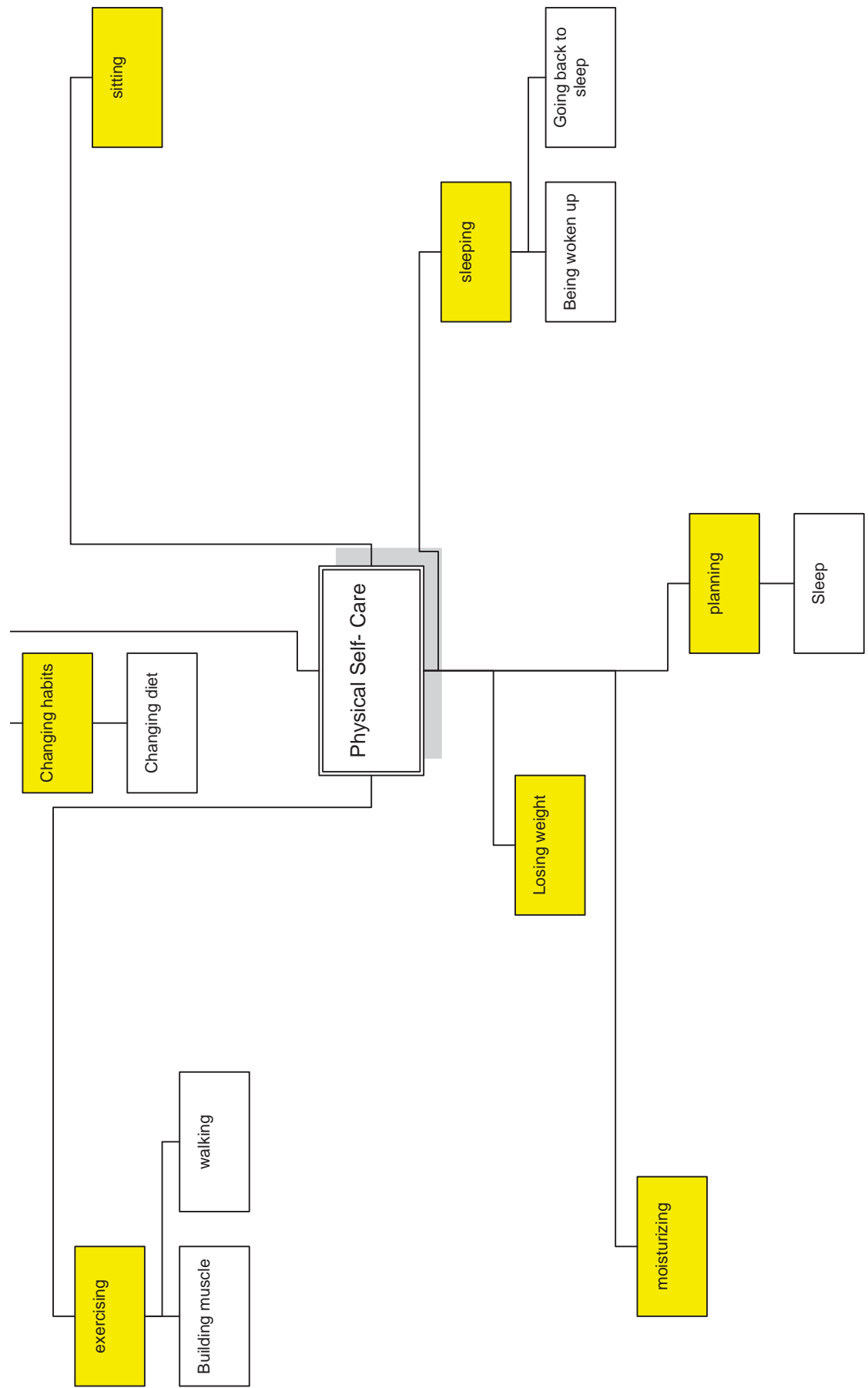
CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT



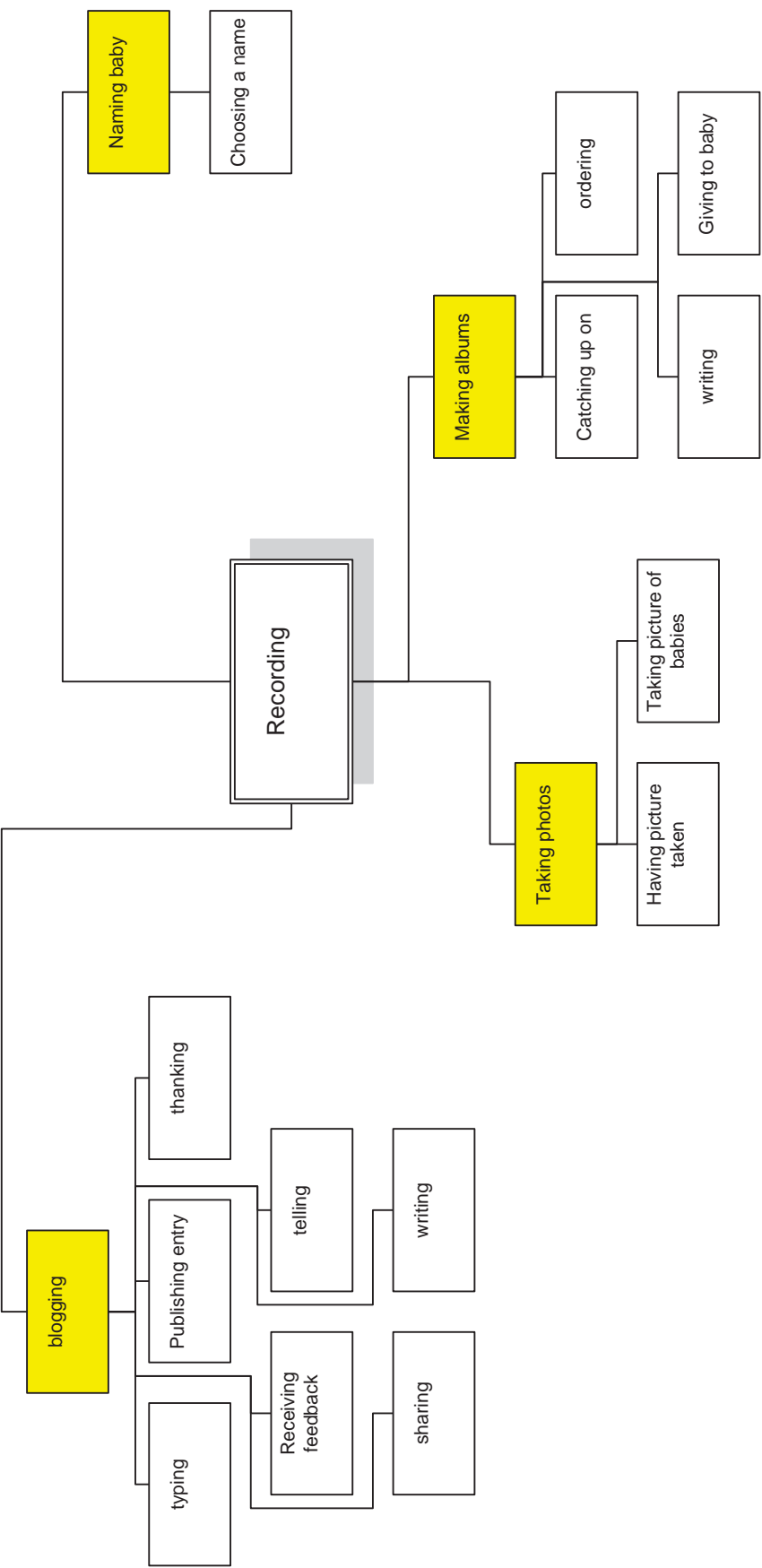
CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT



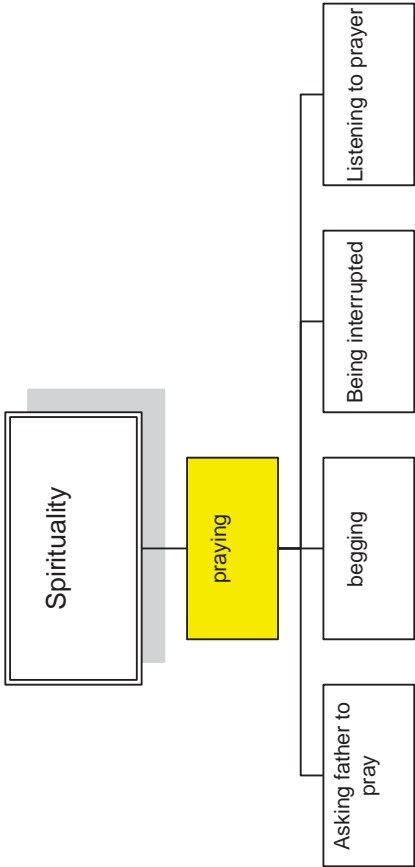
CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT



CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT







Appendix J – Final Spreadsheet Lisa

CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT

Blogger	Quote	Page	Line	code-able?	compound occupation	overall activity	< activity	with	to	for	because of	alongside	letting do	being done to
Lisa	I made little trinket boxes for the boys	1	13	yes	crafting	making trinket boxes	0			X				
Lisa	we got back from our Easter holiday	3	1	yes	holidaying	driving	getting back					X		
Lisa	we left early	3	2	yes	holidaying	driving	leaving					X		
Lisa	we wandered off to check out the garage sales	3	12,13	yes	providing for	shopping	wandering					X		
Lisa	picked up some jam	4	1	yes	providing for	shopping	buying					X		
Lisa	and we ate like kings	4	2	yes	nourishing	eating	0					X		
Lisa	we had breakfast	4	21	yes	nourishing	eating	having breakfast					X		
Lisa	I just wanted to share my last layout of Harrison	8	1	yes	recording	blogging	sharing				X			

Appendix K – Occupational Terminology

Occupational Glossary

This glossary was established for this research only and is expected to have flaws. It is not tested or validated in any way but reflects the author's subjective understanding of occupation-based language.

activity	A set of tasks as perceived by people of the same culture. An activity is an abstract idea rather than an observable process. It builds up from activity sizes such as movements, actions, tasks, compound tasks (Polatajko et al., 2004). Activities do not take place in a specific context.
activity in context	An activity which is taking place and can be observed. As distinct from occupation, activities in context are how others see an individual participate; they do not actively experience the activity. This term arose due to the author's belief that nobody observing someone else participate in an occupation can ever truly know how the participant experiences their occupation.
co-activity	A co-created activity. As an activity, a co-activity is an abstract concept and is non-contextual. It arose from the problem that became evident when comparing activities and occupations; it is logical to then assume that co-occupation without context is co-activity.
co-doing	Adapted from Dewey's transactional view as written by Dickie and colleagues (2006). Co-doings are co-created 'doings'. This word arose due to the confusion around occupation and activity sizes or splinters. It is unclear whether a doing is experienced (like an occupation) or abstract (like an activity).
co-occupation	The interlinking of occupations of two or more people resulting in a co-created experience. This term was developed by Pierce (2004).
co-occupational splinter	Similar to co-doing, a co-occupational splinter is a doing of some size that is co-created and is smaller than a co-occupation. As opposed to co-doing, a co-occupational splinter is experienced.
event	A doing of some size and complexity. It was used to avoid confusion in the coding process. It is unclear whether an event is experienced (like an occupation) or abstract (like an activity). In this study, events are reported by the mothers, therefore seen as similar to 'activity in context' although events can be less complex than activities such as 'tossing the rubbish in a bin'.

occupation	An activity as it is experienced by an individual in their context. An occupation cannot be relived, restaged, or re-experienced, only remembered.
occupational splinter	An occupation-part of some size. Occupational splinters are smaller than occupations; occupational splinters are experienced and therefore were not named task, action, etc as these refer to activity without context.
whole occupation	Term used to reiterate the scope of an occupation, to contrast between occupational splinter and occupation.

Appendix L – Distribution of Categories for each Blogger

CO-OCCUPATION IN THE MOTHERING CONTEXT

Blogger	with	with %	to	to %	b d to	b d to	along side	alongside %	for	for %	because of	because of %	overall	overall %
Amanda	4	11%	3	10%	9	26%	12	34%	5	14%	2	6%	35	3%
Bridgette	3	8%	2	5%	4	11%	0	0%	10	28%	17	47%	36	3%
Fem	12	27%	9	25%	0	0%	14	31%	4	9%	6	13%	45	5%
Karen	49	28%	24	14%	11	6%	55	32%	13	8%	20	12%	172	17%
Kathy	28	30%	21	23%	0	0%	12	13%	5	5%	25	27%	91	9%
Kelle	207	50%	73	18%	10	9%	39	9%	19	4%	66	16%	414	42%
Lisa	7	18%	3	8%	8	20%	5	13%	7	18%	9	23%	39	4%
Mary	2	10%	6	30%	1	5%	0	0%	6	27%	7	32%	22	2%
Michelle	25	40%	5	8%	1	2%	1	2%	10	16%	20	32%	62	7%
Sweets	18	24%	9	12%	5	7%	9	12%	11	15%	22	30%	74	8%
overall	356	36%	149	15%	49	5%	158	16%	88	9%	188	19%	990	100%

