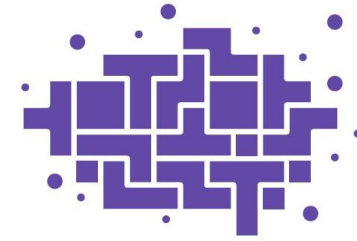




80th International Scientific
Conference of the
University of Latvia 2022



FLPP
FUNDAMENTAL AND
APPLIED RESEARCH
PROJECTS

'Intensive mothering' discourse in narratives pro and against the 'daddy quota' in Latvia.

Thematic analysis of comments in social media
(2021-2022)

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28.06.2022.

Problem and aim of research

Motherhood in Western civilization bows to the dominant discourse of '**intensive mothering**' (Hays, 1996)

The burden (and privilege) of childcare and domestic duties, prominently placed in its 'natural' position – on the **woman's shoulders** – is slowly shifting towards a more liberal and equal division between partners, also engaging the father in taking care of the household and children.

*The importance of traditional values in Latvia is **diminishing**, especially among **younger** residents who are developing more liberal views. [...] During the last 50 years, the number of childless couples has increased and the number of families with 3 children – decreased. (Trapezņikova, 2019, 26.-33. lpp.)*

*Only **14% of respondents with children under 14 have received regular support in childcare from relatives, friends or people living outside their household. during a 12 month period.** (Trapezņikova, 2019, 50. lpp.)*

Despite benefits for the child and woman from the father/partner participating in childrearing and menial household tasks (Bergman & Hobson, 2002; Dunatchik et. al., 2021), there is still **resistance** and a **strong position towards 'traditional' gender roles** in the family – from both men and women.

Par ES direktīvu bērnu kopšanas atvaļinājuma obligātu 2 mēnešu atdošanu tētiem dzimumu vienlīdzības vārdā - varbūt vēl liksiet tētiem bērnu ar krūti zīdīt - vienlīdzības vārdā tā teikt? Citādi mammas vienas cīnās! Vārdu sakot, "līdztiesības" vājprāts iet plašumā...

[Translate Tweet](#)

8:37 PM · Jun 15, 2022 · Twitter Web App

Vīrieša viedoklis. Šī sistēma der labi situetām ģimenēm, kurās jau tagad vīrieši iet pilnajā BKA, jo kundze nestrādā, vai pārtiek no "projektiņiem". Latvijas vīrietis-parastais, aizejot šādā atvaļinājumā, noraus ienākumus, var zaudēt darbu, jo retais DD gaidīs.



Problem and aim of research

In light of the new **EU directive** ([Directive \(EU\) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and careers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU](#)) otherwise known as the **‘daddy quota’**,

the aim of this research is to explore the evidence and influence of the ‘intensive mothering’ discourse on the argumentation pro and against fathers/partners taking ‘obligatory’ parental leave to stay at home with their children for 2 months.

Critique in parenting forums? Parents have been ‘warned’ since autumn, 2021? (LSM, 2022)

Research questions:

- What are the **main arguments against or reservations about the the new directive** and individual entitlement towards parental leave?
- In what forms is the **‘intensive mothering’ discourse** visible in the arguments against the ‘daddy quota’?



niipa @niipaz · 2011

Es nesaprotu to vezumu (mājas ,bērna), kas tieši tur jāvelk? Izaudzināju savus divus (šobrīd pusaudži) un tā arī nesapratu par ko sievietes tā čikst? Tieši kas ir grūti? Ūdens no akas jāstiepj un uz plīts jāsilda? Cūka vai vista pašām jānokauj? Autiņi jāmazgā? Kartupeļi jārok?



1



Ikdienu ar bērnu pilnā krāšņumā- un ko tad tam tētim? Pupu dot bērnam? Traukus mazgāt? Dupsi mazgāt? Ļaujiet vīrietim būt vīrietim. Vīrietis nodrošina ģimeni šajā laikā un tas ļauj viņam justies gan kā vecim, gan kā tētim. Viņiem tas ir svarīgi!



1

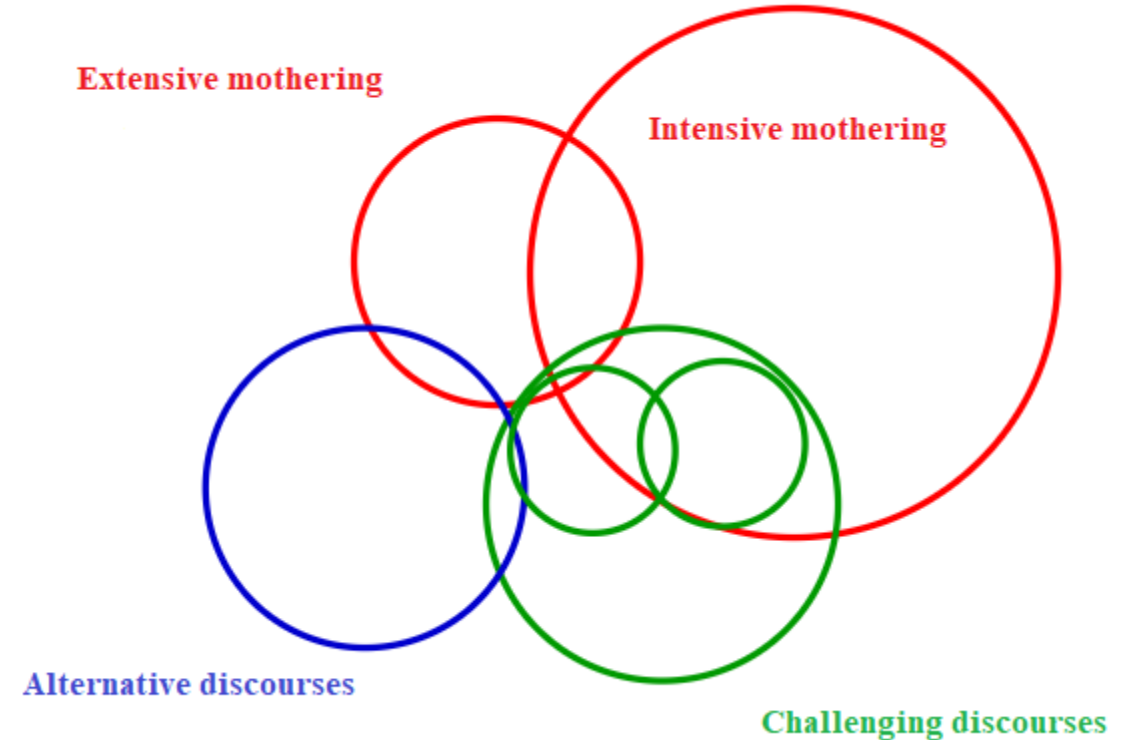


'Intensive mothering'

Dominant discourse in 21st century supports '**intensive mothering**' that provides guidelines for preferable actions, as well as emotions that a mother should express (Hays, 1996; Hallstein, 2006, pp. 97-100; Murray, Finn, 2012, p. 56); *new-momism* (Douglas, Michaels 2004)

'Correct' mothering implies **forever loving affections towards the child**, automatically classifying their struggles with tasks of motherhood and other emotions, including sadness, fear or anger, as inappropriate (Murray, Finn, 2012, p. 56); total satisfaction with the mother's role (Orton-Johnson 2017;)

The mother is «**entirely responsible** for the social, psychological and cognitive well-being of her children» (Feasey, 2017; Budds, Hogg, et al., 2017).



'Intensive mothering'

'Intensive mothering'

insists that parents, especially **mothers invest** «**more than usual amounts of physical and emotional energy into specific activities and practices with children**», as well as put their own needs and interests last or take upon «**enormous risks**» (Das, 2019, p. 499); «investment parenting» (Steiner, Bronstein, 2017, p. 63-64)

reinforces **traditional gender norms**, even idealizes them (Schoppe-Sullivan, Yavorsky, Bartholomew et al., 2017), supports the «**pro-natalist**» position and **medicalisation** or motherhood experience (Tiidenberg, Baym, 2017)

conflicts with paid employment (Dow, 2016)

keeps women from «sharing their experiences of dissatisfaction with the transition to motherhood», as well might prevent women from seeking help when they need it as they try to maintain a good 'mother face' (Cronin-Fisher & Sahlstein Parcel, 2019)

«**Second-shift**» (Hochschild, Machung, 1989) still a reality:

Even when working equal hours as men, women spend on average 12 hours per week more doing unpaid housework (Belle, 2016)

68% of respondents in Latvia **feel that women can take care of children** better than men (Trapeznikova, 2019, p. 47)



Research design

Thematic analysis of comments in the most popular *Facebook* group for parents in Latvia (*Atsaucīgo māmiņu forums*) in the last 9 months

-> *bērnu kopšanas atvaļinājums tēvam*

- 2022 – 30 posts, 3 about the new EU directive/theme
- 2021 – 47 posts, 3 about the new EU directive/theme

-> *tēvu*

- 2022 – 97 posts, 3 about the new EU directive/theme
- 2021 – 100 posts, 1 about the new EU directive/theme

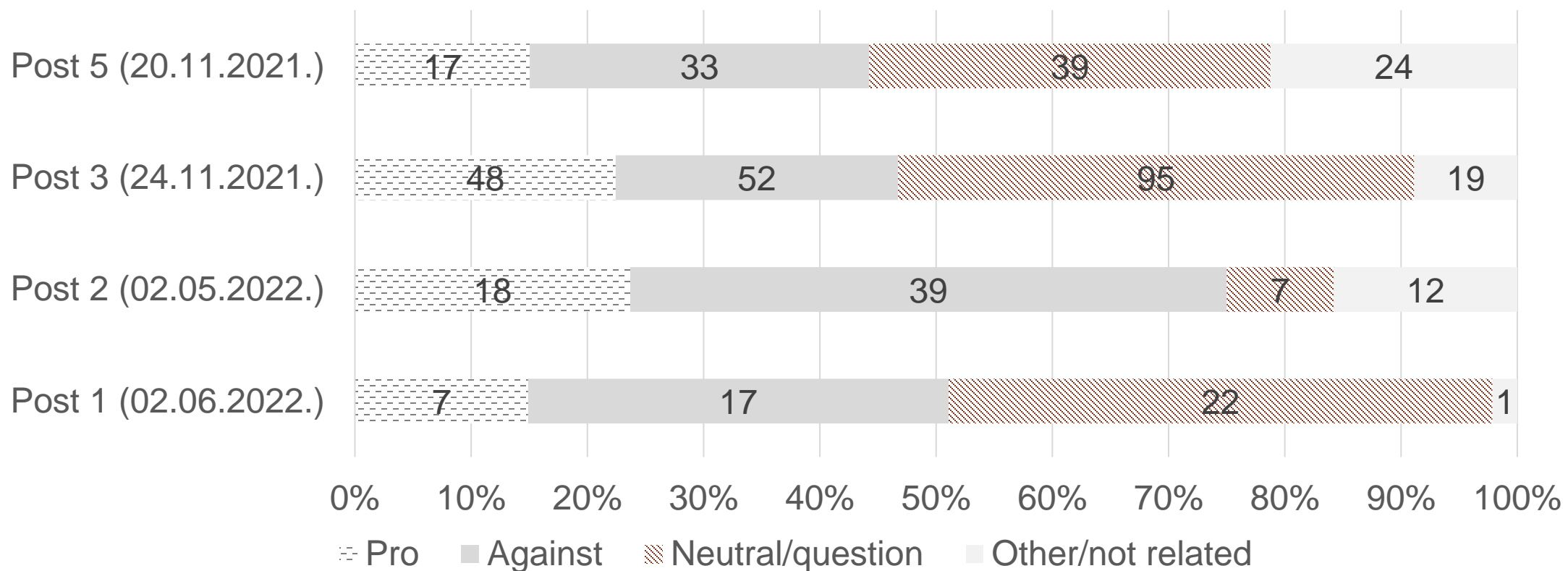
Quantitative content analysis: articles **Delfi.lv**

Quantitative content analysis: articles **Mammamunteti.lv**

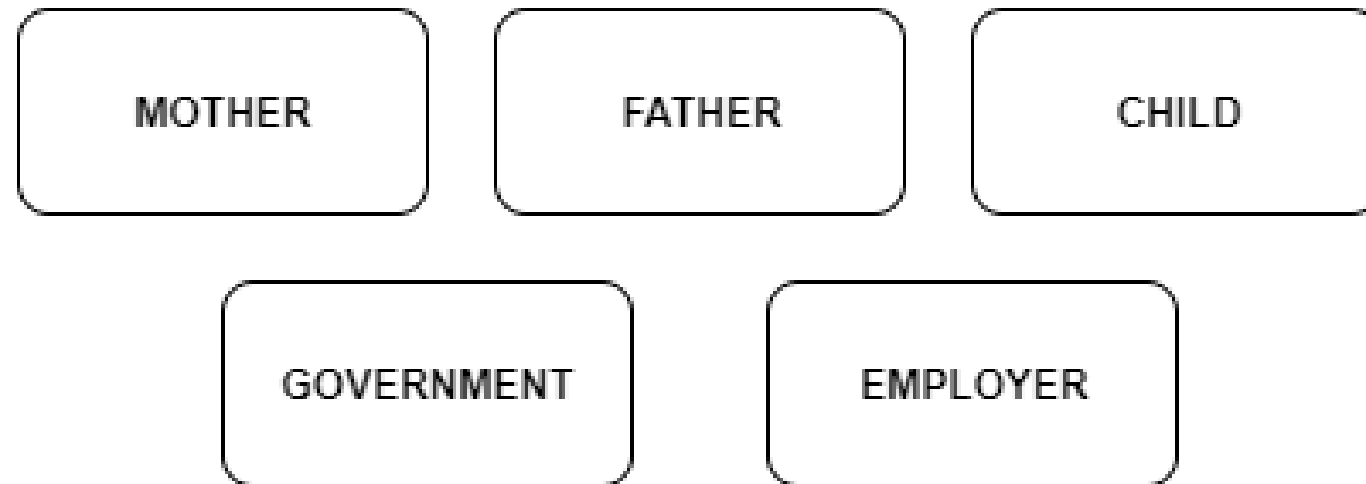


Results

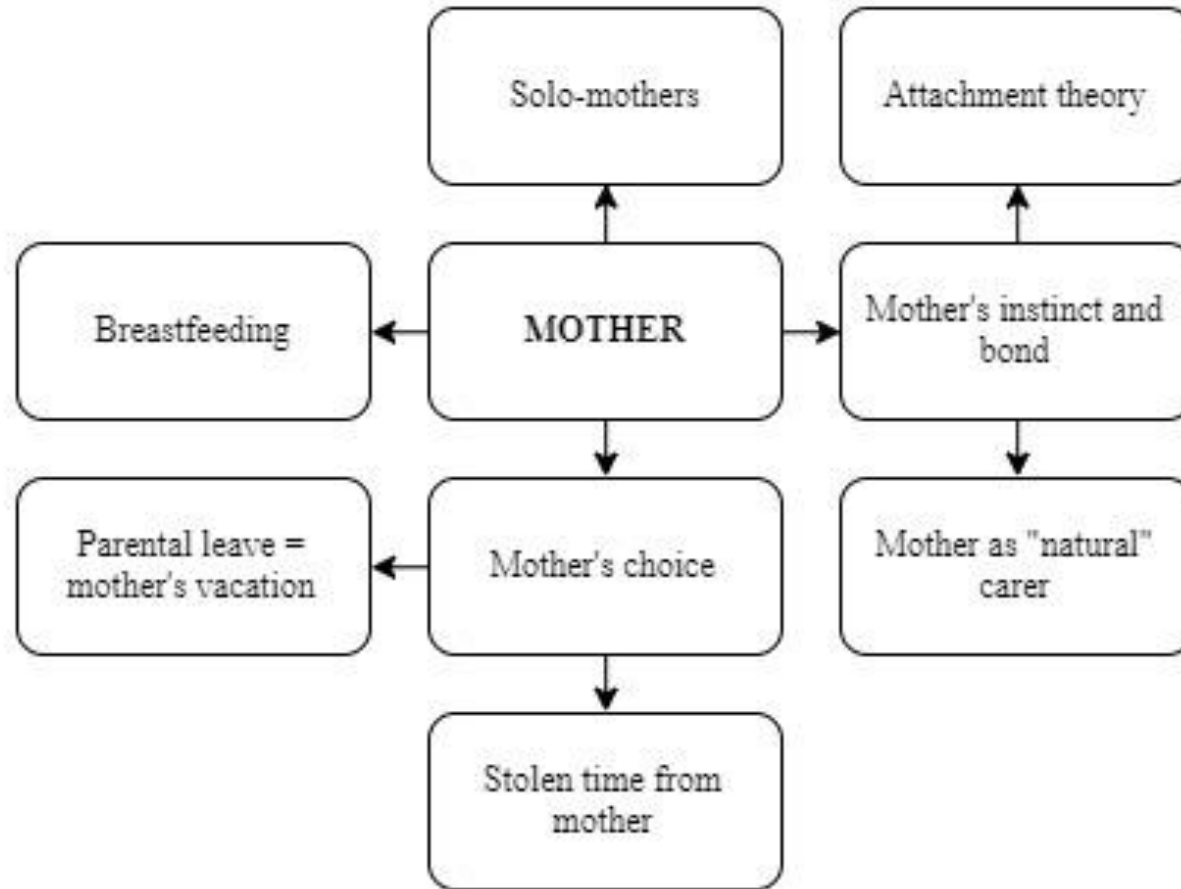
Figure 1. Sentiment expressed in Facebook comments in regard to non-transferrable leave



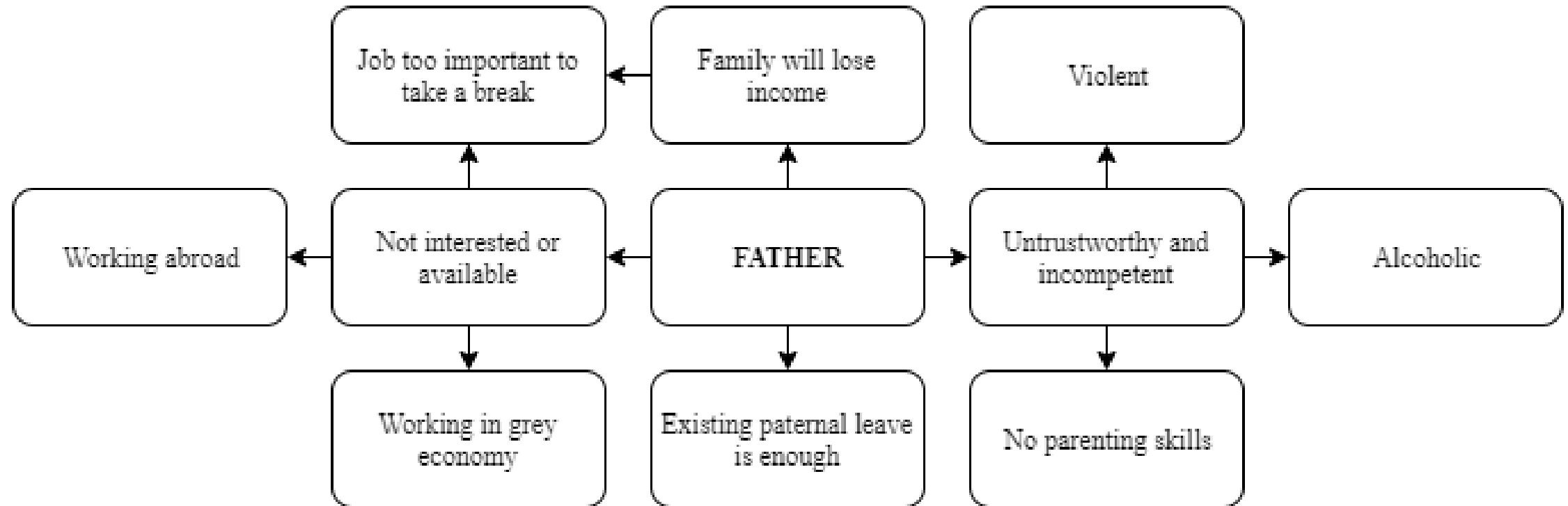
Results



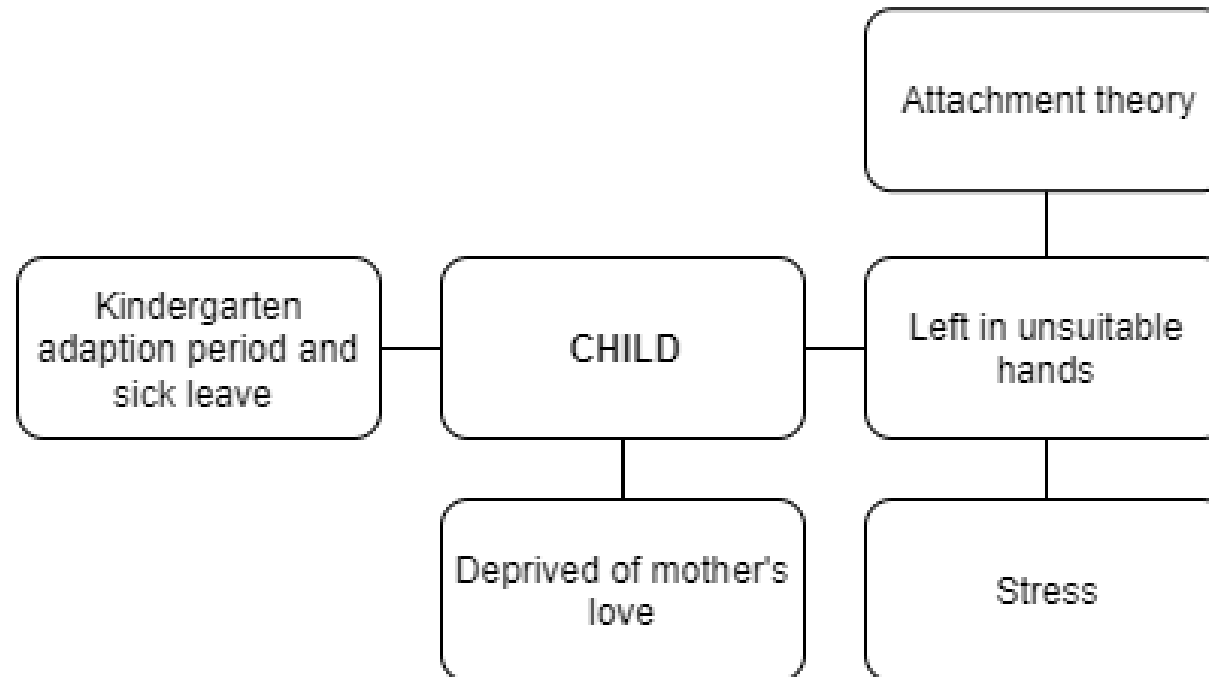
Results



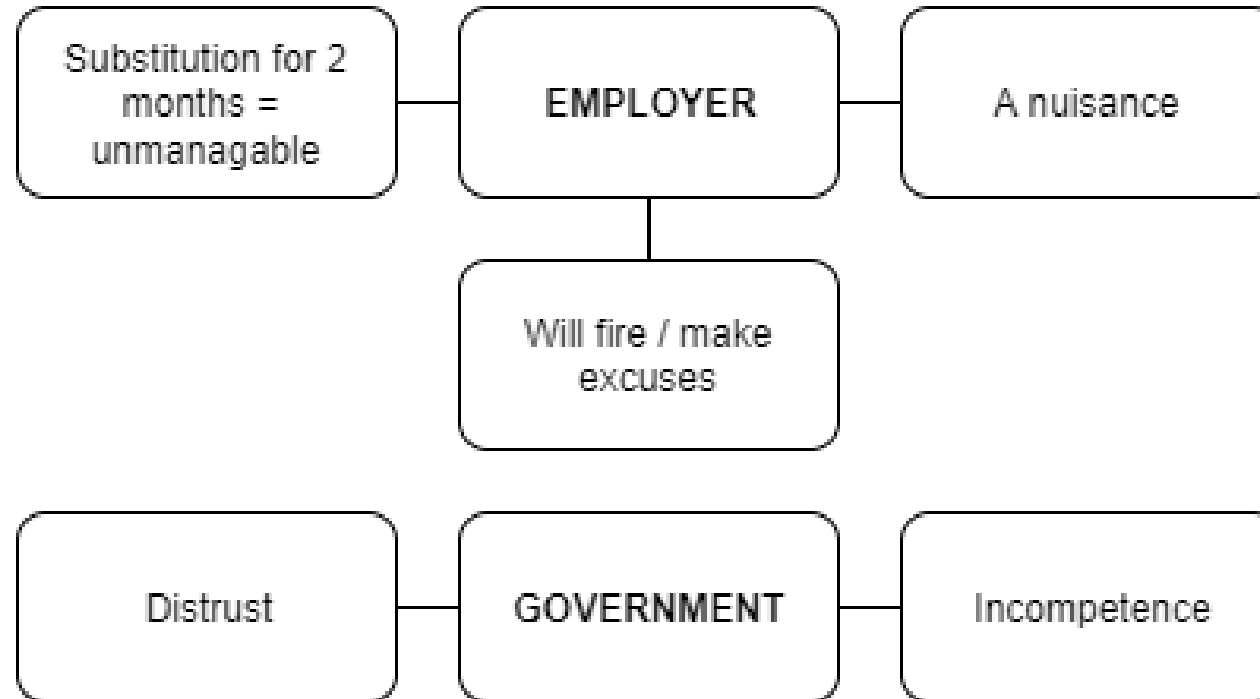
Results



Results



Results



Results

A quantitative assessment on whether the theme of changes in regulation regarding parental leave and, particularly, the non-transferable 2 months, has appeared in mass media was carried out through content analysis – **Delfi** and **Mammāmntētiem**

In the period of 9 months:

- Mammāmntētiem.lv:
 - the keyword “father” (tēvs) appears in 25 articles, which focus on a variety of themes from single parenthood to the role of father in the family, as well as child custody debates and abuse; only 2 articles mention paternity leave.
 - the keyword “parental leave” (bērna kopšanas atvaļinājums) appears in 51 items, of which 9 mention the changes in regulation regarding the non-transferable months
- Delfi.lv:
 - the keyword “father” is in 26 articles, none of which only inform about changes in parental leave, but mainly discuss issues with child custody, alcoholism or tabloid scandals.,
 - The keyword “parental leave” appears in 35 items, of which 5 mention the changes in regulation regarding the non-transferable months.

Discussion and conclusion

Directive passed in 2019 – **lack of communication** since then

‘Obligatory’ parental leave vs.

- *two months the **minimum period of parental leave** which cannot be transferred from one parent to the other* (DIRECTIVE (EU) 2019/1158 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL)
- **individual entitlement** (van Belle, 2016)

Benefits to child, work-life balance, equality etc. other issues – **unrecognized**

Confusion – fear, distrust and anger / disinformation and conspiracy theories

‘Intensive mothering’ discourse – present:

- Mother is more suited with childcare than father – bond, attachment, instinct
- Mother’s choice – *family should be left to decide*
- Father’s role as a breadwinner, not babysitter

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Thank you!



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