THE CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR PARENTS ARE MACHINES/TOOLS: ON MACHINES/TOOLS-RELATED TERMS USED FIGURATIVELY FOR TYPES OF PARENTING

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to propose an analysis of English machines/tools-related terms used figuratively with reference to types of parenting. Specifically, an attempt is made to investigate the scope of the conceptual metaphor PARENTS ARE MACHINES/TOOLS. What ignited our interest was the ubiquity of linguistic metaphors featuring machine terms employed with reference to types of parenting present in everyday language. This initial stimulus has led to the investigation of types of machines employed as typical source domains in the metaphors of this type. A cursory glance at the frequency of linguistic data provided by the Google search engine shows that among the most productive machine-based terms used for types of parenting one may find, among others, *drone parenting* (41 800 000 hits), *helicopter parenting* (15 700 000 hits), *lawnmower parenting* (6 300 000 hits), *bulldozer parenting* (6 140 000 hits), *snowplow parenting* (1 090 000 hits). In the paper, we try to answer the question of why particular machine/tool terms, and not others, are used as possible source domains and why they are so commonly employed in English. Our results, which are also supported by evidence from online corpora (*Corpus of Contemporary American English* and *News on the Web Corpus*), may be said to corroborate not only the conceptual nature of metaphors as such but also their impact on social cognition. The methodology adopted is the Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed originally by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, which evolved in a number of later publications, especially those by Zoltán Kövecses.

Keywords: Metaphor; mapping; parents; machines; Great Chain of Being.

1. Introduction

The behavior of many mothers and/or fathers may be compared to various properties of inanimate entities. The correspondences between human beings (in

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this case parents) and inorganic things may be couched in terms of the HUMANS ARE MACHINES metaphor. Therefore, in this article we investigate the connection between parenthood and machines. To be more precise, our chief goal is to show a coherent linguistic picture of terms, whose senses are connected with parenthood (*helicopter parent, lawnmower parent, bulldozer parent, snowplow parent* and *drone parent*), but were – in fact – inspired by objects. Interestingly, the choice of these objects implies that parents are equated with machines which have very specific and practical purposes, namely either monitoring, clearing a path or eliminating impediments. The analysis is based on the corpus extracted from *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/types-of-parents-meanings/dolphin-jellyfish-parent), where the readers of the section "Words at Play" are provided with basic information connected with, for example, the emergence of new lexical items.

Naturally, our analysis is only a fraction of what may be said about parenting, which itself is a broad and complex notion. In what follows, we shall prove that the invention of the above-mentioned terms was by no means an accidental activity. From the psychological viewpoint, all these expressions allude to an extreme level of protection and control, therefore we may talk about the overparenting phenomenon. What all the lexical items under scrutiny have in common is that they were coined as late as in the 20th century as the upshot of a number of cultural shifts that happened in the 1980s. It is worth mentioning that the metaphorical expressions under scrutiny are part of the informal register, thus the definitions and descriptions are taken from parenting blogs and magazines. In fact, apart from the machine-based types of parenting, one may also encounter a handful of animal-oriented types of parenting, namely *tiger mother/parent, elephant mother/parent, dolphin mother/parent* or *jellyfish mother/parent* which instantiate the PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS conceptual metaphor. However, in this paper we deliberately ignore them due to the length limitations. The PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS metaphor illustrated by relevant linguistic terms used figuratively for types of parenting is discussed in Kiełtyka & Grząśko (2024)". As far as the PEOPLE ARE MACHINES metaphor is concerned, let us refer to the work of, for instance, Lakoff & Turner (1989: 132) but also the research by Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 28), and Kövecses (2002: 127), who discusses an instantiation of the above metaphor verbalized as the MIND IS A MACHINE metaphor. The evidence provided in the literature of the subject enables one to venture a claim that the conceptual metaphor HUMAN BEING IS A MACHINE seems to be productive not only in English but also in other languages. Grząśko & Kiełtyka (2021: 27) emphasize the fact that "there is a great deal of convincing evidence (e.g., *"You need to upgrade your brain", "Hack your life!"*) that human bodies are frequently conceptualized as machines (e.g. HUMAN BRAIN IS A COMPUTER, COMPUTER OPERATIONS ARE MENTAL OPERATIONS)

where things/parts/elements can be broken, upgraded, hacked, or fixed, and a human body as such can be viewed as being in or out of balance".

2. The theoretical apparatus

The theoretical approach adopted in this paper is Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which evolved and was modified in, among others, such publications as Johnson (1987), Lakoff (1987, 1993, 2008), Grady (1997), Lakoff & Johnson (1999), Goatly (2008), Kövecses (2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2017a, 2017b), and Low et al. (2010). In this account, we rely on a definition proposed by Kövecses (2015: ix) according to whom, "conceptual metaphors consist of sets of systematic correspondences, or mappings between two domains of experience and […] the meaning of a particular metaphorical expression realizing an underlying conceptual metaphor is based on such correspondences". What follows from this definition is that conceptual metaphors stand in opposition to metaphorical linguistic expressions in that the latter embody and make manifest the former. As far as the internal structure of conceptual metaphors is concerned, they contain two domains of experience, the source and target domains.

The undeniable utility of this approach to metaphor amounts to the fact that it enables one to elucidate complex or abstract entities, such as time or life, by referring to their less complex and abstract counterparts, because conceptual metaphor helps to organize and structure the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar and the unknown in terms of the known. For example, in the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, the more complex target domain of life is accounted for by reference to the source domain of JOURNEY, while in the conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY, the abstract target domain of time is couched and understood in terms of the more material source domain of MONEY. In particular, such linguistic expressions as *This relationship seems to be going nowhere* and *He invested all his time in his family matters*, which are manifestations of the conceptual metaphors LIFE IS A JOURNEY and TIME IS MONEY, respectively, embody mappings between the source and the target domains. However, as argued by Al-Azary, Gagné & Spalding (2020)[2], there is also a group of conceptual metaphors in which target domains are concrete. Such metaphors are relatively infrequent, but the HUMANS ARE MACHINES metaphor may be perceived as a relevant case in point. The domain of HUMANS and their behavior (parenting styles) is both concrete and observable and it can

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[2]   On the basis of LIGHTS IS A FLUID metaphor, Al-Azary, Gagné & Spalding (2020: 206) show that "concrete conceptual metaphors often result in lexicalized compound words rather than expressions".

be described by the concrete domain of MACHINES, which are concrete and observable too.

In short, we may speak about two types of mappings: abstract-concrete (as in LIFE IS JOURNEY metaphor, TIME IS MONEY metaphor) and concrete-concrete (as in PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS metaphor, HUMANS ARE MACHINES metaphor or LIGHT IS A FLUID metaphor). The former mappings are likely to be crystalized in common sentence expressions, whereas the latter ones result in metaphorical compounds necessary for referential communication (Al-Azary, Gagné & Spalding 2020).

Gibbs (2017) claims that there are some source domains which may be perceived as more metaphorical than previously thought. We may put forward a hypothesis that HUMANS ARE MACHINES metaphor corroborates this statement, because MACHINES are not as embodied as the target domain.

In the following sections of this paper, mappings between the source domain of MACHINES/TOOLS and the target domain of PARENTS are thoroughly investigated. However, before details of these correspondences are given due attention, let us proceed to a discussion of one of the types of metaphor, one that is part and parcel of what is called the Great Chain of Being and which is termed in the literature of the subject as a dehumanizing metaphor.

2.1 Dehumanizing metaphor

There are many shades of dehumanization. It may affect various groups of people and may be based on gender, sexuality, marital status, disability, race, to name but a few. What all these groups have in common is that at least some of their members have been objectified and treated unfairly. Human beings show a marked tendency to use figurative expressions, especially those connected with inanimate imagery or the realm of animals, with reference to these groups in order to downgrade and belittle them. The primary goal of the dehumanizing metaphor is to control and manipulate people in order to wield an influence on their vantage point (see, inter alia, Haslam 2006; Harris & Fiske 2007; Costello 2012; Costello & Hodson 2014; Yancey 2014; Prażmo 2019).

Human beings tend to believe in their superiority over other species, which is connected with their privileged position in the Great Chain of Being. From the hierarchical point of view, humans are situated in the very middle of it, yielding to God positioned at the top and angels below him. Given that the fauna, flora, and inanimate entities are placed lower than humans, it makes them inferior – at least theoretically – to the human race (see Krzeszowski 1997; Lakoff & Turner 1989; Rigato & Minelli 2013). The idea of the Great Chain of Being has its roots in ancient Greek philosophy. As argued by Barcelona (2003: 111), it "is a cultural model defined by attributes and behavior which typically apply to each form of

being (humans, animals, plants, complex objects, and natural physical things) in a hierarchy. (…) The GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor singles out common generic structure from specific concepts. The combination of the two models allows us to understand animal behavior in terms of human character. For example, we believe that lions, like humans, are courageous. The PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS mapping, on the other hand, makes us understand human character in terms of animal behavior".

As a species, human beings take advantage of their supremacy not only with respect to nature, which they tend to destroy but also with respect to other people that they feel superior to. The superiority complex was first characterized by Adler (2001 [1931]) who argued that it is a defense mechanism. To put it simply, the psychologist claimed that those who perceived themselves as superior to others actually were hiding a sense of inferiority. However, that opinion would be a sweeping generalization. The problem of the superiority complex is obviously more elaborate and it should be discussed with reference to a particular case. Take, for example, class/racial/ethnic/gender prejudice, some of which are deeply ingrained in the history/beliefs of a given nation. Moreover, every individual possesses not only his personal identity, but also various social identities which stem from the social groups they belong to (Kudła 2016: 89). As a result, we may argue that apart from our own bias connected with our (low) self-esteem, we may also be the "carriers/vehicles" of the prejudice of the groups we belong to. As observed by Musolff (2012), the IMMIGRANTS ARE PARASITES metaphor serves as an example of disparagement of the Turkish minority living in Germany. In turn, the analyzed dehumanizing metaphor in this paper is verbalized as PARENTS ARE MACHINES/TOOLS. One may argue that comparing parents to inanimate entities is an act of dehumanization and denigration of the targeted group.

Although in this paper a negative view of machines is taken, it is worth mentioning that, as noticed by one of the anonymous reviewers, sometimes a positive view can be expressed as the following examples illustrate: *He's a paper-writing machine*, *She's a walking calculator*, etc. These contexts obviously do not portray the said machines in a negative light, despite the fact that they occupy a lower position in the GCB than the humans they embody. However, all the metaphorical machine-specific contexts examined in the paper display a negative view of the machines discussed.

Let us stress at this juncture that there are also a number of expressions whose aim is to upgrade people by juxtaposing them with animals, for example, the ACHILLES IS A LION metaphor, which focuses on such positively-loaded traits as bravery (Barcelona 2003: 111; Prażmo & Augustyn 2020: 151).

3. Data collection

All the lexical items under scrutiny are relatively recent and many of them have been coined at the beginning of the 20th century. Their frequency of use is supported by the detailed data amassed from two corpora, namely the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (hereinafter referred to as *COCA*) and the *News on the Web* (hereinafter referred to as *NOW Corpus*), juxtaposed against results obtained from the Google search. The results of the query are shown in Table 1. The frequency distribution differences between the data available in the two corpora presented in the table corroborate the fact that in a number of cases the analyzed phrases appear far more frequently in web-based newspapers and magazines contained in the *NOW Corpus* rather than in texts on which the *COCA Corpus* is based (mainly fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, academic texts). However, as shown below, the results obtained from the Google search engine outnumber those obtained from the online corpora we have consulted. Specifically, the most productive machine-based terms employed for types of parenting found in Google search include *drone parenting* (41 800 000 hits), *helicopter parenting* (15 700 000 hits), *lawnmower parenting* (6 300 000 hits), *bulldozer parenting* (6 140 000 hits), *snowplow parenting* (1 090 000 hits).

Table 1. Frequency of occurrence of the analyzed machine-based terms in *COCA*.

Machine term	*Frequency of occurrence in COCA and NOW*
helicopter mother	*1 context (15 in NOW Corpus)*
helicopter parenting	*25 contexts (1079 in NOW Corpus)*
helicopter parents	*76 contexts (1073 in NOW Corpus)*
lawnmower mother	*No matching contexts*
lawnmower parenting	*5 contexts (46 in NOW Corpus)*
lawnmower parents	*1 context (24 in NOW Corpus)*
snowplow mother	*No matching contexts*
snowplow parenting	*2 contexts (29 in NOW Corpus)*
snowplow parents	*6 contexts (30 in NOW Corpus)*
bulldozer mother	*No matching contexts*
bulldozer parenting	*No matching contexts (9 in NOW Corpus)*
bulldozer parents	*3 contexts (19 in NOW Corpus)*
drone mother	*10 contexts (1 in NOW Corpus)*
drone parenting	*No matching contexts (7 in NOW Corpus)*
drone parents	*No matching contexts (5 in NOW Corpus)*

The analyzed lexical items are part of the informal register, thus they may be encountered in online publications, such as newspapers, blogs, or magazines. Given that the terms can hardly be found in dictionaries, both the definitions and the analysis are mainly based on information extracted from various internet sources. In order to search for the definitions and use of the machine-based terms for parenting styles, we have browsed two corpora (*COCA* and *NOW*) as well as a number of magazine and journal articles (e.g. Schiffrin 2014; Marano 2014; Weber 2016), and books devoted to parenting (e.g. Higley 2012; Higley & Lythcott-Haims 2015).

4. Data analysis – findings and discussion

First and foremost, we shall briefly define the broad term *parenting* which is applied with reference to raising children and various activities linked with it, for example supporting a child's emotional and physical development as well as fulfilling their (at least basic) financial needs. It is often our offspring's demeanor that demonstrates whether our decisions and methods (e.g., sheltered upbringing or a permissive approach to parenting) have proved to be successful or – quite the contrary – pernicious.

From the psychological perspective, there have been distinguished three major parenting styles, namely authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive (see Baumrind 1967, 1991, 2012). As far as the authoritative style (a.k.a. nurturant parent model) is concerned, it adverts to demanding and responsive parents. This child-oriented approach revolves around encouraging young people to act independently but, simultaneously, it sets a limit to the offspring's actions (see Santrock 2007). In other words, parents' aim is to be both warm and exacting at the same time in order to strike a balance in rearing children.

In turn, in comparison to the former type of parenthood, authoritarian (a.k.a. strict parent model) style may be labeled as demanding but not responsive. Parents representing this mode of rearing children are restrictive and they opt to punish their progeny. Children must obey the rules and they are given neither explanation nor feedback (see Santrock 2007). However well-intentioned the parents' approach may be, it has a number of drawbacks, especially when one takes into account corporal punishments which do harm to people. Exponents of this style claim that in the long run the approach works to children's benefit as they get accustomed to severe stress, therefore in the future it will be easier for them to cope with aggression from the outside world (see Shaw & Starr 2019).

The permissive (a.k.a. indulgent or non-directive) style of upbringing is responsive but not demanding, thus it is in stark contrast with the authoritarian approach. Permissive methods are characterized by parents' lenient approach to

rearing children. To be more precise, adults seem not to hold high expectations for their children. On the one hand, parents get involved with their offspring's life, but, on the other hand, they do not put forward any demands nor do they control the children (Santrock 2007).

The above-mentioned parenting typology categorized by Baumrind (1967, 1991, 2012) was expanded by Maccoby & Martin (1983), who added one more approach identified as the neglectful one. This mode of upbringing is neither responsive nor demanding. Neglectful parents fail to pay any attention to their children's needs. Young people may do whatever they wish and their parents remain indifferent even if their progeny make a mistake or do harm to someone (Arora 2014). Such parents may be struggling with their own problems, thus they are detached from their offspring's needs.

4.1 Machine-based parenting approaches

The group of terms subject to our analysis, whose senses are connected with parenthood, was inspired by various objects, hence we may refer here to the process of objectification of human beings and, as a result, the working of the dehumanizing factor. In philosophy, the notion in question may be defined as a way of treating people as if they were inanimate objects devoid of opinions, emotions and rights.[3] Interestingly, the terms under scrutiny (*helicopter parent, lawnmower parent, bulldozer parent, snowplow parent, drone parent*) refer to extreme levels of protection and control and all of them result from a few cultural shifts that took place in the mid-1980s and which changed perceptions of parenthood.

As argued by Lythcott-Haims (2015a), in the 1980s one could observe a marked trend towards changing upbringing style. Parents started to be more safety-conscious and academic-achievement-focused. Since the 1980s, children in America have been given various certificates, ribbons, badges or trophies just for participation in a competition. Much was said about missing children, thus people were more and more aware of child abductions. Take, for instance, the case of Adam Walsh abduction in 1981. He was kidnapped from a department store and found dead. The boy's tragic story piqued widespread interest and was made into a film seen by nearly 38 million people in the United States.[4] Moreover, the report *A Nation at Risk*, published in 1983, revealed that in comparison to their peers from other countries, American children had not been doing enough schoolwork. Thus, growing pressure started to be put on education. Another cultural shift that gave rise to new approaches to parenting arose with the advent

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[3]   See Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.).
[4]   See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Adam_Walsh.

of the self-esteem movement, which was a widespread phenomenon in the 1980s. The idea behind it was to prove that self-esteem, and not results, was the main determinant of success (Ripley 2013). The final shift that triggered changes in people's approach to parenthood was connected with the fact that circa 1984 one could observe an increase in the number of mothers entering the workforce, which coincided with the creation of the play-date. It was a useful tool which helped parents with scheduling. Given that more parents were employed, adults started to rely on daycare for children and then it transformed into organized extracurricular activities for teenagers (Lythcott-Haims 2015b).

Having observed the new tendencies, scientists had to define and name new parenting styles that referred to overprotective parents. In fact, the phenomenon of overparenting[5] as one of the approaches towards child rearing has not yet been addressed. Naturally, parenting styles have been constantly changing and evolving. The most widespread term related to the domain of machines is *helicopter parenting* and the other phrases, such as *lawnmower parenting, bulldozer parenting, snowplow parenting* and *drone parenting*, are altered and magnified versions of it. It was the media that took an interest in intensive parenting, which was caused by, for example, scandals connected with famous celebrities in the United States (BBC News 2019).

In cognitive terms, in this case it is the domain of INANIMATE OBJECTS and, in particular, the subdomain MACHINES that may be said to be the source domain, whereas the domain of HUMAN BEINGS, or, to be more precise, PARENTS is the target domain. Obviously, machine imagery proves productive in dehumanizing parents who are pictured as contrivances whose work is repetitive, schematic and lifeless, which is in opposition to nature and its laws.

Helicopter mother is a term coined by Ginott (1969) quoting a teenage girl who compares her mother to a helicopter constantly hovering over her. Twenty years later Cline & Fay (2006 [1990]) started to employ the term with reference to parents of both sexes. The expression is used to describe adults who are inclined to devote meticulous attention to their children and carry too much responsibility for their offspring's achievements or misfortunes. It turned out, however, that the efforts of parents were counterproductive, because the over-controlled and overprotected young people failed to acquire basic skills that they would find useful in adulthood.

On the one hand, we may enumerate a number of drawbacks of the approach that gained ground in the second half of the 20th century, because children raised by helicopter parents are said to be dependent on their mothers/fathers, which

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5   According to the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), *over-parenting* may be defined as "too much involvement by parents in the lives of their children, so that they try to help with or control everything that happens to the child".

prevents young people from acquiring and developing life skills (e.g. problem solving, decision-making, coping with problems). People shielded from the consequences of their choices are often anxious and have low self-esteem. Moreover, in spite of the fact that the notion is, by and large, employed in a derogatory manner, there are also some advantages of this particular type of upbringing. Children raised by helicopter parents are always prepared for lessons and they fulfill their duties (e.g. they volunteer to perform school functions). Moreover, their parents react when there is a problem with marks, health issues or bullying (Bayless 2019; Morin 2020). In view of the foregoing, one can hardly say whether helicopter parenting does more good or, quite the contrary, harm to our progeny.

   Let us consider five exemplary contexts[6] (out of 1073 detected) obtained from the *NOW* corpus in which the metaphorical use of the term *helicopter parent* has been identified:

1)   "Helicopter parents mostly micromanage their children's lives, controlling and monitoring their every move, often taking it to an extremely inappropriate level. They are ready to swoop in to rescue their children at the slightest obstacle."
       (Extracted from https://unb.com.bd/category/Lifestyle/helicopter-parenting)

2)   "Parents who protect and rescue their kids are a lot like helicopters, which are very noisy and are often used in rescue missions. Helicopter parents make a lot of noise as they rescue their kids from the potential consequences of their actions. The message that helicopter parents send their kids is, 'You aren't able to help yourself, so I need to do things for you.' [Helicopters] hover over and then rescue their children whenever trouble arises."
       (Extracted from: https://www.mamamia.com.au/helicopter-parents-broke-a-generation/)

3)   "Julia Courtenay-Tanner, who has been dealing with ethnic-Chinese Tiger Moms, Cop Moms and Helicopter Parents for three decades, said that it was necessary to devise a course to teach parents some basics of parenting."
       (Extracted from: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/news/)

4)   "Have helicopter parents only begun to be perceived as pathological because it is now common to expect a new degree of distance?"
       (Extracted from: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2155959/)

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[6]   Since these contexts come from the NOW Corpus, the URLs provided next to individual excerpts are not repeated in the References, as the corpus itself is treated as the primary source for the quoted evidence.

5) "Observers say the cancellation is a prime example of so-called "helicopter parents" – those who hover over their children and are involved in every aspect of their children's lives."
(Extracted from:https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2012/03/26/easter_)

The analysis of the contexts provided by the corpus shows that the term *helicopter parents* is a frequently used metaphorical expression (1073 cases detected). It appears both in Asian online press articles (e.g. The Times of India https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/, United News of Bangladesh https://unb.com.bd/) and western newspaper and magazine websites such as Mamamia https://www.mamamia.com.au/, Mail Online https://www.dailymail.co.uk/, Toronto Star https://www.thestar.com/.

Additionally, it is important to note that the concept of helicopter parenting is not only used in media sources but also in many peer-reviewed studies in psychology and education journals. The following article titles quoted from relevant psychology- and education-oriented journals testify to this claim:

1) "Does 'hovering' matter? Helicopter parenting and its effect on well-being" in Sociological Spectrum (see LeMoyne & Buchanan 2011)
2) "Black hawk down?: Establishing helicopter parenting as a distinct construct from other forms of parental control during emerging adulthood" in Journal of Adolescence (see Padilla-Walker & Nelson 2012)
3) "Helicopter parents: An examination of the correlates of over-parenting of college students" in Education and Training (see Bradley-Geist & Olson-Buchanan 2014)
4) "Investigating helicopter parenting, family environments, and relational outcomes for millennials" in Communication Studies (see Odenweller, Booth-Butterfield & Weber 2014)
5) "Helicopter parenting: The effect of an overbearing caregiving style on peer attachment and self-efficacy" in Journal of College Counseling (see Van Ingen et al. 2015)
6) "Parental monitoring and helicopter parenting relevant to vocational students' procrastination and self-regulated learning" in Learning and Individual Differences (see Hong et al. 2015)
7) "Helicopter parenting emerging adulthood: Support or barrier for Korean college students' psychological adjustment?" in Journal of Child and Family Studies (see Kwon, Yoo & Bingham 2016)
8) "The relationship between helicopter parenting and adjustment to college" in Journal of Child and Family Studies (see Darlow, Norvilitis & Schuetze 2017)
9) "Helicopter parenting, authenticity, and depressive symptoms: a mediation model" in Journal of Genetic Psychology: Research and Theory on Human

Development (see Turner, Faulk & Garner 2020)

10) "A systematic review of 'helicopter parenting' and its relationship with anxiety and depression" in Frontiers in Psychology (see Vigdal & Brønnick 2022)

As the evidence collected clearly illustrates, not only is the term *helicopter parenting* mentioned in relevant psychological and educational scholarship, but the concept is subject to extensive investigation. For instance, Vigdal & Brønnick (2022) conducted a systematic review to identify all studies where the relationship between helicopter parenting and symptoms of anxiety and/or depression has been investigated.

All things considered, the motivation for the rise of the term in question seems to stem from the PROTECTIVE AND VIGILANT PARENTS ARE HELICOPTERS metaphor which is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. PROTECTIVE AND VIGILANT PARENTS ARE HELICOPTERS metaphor.

Source domain: HELICOPTERS	Target domain: PROTECTIVE PARENTS
considerable size	parents' protection is perceptible by children/considerable amount of parental protection
hover over a given object	observe their children
monitor a given object	control their children

From the cognitive approach perspective, referring to the helicopter mode of parenthood may be said to be another case of using a concealing mechanism to talk about a specific method of rearing children. We may say that the conceptual domain HELICOPTERS presupposes entailments such as VIGILANT or WATCHFUL, which allow us to propound the PROTECTIVE AND VIGILANT PARENTS ARE HELICOPTERS metaphor. The motivation behind the figurative development of the recently coined term *helicopter parenting* seems to be connected with the fact that parents cannot stop themselves from controlling, protecting and observing their offspring. Adults become machines whose aim is performing some tasks rather than focusing on their children's emotions and feelings.

As argued by Bayless (2019), parents hover over their children like helicopters, which is tantamount to observing youngsters, because of the

following reasons: adults think that if a child fails, they are partially responsible for that failure – if they had helped them, minors would not have suffered adverse consequences of their decisions; grown-ups are also more experienced, thus they are aware of the intricacies of, for example, the job market; parents want to protect children and give them the best pieces of advice; another reason is connected with pressure exerted by peers' parents who also try their utmost to help their offspring; last but not least, adults may want to provide their children with what (e.g. help and attention) they themselves were not given in the past. Consider the following quotations extracted from the Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.):

> 1989 Frederick (Maryland) *News-Post* 6 Sept. B1/4 But don't be what Mr. Radovich calls 'a helicopter parent', who hovers over children, making sure everything is done for them.
> 2006 *Times* (Nexis) 12 Sept. 4 Helicopter parents think that they are helping and protecting their child by doing their homework.

Lawnmower parenting is a recent term that adverts to officious and domineering mothers/fathers unduly engaged in their children's lives. The derogatory term was couched in response to a bribery scandal which unfolded in 2019 when it was brought to light that famous American actresses were accused of having performed illegal actions in order to help their children get into college (Lascala 2019; Garrity 2019).

Lawnmower parents do everything to prevent their progeny from making mistakes. Mothers/fathers "mow" impediments and obstacles out of the way and thus a child may tread a clear path to success. Such parents play an active role in their offspring's education, e.g. adults attempt to force teachers to give their progeny better grades, parents have increased expectations of school personnel, mothers/fathers ask lecturers to extend deadlines and adults may even resort to bribery if they want their child to be admitted to colleges (Gordon 2021). The notion of *lawnmower parenting* is discussed and exemplified in the Merriam Webster dictionary (n.d.) in the following way:

> Everyone has a lawnmower parent moment to share, Hannah Hudson, WeAreTeachers.com Editorial Director told All the Moms. "I think everybody has been a lawnmower parent at one time," Hudson said. "Even teachers because they're parents, too. It's a natural tendency to want to help kids." Hudson shared lawnmower parent stories…: The parent of a high-school student who asked a teacher to walk a student to class to assure that the student would not be late. An emailed story about a parent who requested someone

> from the cafeteria blow on their child's too-hot lunch to cool it down.
> A parent who called to schedule a make-up test when the student
> was clearly old enough to request a time. – Sonja Haller, USA Today,
> 19 Sept. 2018 (Merriam-Webster n.d. 9 words for types of parenting).

In spite of the fact that these parents' chief aim is to keep their progeny safe from any failure, misfortune or disappointment, they inadvertently inflict considerable harm on young people. In lieu of educating youngsters how to overcome problems and setbacks, adults eliminate them themselves, thus not allowing young people to acquire and develop skills that are very important in adult life. Despite parents' best intentions to provide their children with a straight and easy pathway devoid of any obstacles, it turns out that in the long run such a way of upbringing deprives minors of coping mechanisms. Moreover, children raised by lawnmower parents find it difficult to fend for themselves and handle trivial tasks, such as communicating with teachers or asking for directions (Gordon 2021).

While helicopter parents are inclined to hover and protect their children, lawnmower parents do much more, because they display a pronounced and alarming tendency to shield their offspring not only from danger but also from any obstacle that young people may encounter (Higuera 2019). Both types of parents have good intentions, but extreme levels of protection have a negative influence on such skills as problem-solving or decision-making. In comparison to lawnmower parents, helicopter parenting seems to be a milder form of upbringing. The OVERPROTECTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE PARENTS ARE LAWNMOWERS metaphor seems to motivate the rise of the concept of *lawnmower parenting*, given that one may find mappings between the domain of MACHINES/the subdomain LAWNMOWERS and the domain HUMANS/the subdomain PARENTS.

Let us examine five exemplary scenarios[7] (out of the 24 identified) found in the *NOW* corpus where the figurative meaning of the phrase *lawnmower parents* has been recognized:

1)   "Proliferation of cake hoarding may be tracked to the surge of so-called "lawnmower parents" clearing away any obstacles in their children's path." (Extracted from: https://www.postandcourier.com/moultrie-news/opinion/teacher-to-parent-help-your-children-to-advocate-for-themselves/article_5220b35a-713f-11eb-9092-432fb5b27596.html)

2)   "While helicopter parents are known for keeping a close eye on their kids' every move, lawnmower parents are paving the way." (Extracted from:

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7   Since these scenarios come from the NOW Corpus, the URLs provided next to individual excerpts are not repeated in the References, as the corpus itself is treated as the primary source for the quoted evidence.

https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/behavior-problems-behavior-solutions/202106/the-trouble-helicopter-lawnmower-and-tiger-parents)

3)   "This is where Gopnik's thesis overlaps with the current popular obsession with lawnmower parents (who are supposed to smooth every obstacle in the path of their offspring), or helicopter parents, (who hover constantly over their children's every activity, leaving no space for autonomy or exploration)." (Extracted from: https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/health-family/parenting/forget-about-parenting-think-about-what-being-a-parent-means-1.2777575)

4)   "Speaking to the Arizona Republic about how parents should handle their children going off to college, he noted that there were "lawnmower parents" who would go so far as calling residential assistants and college administrators to try to solve their children's problems with roommates." (Extracted from: https://www.thestar.com/life/2019/03/30/snowplowing-when-parents-try-to-clear-all-obstacles.html)

5)   "But, they're not the only pushy parents at the school gate. Now, lawnmower parents are here to make their mark." (Extracted from: https://sg.news.yahoo.com/lawnmower-parents-new-helicopter-parents-experts-concerns-092353371.html)

The examination of the contexts from the corpus reveals that the term *lawnmower parents* is a metaphorical expression that is quite commonly used (identified in 24 instances). This expression is found in various sources, including online press articles from the United States and Canada (for example, Moultrie News https://www.postandcourier.com/, Psychology Today https://www.psychologytoday.com/, Toronto Star https://www.thestar.com/), as well as European newspaper and magazine websites like Yahoo! News https://sg.news.yahoo.com/, The Irish Times https://www.irishtimes.com/.

The metaphorical schema OVERPROTECTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE PARENTS ARE LAWNMOWERS is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. OVERPROTECTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE PARENTS ARE
LAWNMOWERS metaphor.

Source domain: LAWNMOWERS	Target domain: OVERPROTECTIVE PARENTS
mow grass	remove obstacles
create a clear path	eliminate impediments
loud	aggressive

Let us stress that the semantic transfer from the domain of INANIMATE
OBJECTS, or, to be more precise, MACHINES (LAWNMOWERS) to the
domain of OVERPROTECTIVE PARENTS is possible due to the fact that
human beings share some features with machines. One may find at least a few
conceptual analogies between the source domain and the target domain presented
in Table 3. Firstly, these two entities share a common aim, which is the removal
of objects (grass or obstacles) in order to create a clear path. Another
commonality between a lawnmower and a parent may be the fact that
lawnmowers are quite loud machines, which may correspond to aggressive
human behavior.

Snowplow parenting is yet another way of rearing children, or, to be more
precise, a stricter form of helicopter parenting. In comparison to helicopter and
lawnmower types of parenting, snowplow mothers/fathers are even more
aggressive, given that the activity of plowing itself requires more physical effort
than giving the lawn a mow. In short, a snowplow parent removes the
impediments, so that a child does not have to overcome them.[8] Naturally, parents
follow their protective instinct which tells them that a good mother/father is a
caring one. We need to bear in mind that if a young person never fails, they may
experience severe repercussions of that in the future (e.g. they may have a sense
of guilt if they do not succeed; they may take everything, especially legitimate
criticism, personally; they may get easily dejected; they may not know how to
make wise decisions) (Engler 2020). Let us look at the following quotations
defining the term in question:

> The parenting website, the Stir, gave seven signs that you might be
> a "snowplow parent." Here are four of them: If you ever tried to get
> your child switched to another class to be with his/her friends. If
> you've offered incentives to a coach to help your child make a team

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8   Merriam-Webster (n.d.) 9 words for types of parenting.

or get more playing time. If you help your child with every homework assignment and project. If you try to have your child's grade changed – especially in college. – Les Masterson, Patch, 12 Nov. 2013 (Merriam-Webster (n.d.) 9 words for types of parenting).

While helicopter parents hover, snowplow parents eliminate obstacles. The average snowplow parent may not commit fraud or bribery, but uses influence in other ways, by doing homework for a child, pleading with teachers to improve a child's bad grade, or pushing for undeserved admission to an honor society. A snowplow parent may complain about a child's lack of playing time in a sport or a child not making the team. – Meghan Walls, Philly.com, 27 Mar. 2019 (Merriam-Webster (n.d.) 9 words for types of parenting).

While helicopter parents protect their kids and lawnmower parents overprotect them, snowplow parenting may be labeled as the most extreme approach to rearing offspring. Interestingly, in all likelihood, both lawnmower and snowplow methods might have been influenced and inspired by the media, which may make people believe that we are in constant danger and that we have to protect our children (Maguire 2019). Moreover, as stressed by Engler (2020), both movements are often connected with affluent families which have the possibilities to make their children's lives easier. Given that a good education helps in getting a good start in life, rich people can afford to pay for the best universities or even to resort to bribery.

To conclude, while helicopter parents tend to observe and monitor their children's movements, snowplow parents coordinate them and make the most important decisions on behalf of their offspring. Snowplow parents pay meticulous attention to education and they want their child to succeed and always be the best. If a child fails, they never share or take the blame, but they lay it on somebody else, for example the school (Waverman 2019).

Let us explore five notable scenarios[9] (out of the 30 identified) from the *NOW* corpus where the figurative meaning of the term *snowplow parents* has been recognized:

1) "Popular media is full of stories about college kids lacking basic life skills and struggling with independence and the snowplow parents who produced them." (Extracted from: https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/blog/sport-between-the-ears/202112/stop-coddling-your-young-athlete)

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[9]   Since these scenarios come from the NOW Corpus, the URLs provided next to individual excerpts are not repeated in the References, as the corpus itself is treated as the primary source for the quoted data.

2)   "On "snowplow parents": "I've been saying this for over two decades coaching parents: you do your child a disservice. I believe it's a contributing factor to so much child and young adult mental health. Let your kids learn from adversity."" (Extracted from: https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/blog/sport-between-the-ears/202112/stop-coddling-your-young-athlete)

3)   "Three years ago, she called out «snowplow parents» who clear away any potential obstacles for children, leaving them unable to cope with failure in the real world." (Extracted from: https://www.finews.asia/finance/24177-clarissa-farr-ubs-dads4daughters-women-diversity-city-of-london)

4)   "Helicopter parents (hovering) or snowplow parents (clearing the way) create a sense of entitlement. "Kids don't experience failure in the same way. It's not so much about the failure, but it's the examination of what went wrong that's important." (Extracted from: https://windsorstar.com/health/those-challenging-teenaged-years-its-all-in-their-heads)

5)   "I was a lowly PhD student and this was years before the terms helicopter or tiger or snowplow parents had been invented. Over the course of the dinner, the super-wealthy parents around the table discussed how to place their academically inclined children into tenure track assistant professorships at Ivy League colleges." (Extracted from: https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2019/09/07/oxcart-rather-than-snowplow-or-lawnmower-parents-our-students-parents-are-not-the-problem/)

The analysis of the contexts provided by the corpus shows that the term *snowplow parents* is a frequently used metaphorical expression (30 cases detected). It appears both in American and Australian online press articles (e.g. Windsor Star https://windsorstar.com/, Psychology Today https://www.psychologytoday.com/, Mamamia https://www.mamamia.com.au/) as well as European and Asian newspaper and magazine websites such as London School of Economics Blogs https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/, Finews.asia https://www.finews.asia/.

   In terms of the cognitive framework adopted in this paper, we may formulate the OVERPROTECTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE PARENTS ARE SNOWPLOWS conceptual metaphor presented in Table 4.

Table 4. OVERPROTECTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE PARENTS ARE SNOWPLOWS metaphor.

Source domain: SNOWPLOWS	Target domain: AGGRESSIVE PARENTS
sweep snow off the pavement require more physical effort (than a lawnmower)	remove obstacles parents are determined to eliminate all impediments (even by force or by illegal means) to help their children
loud	aggressive

If we compare snowplows with lawnmowers, we will see that there are only a few subtle differences between them, mainly as far as the domain of SIZE is concerned. Both machines are loud and their aim is to make the path clear and safe, nevertheless it is the snowplow that is bigger and therefore may be perceived as more dangerous. In turn, the physical effort put into using a snowplow may figuratively refer to the determination of parents who will stop at nothing to eliminate any obstacles on their children's way. Therefore, the lexical item *path* is, on the one hand, a route between two places, and, on the other hand, the way we follow in our lives and the trajectory of our career. It is of utmost importance to remember that the negatively-loaded term *snowplow parenting* does, in fact, refer to loving and caring parents whose perception of proper parenthood seems to be distorted.

Likewise, another recently introduced term that may be applied to well-intentioned but overprotective parents is *bulldozer parents*. Its meaning overlaps with those of *lawnmower* and *snowplow parents*. Given that the involvement of mothers/fathers turns out to be part and parcel of success as far as their children are concerned, parents do their utmost to pave the way for their success. Bulldozer parents are as aggressive as lawnmower and snowplow parents, thus we may say that the terms may be employed with reference to the same parental techniques.

A bulldozer mother/father is perceived to be a machine that removes objects/obstacles that may cause problems for a child. Bulldozer parents are mainly focused on education and career; therefore, they often intervene if their child encounters some difficulties at school, college or even work:

> The mother sat in my office. Her daughter, my advisee, was failing three of her four classes. Perhaps, the mom suggested, a private tutor might be hired, to help her child get back on track. "Perhaps," I said, trying to be compassionate. What I wanted to say was, "My

suggestion would be that your daughter actually start going to all the classes she's skipping, to maybe also start doing the homework." Instead, I let the mom talk. "The thing is," she said, "she's really a good kid." And it was at this moment, I believe, that my heart broke in half – for the mom, for her child and for all of us still trying to figure out the best way to shepherd young people into adulthood. Some people would describe that mom as a "bulldozer parent," engaging in a more aggressive form of what we used to call "helicoptering." – Jennifer Finney Boylan, The New York Times, 3 Oct. 2018 (Merriam-Webster (n.d.) 9 words for types of parenting).

Let us examine five specific contexts[10] (out of a total of 19 identified) derived from the *NOW* corpus, where the metaphorical employment of the term *bulldozer parents* has been recognized:

1)   "Bulldozer parents or so-called helicopter parents are those that clear every obstacle or who hover incessantly around their perfectly capable children, trouble-shooting their problems away. As noble an action as that may be, it also means they will never experience what it means to cope with adversity." (Extracted from: https://www.image.ie/editorial/why-you-should-also-teach-your-children-how-to-fail-171787)

2)   "Millennial culture was brought up by helicopter and bulldozer parents in an educational landscape that went from 'be the best you can be' to 'everyone   is   special'."   (Extracted   from: https://thedailyblog.co.nz/2021/07/07/mediawatch-the-horror-of-what-stuff-considers-hate-speech/)

3)   "Helicopter or bulldozer parents" who have the best of intentions to protect their children from stress by rushing in to rescue them, but remove the opportunity for children to learn to cope with negative emotions like sadness, fear and anger when they're aged four to six." (Extracted from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/self-harm-behind-1-in-4-youth-injury-hospitalizations-1.2839395)

4)   "Often, the parenting problems stem from the bulldozer parents' own childhood. The desire for more attention or support from their own parents is   now   projected   onto   their   own   child." (Extracted   from: https://www.businessinsider.com/helicopter-how-bulldozer-parents-harm-their-children-2023-6?IR=T)

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[10]   Since these contexts come from the NOW Corpus, the URLs provided next to individual excerpts are not repeated in the References, as the corpus itself is treated as the primary source for the quoted evidence.

5)   "That said, the pros and cons are probably similar to those for helicopter parents. Bulldozer parents could help children feel safe and secure. But this style might also foster a sense of entitlement or narcissism in the child." (Extracted from: https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/what-type-of-parent-are-you)

The analysis of the contexts provided by the corpus shows that the term *bulldozer parents* is a relatively frequently used metaphorical expression (19 cases detected). It appears both in European online press articles (e.g. Image https://www.image.ie/), American and Canadian newspaper and magazine websites such as Insider https://www.businessinsider.com/, CBC https://www.cbc.ca/, Asian newspapers (e.g. The Straits Times https://www.straitstimes.com/) as well as Australian and New Zealander online press (e.g. The Daily Blog https://thedailyblog.co.nz/) .

The metaphorical schema OVERPROTECTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE PARENTS ARE BULLDOZERS is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. OVERPROTECTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE PARENTS ARE BULLDOZERS metaphor.

Source domain:	Target domain:
BULLDOZERS	OVERPROTECTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE PARENTS
remove objects	remove obstacles, pave the way for their children to success
an enormous machine	loud and aggressive
may be dangerous	may intervene and unintentionally harm their children

The bulldozer type of parenting ought to be juxtaposed with lawnmower and snowplow parenting given that they all refer to the same extreme form of bringing up children. The idea behind using these particular three machines (lawnmower, snowplow and bulldozer) is that although they differ in terms of size, they all remove some objects in order to clear the way. We may put forward a hypothesis that the bigger the machine is, the more aggressive and dangerous it becomes. The shift from the domain of INANIMATE OBJECTS/MACHINES to the domain of HUMAN BEINGS/PARENTS is motivated by a number of analogies that may be found between these two entities. In spite of the fact that the

conceptual category and the source domain MACHINES may be said to be heterogeneous, the examples of machine-inspired types of parenting prove that we are dealing here with the process of downgrading and dehumanizing parents, which, in turn, is detrimental to the general perception of parenthood.

Last but not least, drone parenting is another stricter and more intense form of helicopter parenting. There is, however, a subtle difference between these two styles of upbringing. While the latter approach applies to parents whose presence is perceptible by children, the former one is employed with reference to parents who also remove the potential obstacles to clear the child's path, but these adults' help and actions are usually imperceptible by the youth. Drone parents' behavior is surreptitious and they tend to keep flying like drones over schools to keep track of their children's educational progress and, if need be, intervene (Sachs 2017). Such parents are heavily engaged in their children's life. Mothers/fathers solve children's conflicts with peers or do their children's homework. Interestingly, drone parents show an alarming tendency even to take care of their grown-up children, for example when they do something on behalf of their progeny (Baton Rouge Parents. n.d.).

In five exemplary scenarios[11] from the *NOW* corpus, the figurative use of the term *drone parents* has been recognized. These instances highlight situations where parents exhibit overprotective and controlling behavior towards their children, similar to how drones are programmed to operate autonomously. These parents often hover over their children, monitoring their every move and intervening in their lives excessively. The metaphor sheds light on the stifling and suffocating nature of such parenting styles, emphasizing the lack of independence and personal growth for the children involved:

1) "Drone parents are obsessively involved in the lives of their children and are able to manage their child's behaviour and lifestyle from a distance." (Extracted from: https://www.the-sun.com/lifestyle/3634309/so-long-helicopter-now-its-all-about-the-koala-mum-the-new-parenting-tribes-revealed/)

2) "And, yes, admission madness has escalated in recent decades, resulting in absurd actions by drone parents who don't have faith their children can do well in life unless they attend an Ivy League or other top-ranked institution." (Extracted from: https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2019/03/20/two-aspects-admissions-scandal-media-tends-neglect-opinion)

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[11] Since these scenarios come from the NOW Corpus, the URLs provided next to individual excerpts are not repeated in the References, as the corpus itself is treated as the primary source for the quoted data.

3) "Drone parents are able to intercept their child's life and interfere with their decision making without physically hovering over their every move." (Extracted from: https://www.the-sun.com/lifestyle/3634309/so-long-helicopter-now-its-all-about-the-koala-mum-the-new-parenting-tribes-revealed/)

4) "In these days of hovering Helicopter Parents, terrifying Tiger Mothers and Drone Parents, who monitor their child's every moment on social media, CIA-style, I reckon I am a pretty relaxed mum." (Extracted from: https://www.deccanherald.com/content/563998/what-kind-parent-you.html)

5) "Suze Patel, Co-Founder of Nini Baby said: "Drone parents are said to be 'obsessively involved' in their children's lives. This is thought to be a highly-focused form of parenting and can appear overbearing." (Extracted from: https://www.the-sun.com/lifestyle/3634309/so-long-helicopter-now-its-all-about-the-koala-mum-the-new-parenting-tribes-revealed/).

The analysis of the contexts provided by the corpus shows that the term *drone parents* is not a frequently used metaphorical expression (only five cases detected). It appears both in Asian online press articles (e.g. Deccan Heraldhttps://www.deccanherald.com/) and American newspaper and magazine websites such as The U.S. Sun https://www.the-sun.com/, Inside Higher Ed https://www.insidehighered.com/.

The metaphorical schema ENGAGED AND VIGILANT PARENTS ARE DRONES that seems to motivate the concept of drone parenting is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. ENGAGED AND VIGILANT PARENTS ARE DRONES metaphor.

Source domain: DRONES	**Target domain:** VIGILANT PARENTS
small and thus may be imperceptible	parents' protection is imperceptible by children
fly over some places	keep track of children's educational progress
multitasking	serve a number of functions during the process of upbringing

The first common feature between drones and vigilant parents is the fact that the aim of both is not to be detected. Drones are small and therefore people may not even be aware of their presence. Likewise, children may not know that their parents are controlling them. Another common denominator between these two entities is that their role is to observe by either flying over certain places (in the case of drones) or keeping track of a child's educational progress. Last but not least, drones are useful for multitasking, which makes them similar to parents who also have to serve a number of different functions while bringing up their children.

5. Conclusions

The aim of the paper was to show that the world of inanimate entities (in this case machines) may serve as a source of conceptual metaphors targeted at the domain of HUMAN PARENTING. The common mappings that may be established between the source and target domains are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. PARENTS ARE MACHINES metaphor.

Source domain:	Target domain:
MACHINES	PARENTS
loud	aggressive
clear the path	eliminate obstacles
useful	protective
programmed	determined

In spite of the fact that there have been distinguished four major approaches to parenting, it turns out that the depiction of a parent sketched on the basis of machine-oriented types of parenting is homogeneous. It is so due to the fact that all the discussed terms advert to the same style of raising children and its intensified versions. The term *helicopter mother*, coined in 1969, seems to be the most neutral one at least in comparison with the other types discussed in the paper, as it refers to protective and attentive parents (PROTECTIVE AND VIGILANT PARENTS ARE HELICOPTERS metaphor). The meaning of the less neutral term *drone parent* encompasses not only attentiveness and protection but also some kind of invisibility of parents whose presence is imperceptible by children (ENGAGED AND VIGILANT PARENTS ARE DRONES metaphor).

The terms *lawnmower parent, bulldozer parent* and *snowplow parent* may, in fact, be used interchangeably, as they refer to the same extreme form of parenting based on overprotectiveness and aggression directed at those who may do harm to children. Lawnmower, bulldozer and snowplow parents share common features, because adults are known for eliminating any obstacles a child may encounter (OVERPROTECTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE PARENTS ARE LAWNMOWERS metaphor, OVERPROTECTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE PARENTS ARE SNOWPLOWS metaphor, OVERPROTECTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE PARENTS ARE BULLDOZERS metaphor).

It is difficult to decide whether being overprotective is a positive or negative feature of parents. On the one hand, the prefix *over-*, suggests that there is too much of something and, as a result, it may be negatively-loaded (see https://www.etymonline.com/word/over-). On the other hand, the terms refer to parents who do love their offspring and believe that their methods of bringing up children are effective. From the axiological perspective, equating parents with machines may degrade and dehumanize the targeted group, which may lead to the conclusion that all the discussed metaphors should be viewed negatively.

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