

CHANGING REPRESENTATIONS OF MOTHERHOOD & FATHERHOOD IN GERMANY'S MEDIA

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APPARENT

International and national studies of norms
and gender division of work at the life course
transition to parenthood

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Changing forms of parenthood

- Puzzle:
 - Couples start egalitarian, but traditionalize in dividing paid and unpaid work over time - especially after the birth of the 1. child (Grunow et al. 2007; Bühlman et al. 2010; Menz 2011; Grunow 2013a; Grunow 2013b; Dechant/Schulz 2014)
 - New forms of parenthood emerging:
 - Intensive Motherhood (Hays 1996)
 - New Momism (Douglas/Michaels, 2004)
 - Helicopter Parenting (Lareau, 2003)
 - New Fathers (Hobson and Morgan, 2002)
- All Forms of intensive parenting (Faircloth 2014)

Changing forms of parenthood

- Intensive parenting is ...
 - ... important 'cultural script' or 'ideal'
 - ... it emerged 'from below', from parents themselves as a product of cultural developments and influences at the level of expertise, policy and intergenerational transmission (Faircloth 2014)
- Gap: Role of media – especially newspaper articles as part of everyday life, available to everybody at all times

Literature review: Parents in media

- Little research on how parents, mothers and fathers are depicted in newspaper media
- Research focuses often on ,deviant‘ parents
 - Older mothers (Shaw/Giles 2009; also Budds et al. 2012)
 - Incarcerated parents (Umamaheswar 2013)
 - Infanticide (Barnett 2006, Nikunen 2006)

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 - Infanticide (Barnett 2006, Nikunen 2006)
- Usually small number of articles because of qualitative analysis for highly specific research questions
- Mostly focuses on special issues
- creates potential bias

Why does the project matter?

- Media and reality:
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 - Media is one of the places where Gender is constructed
 - Traditional portrayals dominate – especially of women (Litosseliti 2006)
- Media and influence:
 - Discourses help to understand and respond to a phenomenon
 - Ressource for parents to shape their image of what a good parent is, how a mother or father should behave (Francis-Connolly 2003)
 - Newspapers in the ‘quality press’ group aim at being a source of trustworthy information (Jallinoja 2005)

Guiding Questions

- RQ: What does the discourse about parenthood, motherhood and fatherhood in newspaper media look like? What are prevailing topics in newspaper articles about parenthood, motherhood and fatherhood?

Data preparation and method

Preparing the data

“Most content analyses start with data that are not intended to be analyzed to answer specific research questions.” (Krippendorff 2004: 30).

- Sample

- Süddeutsche Zeitung
 - High quality
 - High circulation
 - Nationwide available
 - Position: Center-left
- Articles from January 1994 until December 2015
- Strategy of relevance sampling (Krippendorff 2004)
- Articles on topics about motherhood, fatherhood and parenthood
- Access through *Nexis*

Preparing the data

Year	Count of Articles on parenthood 1994-2015 (Sample)
1994	5897
1995	6396
1996	5760
1997	6808
1998	9609
1999	6638
2000	6264
2001	8637
2002	5140
2003	4455
2004	5489
2005	5541
2006	18730
2007	15176
2008	17920
2009	20493
2010	20618
2011	20396
2012	21004
2013	20021
2014	19272
2015	19214

Too many articles
for a content
analysis by hand

...

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Method

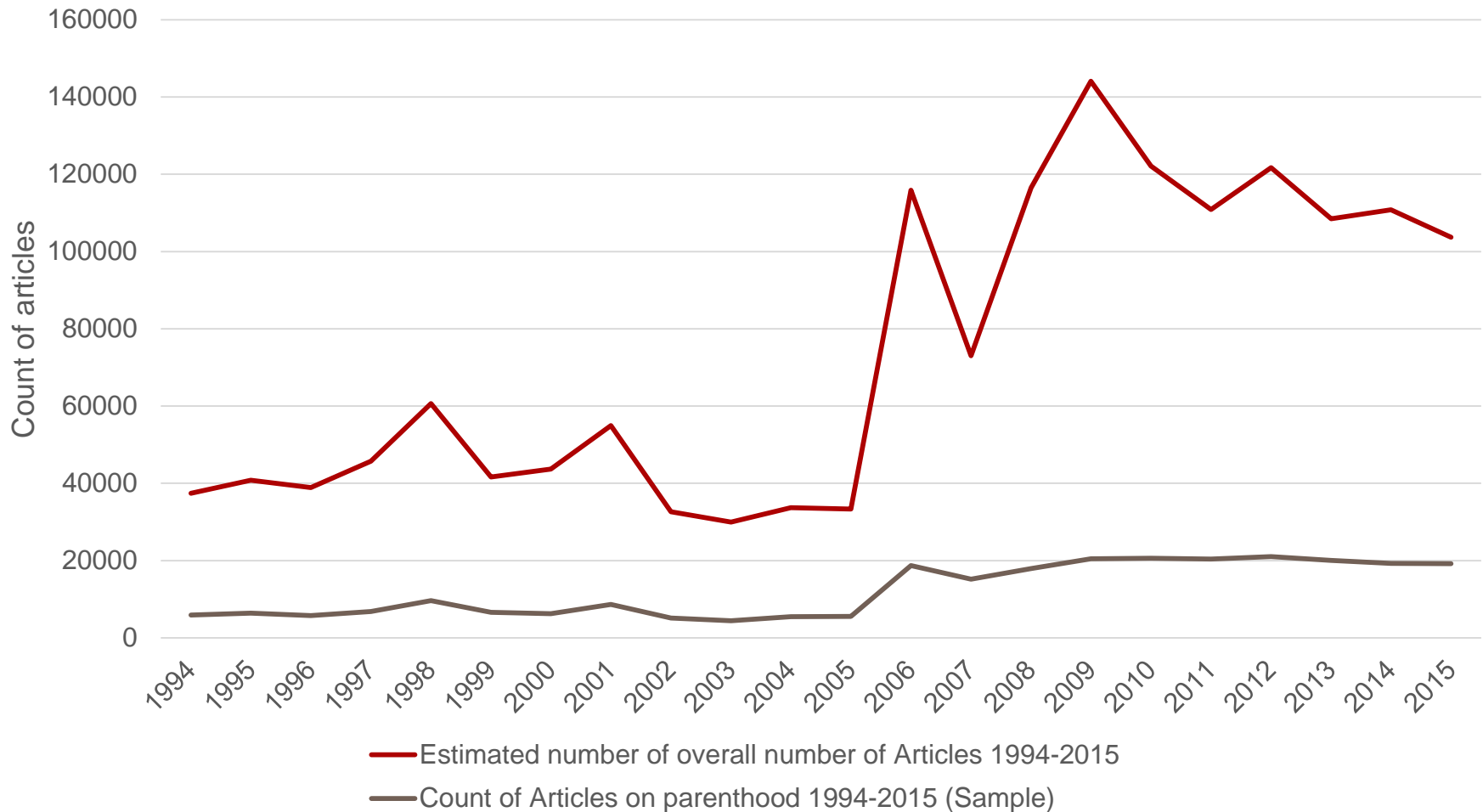
- Text Mining

- Computer based methods to help structure big numbers of text through automated or semi-automated methods
 - Extract information from (unstructured) data (Heyer 2006)
- Frequency counts
- Co-occurrence-Analysis

First Findings

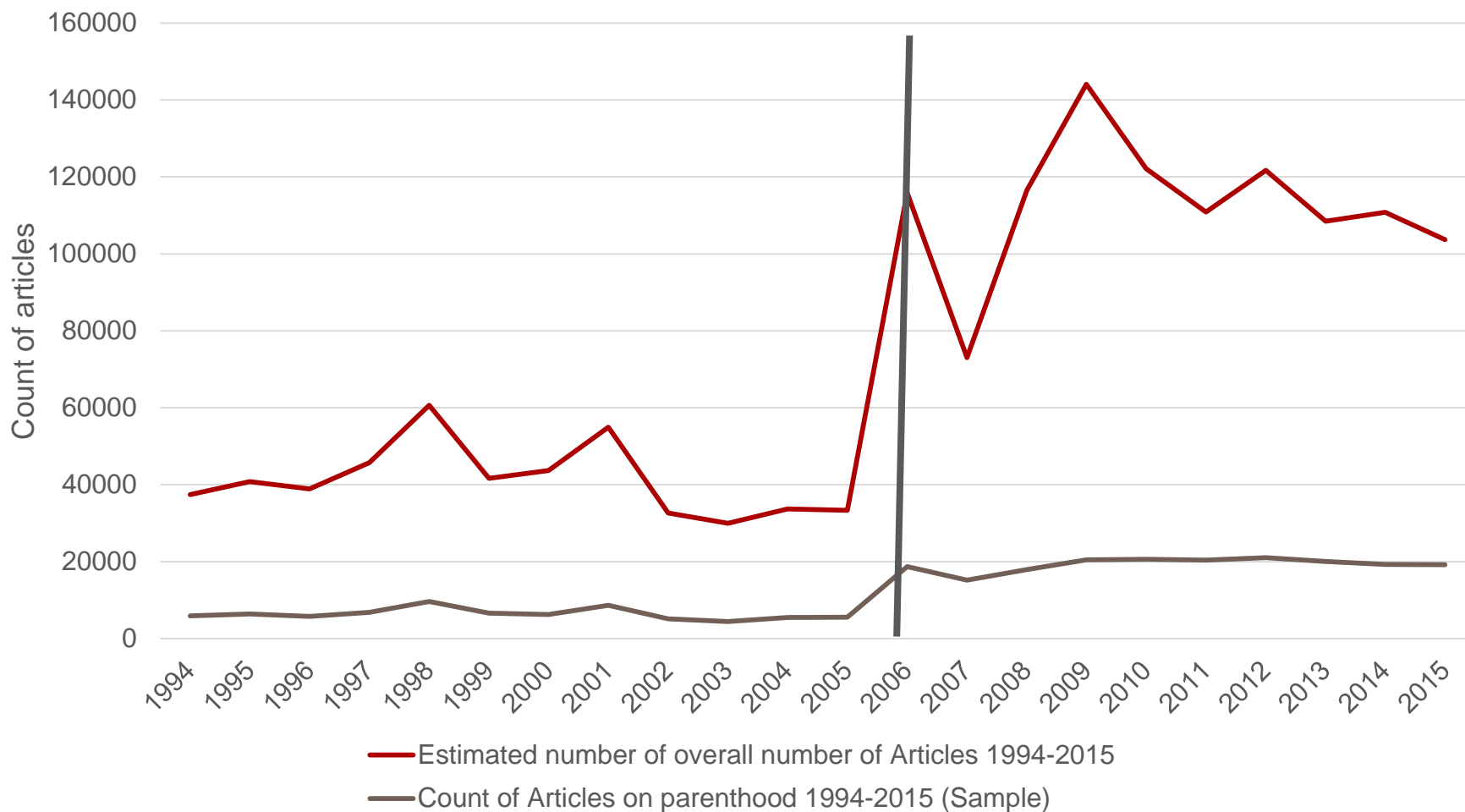
Change of discourse

Articles on parenthood as share of total number of articles in SZ



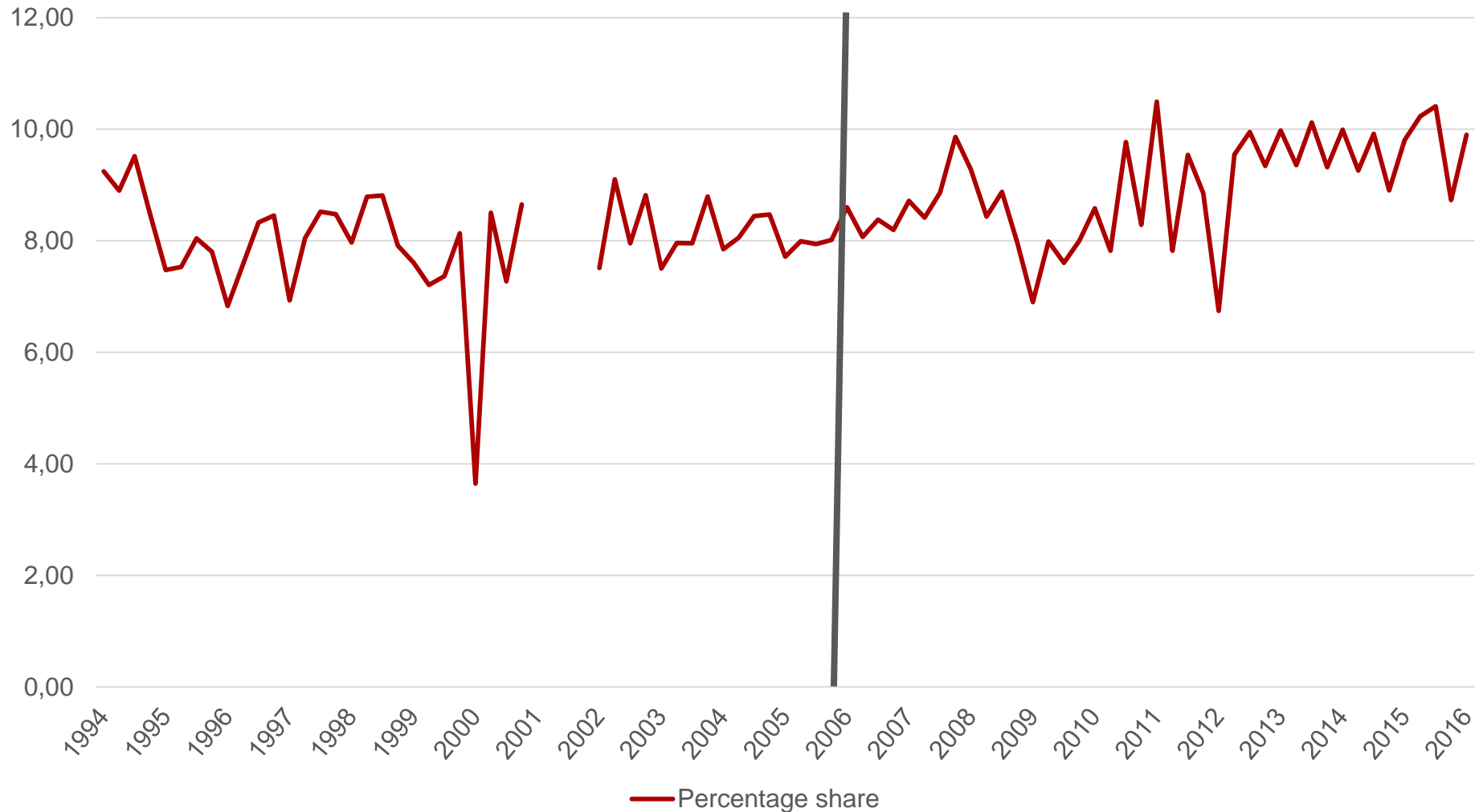
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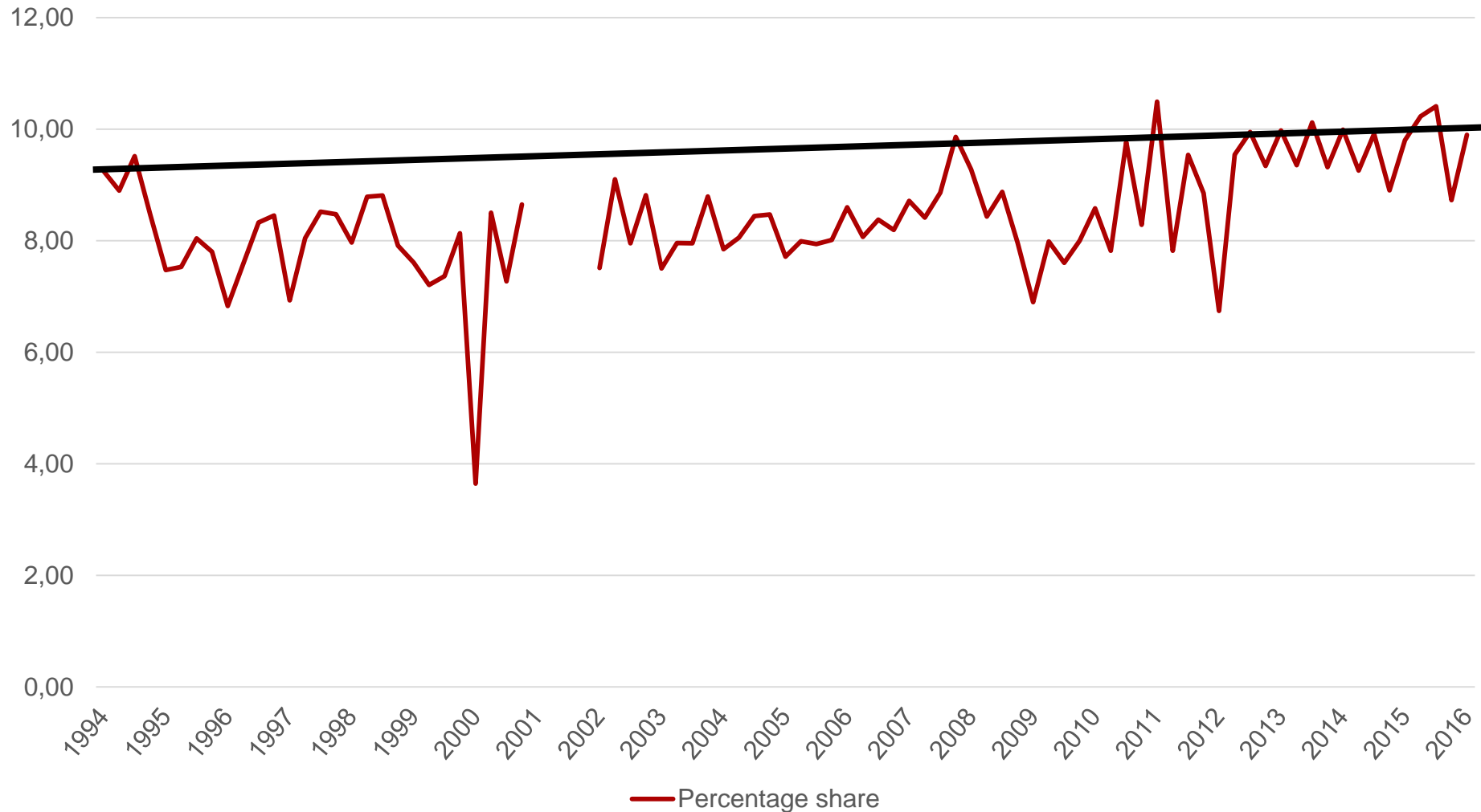
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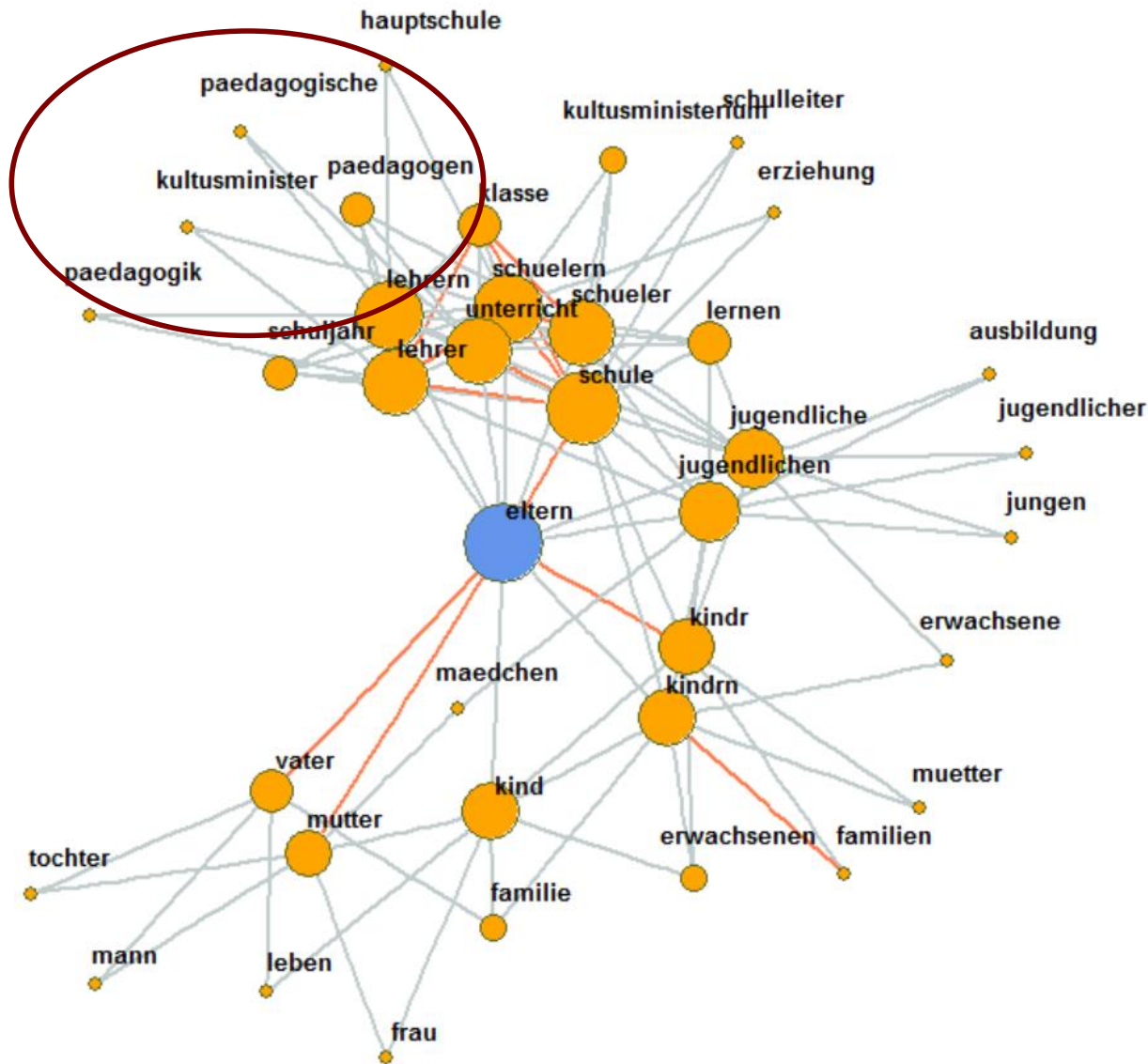


Change of discourse

Articles on parenthood as share of total number of articles in SZ



Change of Topics: Co-Occurrences



Co-Occurrence for
'parents'
1994

Limitations/Conclusion

- Analysis only scratches surface, need for deeper analysis in future
- What vs. why
- Very slight rise in the discourse on ,parenthood‘
- Change in words: Using ,parents‘ instead of ,mother‘ and ,father‘
- Co-occurrences show topics like ,school‘ and ,family‘ stay over time, but new topics emerge

Next Steps

- Split up articles for mothers, fathers and parents to analyze separately
- More dynamic approaches
- Topic modeling
- Supervised machine learning



THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION!

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