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**GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS TO FAMILY POLICY IN FINLAND,
GERMANY AND ITALY**

A Comparative Perspective

Master's Thesis in
Public Management

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TABLE OF CONTENTS	page
LIST OF TABLES	3
ABSTRACT	5
1. INTRODUCTION	7
1.1. Background	7
1.2. Previous studies	12
1.3. Research questions, methodology and structure	15
2. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS TO WELFARE POLICY	17
2.1. Public administration doctrines behind responsive thinking	17
2.1.1. New public administration	17
2.1.2. New public service	19
2.2. Responsiveness as part of welfare policy	22
2.2.1. Responsiveness to citizens' needs	22
2.2.2. Governmental responsibility	25
2.3. Good governance as the basis for responsive welfare thinking	28
2.4. Welfare state ideology	30
2.4.1 "The three welfare groups" - model	31
2.4.2. Social security models	33
2.4.3. Other welfare groupings	34
2.5. Summary	37
3. METHODS AND DATA	39
3.1. Comparative approach	39
3.2. Qualitative research	41
3.3. The empirical data	43

4. COMPARATIVE OBSERVATIONS OF RESPONSIVE FAMILY POLICY	
4.1. Historical development of family policy in the three countries	44
4.2. A current question: demographic pressure on family policy	50
4.3. Role of values	54
4.4. Welfare state ideology in the three countries	57
4.4.1. Finland	57
4.4.2. Germany	61
4.4.3. Italy	64
4.5. Legislative foundation of family policy	67
4.5.1. EU	67
4.5.2. Finland, Germany and Italy	69
4.6. Financing and the benefits	75
4.6.1. Expenditure on families	73
4.6.2. Temporal and financial benefits	75
4.7. Citizens' opinions about family policy responsiveness	76
4.8. Summary	79
5. CONCLUSIONS	83
REFERENCES	91
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX 1. Background Information	103

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Total Fertility Rates in Finland, Germany and Italy in 2008	52
Table 2. Citizen's Trust on National Government in 2006	56
Table 3. Citizen's Trust on National Parliament in 2006	57
Table 4. Expenditure on Families and Children as Percentages of GDP in the Three Countries in 2006	74
Table 5. Benefits to Family and Children as Percentage of Total Social Protection Benefits (TPS) in the Three Countries in 2006	74
Table 6. "Effective Parental Leave"	75
Table 7. Citizens' Satisfaction with Public Support for Families with Children	77
Table 8. Citizens' Opinions about an increased Tax Advantages	78
Table 9. Citizens' Opinions about flexible Childcare Arrangements	79

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ABSTRACT:

It is not possible to question the importance of family policy: the way how family policy is administered affects greatly our well-being. The more responsive the government is to family needs, the more satisfied are the citizens with public policy. In countries with less responsive family policy, also fertility rates are lower. The matter is not affecting only the personal lives how the family matters are organized, but the whole world economics as well. If there are not enough children and tax payers in proportion to the elderly, it has macro economical effects and the society is not in balance either.

Even if family policy is slowly getting more attention in the realm of public administration, differences in family policy responsiveness have not been emphasized enough. Since the European Union countries belong to the same unification, citizens would not in first hand assume there are vast differences how responsive the countries are in their family policy facilitating their life. That makes one to ask how similar European Union countries actually are? Later on in future it will be shown if the idea of forming a union of the countries was a good vision or if it will fail – partly because of the differences. Therefore, as one reason this thesis will illustrate three different family policy cultures of Western, industrialized, European Union nations; Finland, Germany and Italy.

This research studies how responsive are the Finnish, German and Italian governments to family policy. According to most of the welfare state models, they are each belonging to a separate group. In this thesis these countries' family policies are analyzed with the help of public administration doctrines new public administration and new public service, of which each of the countries is more or less constructed according to the ideal systems. In addition, with the help of the concepts of responsiveness, governmental responsibility and good governance, the topic will be opened up.

This is a qualitative study using comparative approach as a method. With the help of comparison the differences of family policy in the countries are compared. This thesis has a wide range of material which consists of theoretical administrative and public policy literature, as well as of material among social policy, welfare, justice, governance and special family policy literature. In addition, in the empirical part there are used statistics, governmental documents and constitutions for comparing the three countries.

The central findings of the study show that Finland, Germany and Italy are still belonging to separate welfare groups in their responsiveness. The amounts of benefits are highest in Finland, moderate in Germany and lowest in Italy. The Finnish government seems to be most responsive to family policy and also citizens tend to be satisfied with the public support for families. Comparing these countries, fertility rates are also highest in Finland and as well as above the EU average level, which appears to have direct connection with responsive family policy. In many aspects Germany spends half of the amount to families as Finland do. Around one third of German citizens are satisfied with the family policy. Italian government gives in many points the same amount of benefits as Germany, or half of the amount as Germany does. The fertility rates for Italy and Germany stay around the same, being below EU average as well as being countries with one of the lowest fertility rates in the world.

KEYWORDS: government responsiveness, serving citizens, family policy, welfare state

1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis concentrates on comparing government responsiveness to family policy in Finland, Germany and Italy. It opens up the whys and wherefores for their policy and shows the breadth of the family policy in these countries.

1.1. Background

Family policy is seen as a top priority in contemporary social policy (Starke & Obinger 2009: 133). It is an important issue affecting the whole society. It has a large influence on citizen's lives and life-organization. As Giddens (1999: 51) has stated, the matter of family policy administration cannot be emphasized enough. Among all the changes going on in the world, nothing is more important than those happening in our personal lives – like in the family.

In one scale family policy means responding to citizens' needs in situations where the support is needed. To respond to families gives the citizen temporal and financial aid, as well as other services (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 23). In other words, they are subsidies to help and facilitate life in phases when there are additional expenses.

Family policy has been greatly acknowledged as one of the fields where state intervenes. State intervention is seen as an essential factor in overarching questions concerning family policy since it is the government which provides the foundation for social democracy (Starke & Obinger 2009: 133). Serving citizens is a task of a responsive government and many reasons behind the family policy lie in the decisions made by the political machinery. Thus, public administration and the government have a major part in forming family benefits (Björklund 2007).

In earlier periods, the strength of nations was measured in battalions and armaments – now societal indicators about well-being are seen as more important (Heidenheimer, Hecló & Adams 1990: 13). Indeed, the real criteria for the success of a society is

primarily its progress in terms of respect for human rights and dignity (ISSA 2010). The quality of society and public services is also fundamental to citizens' well-being and quality of life (Ferrarini 2006: 1; Eurofound 2009: 53, 62).

In public discussions it is often asked: who is responsible? It has become an important research topic internationally. From the beginning of 1990 the idea has been emphasized to invest time and money in children and in the last 15 years public responsiveness of social care has increased. Since ten years social care has changed from being a marginal question to a major topic among social policy. It has changed progressively from being a private issue to a public and political question. (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 4–5, 46.)

In order to be member of the European Union, the country must fulfill the EU membership requirements. Thus, the countries are to certain extent similar. However, in spite of common goals, they are also much distinct. The nations might have considerable differences between their governmental policies (Rosner 2003: 257; Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 15; Starke & Obinger 2009: 133). But how similar or dissimilar are the member states of European Union thought actually to be?

Why government responsiveness varies by nation and policy section? Each country has developed its own style of social protection as a result of a long process. Thus, public administration, or *government administration*, is a continuation of the culture and reflecting particular traditions. It is related to the history, politics, economy and culture (Waldo 1996: 6; Rosner 2003). Also according to convergence theory the disparities in the systems might come from the stage of socio-economic development which each country has reached (Hantrais 2000: 37). Also in this study, the differences of each country's administration is based on different facts: history, legislation, culture and politics, as well as the way they have answered to demographic needs, so to mention.

In contrast to efficiency, they have developed the concept of social justice (Denhardt 2008: 195). Social justice means giving same possibilities despite of background or wealth. Also for families it should be able to give same possibilities despite of person's

background or wealth (Rawls 2003: 168). Thus, it could be stated that the more responsive the countries are in their family policy the greater amount of solidarity they have.

There have happened vast changes in all areas of public and private life in last decades and it is recommended to link country-comparisons to global issues and trends (Dogan & Kazancigil 1994: 8). This thesis will open up the circumstances of demographic changes and low fertility rates. It is a macroeconomic problem causing unbalances in the societies as fertility rates are today low and the amount of elderly people is growing. Secondly, family patterns have gone through a vast transition since family sizes have changed (Paskalia 2007: 39). The government should take these changes into account. In addition, the family administration should itself change and modernize since the societies need to develop and modernize all the time (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 12, 19).

The situation of present welfare policy is interesting. Even if welfare regimes might converge at some part, it is still forecasted rather renewed diversity than radical convergence (Ebbinghaus & Manow 2001a: 313). Most of the EU countries strive towards social policy alike Nordic way. Still, they are often either representing two extremes or in-between (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 123; Klammer 2006: 238). Micro-level studies show that leaders in this field – mainly found in Northern Europe – have continued to develop their commitment to families, while some other countries have moved away from this direction. (Starke & Obinger 2009: 133–134.)

The countries

To do a country-comparison, the choice of the countries should be made according to a logical criterion (Riggs 1994: quoted in Dogan & Kazancigil 1994: 4). In this thesis, the choice of the countries could be reasoned in many ways. Firstly; Finland, Germany and Italy are all developed, industrialized nations and members of European Union. In this sense, they are not too different. European Union countries have even been called as forming a “European social model” (Armingeon & Beyeler 2004: 6). In addition, they

are all countries with similar Western values and have an uninterrupted democratic tradition since the Second World War (Ferrarini 2006: 9). However, even if they are situated all in the same continent, it does not straightforwardly have some relevance: similarity is not necessarily related to the closeness of the nations (Martz 1994, quoted in Dogan & Kazancigil 1994: 7). Furthermore, European Union has also been described as “less than a federation more than a regime”; despite of common European Union policies, each country can – or must – still implement their own practices (Ismayr 1997: 693).

These three countries are each an example of different social or welfare model groups; and the situation of family policy has different status in these countries. Thus, the countries are also chosen in order to have a representation of different welfare regimes and of the three major family policy trends in Europe. They reflect fundamental differences how the societies are created (Allen, Barlow, Leal, Maloutas & Padovani 2004: 57).

In the long run, the European social policy will for sure balance out and some benefits will get better and some might slightly deteriorate. A major topic for future research is to find out whether the different welfare groups still are grouping together or whether they not anymore meet the standards they used to do (Kautto, Fritzell, Hvinden, Kvist & Uusitalo 2001: 266).

Family policy of the chosen countries

The meaning of family has similar connotations both in Northern and Southern Europe: to take care of the welfare of its members (Allen et al. 2004: 4–5). Also otherwise, responsibility for family policy in the three studied countries in this thesis is assigned primarily to the government (Hantrais 2004: 160). Still, despite of some similarities there are debates about the differences. According to Hantrais, EU member states are divided into several groups e.g. in terms of historical development and legal base.

At the one extreme are the Nordic states: policy is highly structured, legitimated, and policymakers are strongly concentrated on supporting families. At the opposite side are the southern European countries, where policy is more uncertain, lacking in coherence and under-resourced, and its legitimacy is often dubious. Between these two extremes are countries, e.g. Germany, where the public speaking supports families, but where policy actors are mostly reluctant to intervene in the family life of people. (Hantrais 2004: 160.)

Inside Europe, the countries usually have some common values. Similarly, also Finland, Germany and Italy have common principles of justice. All of them, however, are administered differently and to a different extent: Finland is often seen as part of socially well developed Nordic countries with equal rights and duties. According to Hantrais, Nordic states are characterized by their family-friendly environment, their coherent and integrated approach to policy formulation and delivery, as well as their strong ideological commitment to redistributive policy intervention based on solidarity. They offer a relatively high standard of benefits and services, designed to afford maximum personal choice and flexibility.

Both Germany and Italy are seen as more conservative: Germany's social security is described to lie somewhere between the Nordic and southern European social models being strongly occupational, where Italy is seen more as part of the 'Latin' welfare system, where family ties have a big role.

Central European countries can be described as having only partial co-ordinated, coherent and legitimated family policies. E.g. in Germany family policy has become more and more open and formalized as family matters have moved up the policy program. Family policy in Germany, however, continues to be slightly narrow in the sense that a family with children should be based on a married couple.

Southern European regimes had authoritarian regimes until the second half of the 20th century. They changed from patriarchal values to democracies committed to a more liberal approach towards family life. The base to build up their welfare was a low base.

They created their welfare systems little by little, creating in fragmentary coverage. Today, compared with other EU member states, they have in common relatively unsatisfactory levels of benefits and support services for families. Family policy is an unspoken matter and relatively poorly coordinated. The state has continued to delegate the responsibility for family to family members and the government lacks the ability to provide the services that are most needed to support family life. (Hantrais 2004: 159–162.)

Interestingly, the Nordic countries have in general higher amount of social capital. After the Second World War, the Nordic countries became some of the most richest nations in the world at the same time they were building unique welfare programs (Kananaja 2003: 215). Another example: In a well-known research made by Putnam, they found out that in states in the U.S. which have greater share of its population of Scandinavian origin have also greater share of social capital than other states. (Statistics Finland 2010.)

1.2. Previous studies

Studies about public administration as an own field exist since three to four decades. Since approximately 15 years family policy writings and the issue of being responsive to family needs are a segment of it. In social policy literature, analyses of serving families are nowadays almost inevitably included. Since approximately 10 years, own literature and publications of merely family policy are issued. In addition, there are plenty of administrative journals which touch the area of family policy.

According to Anttonen & Sointu (2006: 16), country-comparisons have become significant during the last 20 years. General internationalization and Europeanization have contributed to greater interest in comparisons among researchers and politicians. People want to know more about the differences and similarities between countries as well as about practices in other countries. This is especially an important foundation for European Union since comparisons are a significant starting point for policy making.

Also in the field of family policy, since around ten years comparisons of benefits are popular, and especially between EU and OECD countries many comparisons related to family policy have been made.

Modernization has been a key word in European Community trying to co-ordinate the Member States. Still, modernization relating to changed family conditions has not attracted any remarkable interest, as far as modernisation of the system is concerned (Paskalia 2007: 105). There have been many comparisons and analyses of welfare policies among European Union countries; however, it is not enough (Paskalia 2007: 64). Family policy has not been sufficiently emphasized. Besides the welfare state, which has remained hugely popular in public opinion, the changes of the labor market, in other words feminization, and the emergence of new type of worker who has to combine work and family, as well as the changes in family structures have not evoked that significant attention (Esping-Andersen 1997: 75; Lewis 2006: 13; Paskalia 2007: 64). Also governance analyses have paid little attention to social policy or welfare state reform (Dingeldey & Rothgang 2009: 1).

In addition, the possibility of alleviating the problem of aging population by increasing fertility rates has in general reached rather less attention (Björklund 2007: 3.) Thus, besides the numerous welfare state studies and researches, new social forms and changes should be included as well. Still, it is to mention that it is of great relevance where a study is made since researchers e.g. from Northern and Southern Europe may have different viewpoints.

However, not until the recent years, political interest in the quality of family life and factors affecting this sphere have increased (Eurofound 2009). The relevance of the welfare state for the relationship between family, state and the labour market has been widely recognized in comparative welfare state research (Ferrarini 2006: 2). This reflects increasing interest about the challenges that families nowadays face with child issues. Attention to family matters has intensified with growing awareness of demographic trends: declining fertility together with increasing life expectancy among Europe's population. (Eurofound 2009.) Still, a powerful incitement towards responsive

family policy in most of the EU countries is missing. Also otherwise, it is important to enhance the general European awareness in these matters (Heikkilä 2006: 3) It is still to remind, that during the last years also in Finnish, German and Italian media and newspapers the topic has reached attention. About the differences between the country policies have been much written.

In the theoretical part of this study there are used literature in the area of public and social policy, welfare, justice, governance and special family policy literature. As a foundation for the theoretical part, there are cited famous works as “New Public Administration” by H. George Frederickson and “The New Public Service” by Robert Denhardt and Janet Denhardt. Journals about the doctrines are used in this thesis as “The Journal of Politics” and “The Journal of Management History”. There exists a lot of literature about responsiveness, too. Also in the journal “Public Administration Review” the topic of responsiveness is much discussed and quoted in this thesis, too.

In the area of methods there are many research guides to be found since comparative analysis in social sciences is nowadays rather popular method. For this thesis studies made in the University of Vaasa by Salminen (1999; 2000) are useful for describing the comparative method. In addition, “Comparing Nations” by Dogan & Kazancigil (1994) was much used in this thesis.

There are made a lot of works in the history of public policy. They are used in the empirical part. It has been also made plenty of demographic publications and they are growing every year. Especially helpful for this thesis was a report by Björklund (2007) made in Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies. In addition, in the empirical part are used law, statistics and other public policy facts. There are a great amount sources of these to find as books, journals and especially Internet sources, as e.g. Eurofound, European Commission, Eurostat, OSCE, United Nations, Finlex, ISSA (The International Social Security Association) and ministry web pages, which are consulted in this work. For this thesis, a publication about family policy responsiveness in EU countries made by Anttonen & Sointu (2006) from Statistics Finland is especially useful.

1.3. Research questions, methodology and structure

Research questions

Differences in family policies have not been enough emphasized and it is important to make comparative studies of them. Goal of this study is to show that the governments' policy serving citizens, in this case families, differs greatly between the three studied EU countries, namely between Finland, Germany and Italy. Even though the EU countries are partly seen as identical, especially when compared with the American system, one still needs to ask how different the countries are allowed to be?

The main research questions are stated as: How responsive the governments of the three countries are to family needs concerning the serving function? At the same time it can be studied do the countries indeed belong to separate welfare groups? The current matter of demographic issues is included in this study and it will be studied if the public responsiveness has influence on fertility levels?

When doing a comparative research, it will be often answered to questions "how", "why" and "to what effect" (Heidenheimer et al. 1990: 4). In this thesis, it will be answered to "how" by describing the family policy systems of the countries. In the background of these observations there will be theoretical considerations of public administration and welfare policy. To get an answer to "why"-question it will be given both historical, contemporary and juridical information about the countries and their policies in order to understand better their actions and why the nations differ.

This thesis will also answer to the question "to what extent" by giving concrete and practical facts to what extent do the countries support the family needs, whether the assistance is financial, material or in the form of time. In general the main aim is to illustrate and describe these countries' family policy practices and afterwards analyze to what extent are the systems responsive, as well as to find explanations for their differences.

Methodology and structure

This thesis is a comparison of government responsiveness to family policy in Finland, Germany and Italy. The purpose of a comparison is to describe the cases and with the help of the comparison explain the similarities and differences (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 16). A comparative study can be based either on qualitative or quantitative data or on combination of them (Anttonen & Sointu 2006:16). This is a qualitative study using quantitative data in analyzing family policy measures in the three countries.

The structure of this paper is following: In this first introductory chapter the background of family policy, previous studies in the field as well as research questions and methods are presented. This is followed by the second chapter, which concentrates on the theoretical basis for this study: it opens up public administration doctrines which are relevant for family policy and responsiveness. In addition, it introduces concepts about good governance as well as theories about welfare states as a foundation for the later empirical observations.

The third chapter focuses on methods of this thesis, after which they are used in chapter four which illustrates a number of empirical observations: In the empirical chapter, besides country presentations according to welfare models, there will follow descriptions of family policy issues including historical development, demographic facts, observations of values, legislative background, financing and the concrete amounts of family benefits. In addition, this thesis shows citizens' opinions about family policy in the three countries, which are to authenticate the stated observations. This collection of documents is seen as an indicator to what extent the countries are responsive. At last, chapter five summarizes the conclusions of this research. This final chapter provides for a complex description and interpretation of the problem.

2. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS TO WELFARE POLICY

“Theory” means a cohesive set of ideas about why a problem exists and/or how a change can be created. Having a theory that is based on research and the experience of other social movements can help us to justify our actions to others ... A theory can indicate where we’re going (the change we desire), why we believe we are moving in the right direction; and how we can get there. Theory helps us to see how our actions build on one another.” (Transforming Communities 2000.)

Theories used in this thesis help one to see how different aspects of public administration are at last all congruent with each other. They let one understand deeper why the welfare regimes differ and from where do the family policy characteristics originate.

2.1. Public administration doctrines behind responsive thinking

2.1.1. New public administration

New Public Administration supports the questions of this research. It is said to be the public servants’ commitment toward the pursuit of social equity as well as economy and efficiency in the function of public agencies. As Frederickson, the creator of new public administration, has defined, social equity is a group of not that coherent values. However, what it seems to mean is the general sensitivity among officials to the needs of traditional disadvantaged groups. (Rourke 1982: 600.) Families are one of these groups.

Philosophically seen, the new public administration takes its ideas from theories of justice, mainly from justice suggestions of Rawls, the creator of justice theory, to which Frederickson also mainly lean on (Rourke 1982; Esquith 1997). As Frederickson has stated, fairness, especially to the most underprivileged in society, should be the compelling matter of public servants.

In addition, Frederickson sees citizens' participation as part of fair policy, as well as other policies that will enhance the possibility that citizens who are affected by government decisions might have some voice in making them (Rourke 1982: 600). Also Rawls shares this opinion; according to him there should not be indirect obstacles to political participation and the citizens should have the same possibilities. However, differing from Frederickson's view, Rawls does not see there is a citizen's duty to participate in public life. According to Rawls, this might be excessive and public administrators might overstep the bounds of their office. (Esquith 1997: 331.) What comes to family policy, it depends on the situation: It might be the policies are already well organized when citizens do not feel a strong need to complain. However, it is in general good to be able to participate also in family questions if needed.

The key feature of the new public administration is social equity. In general, public administration tries to answer either of these questions: "How can we offer more or better services with available resources?" This means being efficient. It also asks "how can we maintain our level of services while spending less money?" This is being economical. New public administration adds to this the thought if this service does enhance the social equity. As Frederickson has stated, if the public administration does not actively try to correct the inequalities in the modern democratic societies, it will unavoidably deteriorate these problems.

Frederickson has also added that public services must be decentralized in order to be more responsive. Public services should be equitably distributed, regardless of economic class divisions. He restates the principles of justice: according to him it means equal liberty, fair equality of opportunity and the difference principle meaning that in social and economic policymaking, only differences that are to the benefit of the least privileged are acceptable. Organizational needs should never exceed individual rights or human needs for primary goods. "The problem" of complex organizations, therefore, is to concentrate more on dignity of the individual citizen. (Esquith 1997: 328-334.) Family services should also be distributed regardless of class divisions.

Following Frederickson, principles of justice are ideal guidance for legislative and constitutional actions and decisions, especially in political society (Esquith 1997: 328–334). Constitutions concerning family policy are also later analyzed in this thesis. Modern public democracy should strive to activate a democracy which is selected through electoral process. The pattern of “pluralism” should be united with protection for marginal groups.

Also the employees in the area should behave according to certain standards. According to Esquith, public servants should behave ethical and have higher ethical standards than other citizens. In contrary to citizens who all have the natural sense of justice, the administrators also carry “noblesse oblige”, a duty to serve the public. By behaving ethically, public administrators enhance their own self-worth as well as the self-worth of citizens. The public administrator should also be an active participant in public dialogue about the needs of citizens. (Esquith 1997: 328–334.) This is seen for instance in the citizen satisfaction questionnaires in this thesis. In addition, according to Esquith, public administrators should have direct and routine interaction with elected officials and legislative bodies, as well as with the citizens. This is crucial for the progress of social equity. Indeed, according to Frederickson and Hart, public administrators should be “both moral philosophers and moral activists”. In addition, public servants have a duty to pay attention to the interests of future generations, both proximate and far into the future. (Esquith 1997: 328–334.) Also concerning family matters, public administrators should think about families’ situations in the future.

2.1.2. New public service

“Contemporary public service traces the Platonic tradition in which public interest is seen as distinguishable from self-interest, ideologically seen” (Lewis & Gilman 2005: 129).

Public administration related to political science is especially seen in *New Public Service*. New public service streams from the democratic humanist practice and concentrates on issues of citizenship and community, so to mention. (Denhardt 2008:

12, 16.) According to the model, should the connection between citizens and their governments be democratic (Denhardt 2008: 174).

The new public service transcends the aggregation of individual self interest (Denhardt 2008: 184). New public service is about serving the people as citizens, not as customers. It is about creating trust and co-operation with – and among citizens. This is interesting as in some countries people have more trust on public authority as well as on fellow countrymen. According to Denhardt (2009: 181), the new service-principle tries to promote government to be sensitive to the opinions of citizens. This new way and attitude in serving citizens is to make public service more dignified and significant. It is to strengthen democratic values, citizenship, and the issue of public interest as the most excellent value of public administration. Drawing from these approaches, there are elaborated basic notions about the new methods in the public service.

Public service values contribute to serve citizens, to make the world better and safer. The public service values are to make democracy workable – to show the best how it is to be a citizen in a serving society. In fact, in the new way of serving, citizens are the owners of government in acting for the greater common good. (Denhardt 2008: 184.) Serving families is one step towards making the world better.

According to Denhardt (2008: 183), to serving principle also belong to value citizen's rights and public service more than entrepreneurial thinking. Instead of rowing or steering people as customers, the central role of the administrator should be to strive to offer as high quality service as possible, without not forgetting to take the law and the accountability into consideration. In summary, the civil servant should value the people, not just the productivity.

Public servants should serve rather than steer. In leading the citizenry they should take the values into account. They should lead with commitment and integrity that respects and improves citizenship. (Denhardt 2008: 183–184.) It is said, that administrators should be subordinate to elected officials because elected officials are directly responsible to the people. These officials, which can be e.g. politicians, should listen the

public voice, and tell the administrators how to serve the public's needs. (Denhardt & Denhardt 2007: 122.) This serving of the public isn't only the *needs* what officials think to exist, but the needs public wants (Finer 1941: 337, quoted in Denhardt 2007: 122). Therefore, it is important to ask e.g. families' opinions.

One part of new way of service thinking is citizen involvement. According to Denhardt (2008: 174–177) and Hadley & Young (1990: 53), to responsiveness belong also social responsibility – citizen's duty to participate in dialogue and decision making. Due to this idea, citizenship is not considered just as a juridical form, but that citizens also carry a certain degree of responsibility, morality and should express their long-term interests. Moreover, there is particularly strong object to engage citizens in all phases of the policy-making process: they are seen as having an equal responsibility both for the problem-identifying as well as the solution-execution. (Denhardt 2008: 181–183.) To let the families be part of the policy-making process also lets the administrators see what functions best.

Denhardt has stated that public administrators should try to work for common opinion about the public's best. The decision making should not be a duty of an individual, in contrast – there should prevail a shared responsibility of public wishes as the cooperation consists of citizens, groups, elected representatives and other institutions. (Denhardt 2008: 182.) A participative citizen doesn't look only his or her needs, in contrast; the role of the citizen is to look to public need and broader interest of the people. Thus, a community is described as a devotion to a set of common values and norms, and where the responsiveness prevails among citizens as well. To summarize; the more there is interaction between the government and the desires and interests of the citizens, the more likely the civil society is to succeed and increase its improvement. (Denhardt 2008: 176.)

However, the government still plays an important role in leading the civic society and has the duty to assure that the issues as justice, fairness and equity come true (Denhardt 2008: 182). As Rawls has mentioned, the idea of justice is important to take into account when thinking about a well-ordered society. The matter of justice for a

democratic society where citizens are seen as free and equal, is whether, and how well, it can serve the publicly recognized and mutually recognized conception of justice. (Rawls 2003: 9.)

“Under all circumstances, theories must be adapted to the changing social and cultural circumstances of the times.” (Denhardt 2008: 19.) Therefore, as already earlier pointed out in this study, also family policy must be tailored to the needs of today, as well as according to the demographic circumstances. *New public service*, followed by *the old public administration* and *the new public management*, is a response to our contemporary interests. According to Denhardt (2007: 195), today living standards are high in most western areas and there would be possibility for utmost effective practice of social policy. You can always strive for doing something better: There are plenty of opportunities and beneficial actions to be achieved in order to serve people better, to make our world function better and to create something of great consequence.

2.2. Responsiveness as part of welfare policy

Responsiveness means sensitiveness, it is about “the quality of being responsive; reacting quickly; as a quality of people, it involves responding with emotion to people and events” (The Free Dictionary 2010a).

2.2.1. Responsiveness to citizen’s needs

Based on previous international comparisons it can be stated that there are vast differences how responsive the governments are to social policy (Hantrais 2004; Anttonen & Sointu 2006; Paskalia 2007).

Making public administration and governance more responsive to citizen’s needs is generally one of the most important goals. It is focusing on strengthening trust, accountability and participation in government in order to serve citizens more responsively, effectively and efficiently. (United Nations 2006.)

What is responsiveness in a welfare state? According to Denhardt, responsibility is an important and central concern of public service. Administrative responsiveness is about the extent, to how much the correspondence between policymakers and public references is valued. This is also closely related with effectiveness: To what degree do decision makers succeed in desired policy outcomes. In order that the administrative state can attain legitimacy and be responsive, it needs to prove its capacity to enhance the importance of the individuals, equality in the country and collective participation. (Denhardt 2008: 116–119.) In addition, a responsive public service should guarantee minimum standards of benefits for all citizens (Hadley & Young 1990: 18–19).

Responsive public servants should be open, able and willing to respond. In addition, they should be just and uncorrupted. Listening citizens is important: it helps administrators to gather valuable information. Above all, due to the listening, the view of citizens get the change to have real impact on federal priorities and policies. In addition, to listen citizens promotes accountability in the sense that it helps administrators to remain open to emerging perspectives and to hear neglected voices. (Stivers 1994: 367–368.) Also in this research it will be showed citizens' voices, e.g. if they are satisfied with family policy or if they trust on government.

Responsiveness is a fundamental part to any modern model of public policy, which has often been related to bureaucrats, to well-trained professionals, who are responsive and attentive. In addition of concentrating on competent performance in government operations, they should always keep in mind public values. Besides interpreting public values in a best possible manner, they should be able to identify important, often hidden needs – as well as to try to find a solution for them. This demands certain degree of leadership to be able in bringing the issues to debate. (Stivers 1994; Denhardt 2008: 119–125.) Furthermore, responsiveness is not only about striving for outcomes; it is also about doing so in a just and democratic way (Denhardt 2008: 125).

Why responsiveness has not always got that much attention as e.g. responsibility? “Responsive” means “quick to respond or react appropriately or sympathetically; sensitive”. It means to be “sentient, answering, respondent and reactive”.

“Responsible”, on the other hand, means to be liable to account as the primary cause, being the cause or explanation; trustworthy; able to choose between right and wrong, politically answerable”. It means to be accountable, dependable, reliable and stable. (Strivers 1994: 365.) Thus, responsibility is also part of serving citizens in a way. According to Strivers, the responsible bureaucrats enable things to happen. They are capable of moral judgment, reliable, as well as politically answerable. In contrast, a responsive public servant is sympathetic and capable of feeling or suffering; and first of all sensitive (Hadley & Young 1990: 10; Strivers 1994: 365). This is it, one needs responsible governance. However, in order to be properly a nation serving – and listening – its citizens, the administrator must be responsive as well.

Nevertheless, according to Strivers, to rely too much on administrator’s sense of responsibility it threatens democratic accountability. Difficulties with trusting too much on professional norms of responsibility have been noted. Professional expertise is not enough to make possible for public servants to cope with changing and turbulent policy environments, and that does not make workable approaches. Thus, again, to balance the contradiction between administrative effectiveness and democratic accountability it is to listen the citizens and to take public interest into account. The experience of listening is an experience of openness, too. It makes us aware of the reality. The act of listening is characterized by reciprocity. As Levin has stated, to listen another is to learn what the world is like from a position that is not one’s own, to reverse roles and experiences. (Stivers 1994: 364–366.) All these concepts can also be connected to equal policy, to the matters of solidarity and fairness. As Stivers adds, the advantage of listening citizens as part of responsiveness is that it turns the public servants not into superpeople but it teaches them modest and significant capacities (Stivers 1994: 367). Also in this thesis, it differs how much administrators are taking citizens’ opinions into account.

As Stivers mentions, it has been suggested that skillful listening and reciprocity to differences cultivates the society. It creates a shared public space and a sense of mutual commitment. Therefore, responsive listening may promote the accountability of public officials as they begin to see the citizens as nationals of the same public square. How it is responded to differences makes up the politics of our everyday lives. Difference is

indeed the essence of a democratic nation rather than a roadblock to it. Listening citizens is seen as a reciprocal understanding of justice; it promotes a situation-emergent view of truth. Perhaps even the skill of listening citizens could become as part of the practice of responsiveness in public administration. (Stivers 1994: 366.) However, in all these contexts, it can be noted that the studied countries in this thesis have used different approaches what comes to listening citizens and being responsive.

As stated by Stivers (1994: 364), responsiveness is usually seen as an aspect of responsibility. Nevertheless, in public administration, responsiveness is also seen as a problematic concept. Administrators partly tend to treat responsiveness as a hindrance for professional effectiveness or as a political expediency. Over the years the emphasis has changed towards relying more in the administrator's personal sense of responsibility. Already Wilson has stated that administrators should have their own will in order to accomplish the work properly (Wilson 2004: 29). Thus, being responsive to citizens is not simple: Besides legislation and accountability, administrators should take into account common values, political norms and professional standards. These factors make even more complicated the external controls, citizen preferences and moral issues: It could be said that the relationship between citizens and the government is a complex web of issues. (Denhardt 2008: 182–184.) Still, it could be summarized that if a nation has succeeded in fulfilling all the norms, the government has made a good job.

2.2.2. Governmental responsibility

The fundamental purpose of the state is to serve the common good and the public welfare (Sheeran 2006: 137). “Public policy is, at its most simple, a choice made by government to undertake some choice of action” (Howlett and Ramesh 2003:3, quoted in Pollitt & Bouckaert 2009: 3).

The concept of governance exists since human civilization. Fundamentally it means the process of decision making and the procedure by which such decisions are made. (Dwivedi & Mishra 2007: 702.) The government affects extraordinary much to our everyday lives. Public services are seen as vital social goods in whose allocation government needs to play a key role (Heidenheimer et al. 1990: 17).

The United Nations has described governance as “the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation’s affairs.” It consists of “the complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences.” (United Nations 2006: 6).

As stated by Peters & van Nipsen (1998: 58), government is one of the most important components of the policy system. Even if it is not the sole ruler, it still has a special position, role and responsibility within a society. It is also listed to be hierarchically superior to the other components of the society.

Public bureaucracy plays a significant role in the government process and has been considered as part of it. Consequently, it is similar to political science. On the other hand, public administration has been said to differentiate from governmental process; from this perspective it has been argued that public organizations are said to influence the development and implementation of public decisions in a range of areas: all this is to affect the allocation of values in society. (Denhardt 2008: 11–12.) Still, it is the choice of the government how the public resources are allocated. It is their choice how shall the benefits for families be distributed. (Heidenheimer et al. 1990: 16–17.) Of these reasons terms and *responsiveness*, as *equality*, *justice* and *freedom* can be same way applied to public policy as e.g. to the executive body, the legislature or the judiciary. (Denhardt 2008: 11–12.) Thus, at the end it is the government who is responsible.

The governance procedure has to do with the way decisions are made in the society and how citizens and groups can affect the establishment and implementation of public purposes (Denhardt 2008: 124). This is one reason why public policy is seen attached to government; government agencies are typically more interested in service – than in production or profit as in private institutions. And, besides the responsiveness for citizens, the decision-making process in government should be transparent, more precise in their objectives, as well as more open and accountable. (Denhardt 2008: 14–15.)

Both public administration and political theory emphasize the importance of effective democratic governance (Denhardt 2008: 12). “A democratic state must not only be based on democratic principles but also democratically administered, the democratic philosophy permeating its administrative machinery.” (Levitan 1943, quoted in Denhardt 2008: 64–65.) Democratic policy making is connected with the way how societal values are promoted; with the values that have a high degree of responsiveness to the needs and interests of the citizenry (Denhardt 2008: 16). Family benefits and social allowances are thus one respond to the needs of people. They are intended to cover the higher expenses after childbirth, as well as the starting of a family (Paskalia 2007: 248).

There are two major challenges to which governments are trying to answer for. Firstly; the globalization has had major impact on the governments as they need to adapt and respond to rapidly changing global economic, social, political and technological challenges. (United Nations 2006: 1.) Besides present challenges, it has also responsibility for future generations: it should aim at ensuring a viable future and be able to maintain the legacy of civilization. This urges the government to be dynamic and to go on “with a foot in the future”. Thus, one proof of public interest is the respect for future generations and to take into account the long-term consequences of decisions made today. (Lewis & Gilman 2005: 75–77.) Secondly, among citizens in many countries, the governments are trying to improve the increasing dissatisfaction with the governance systems and the public services that are provided. (United Nations 2006: 1.)

However, the global level affects national governance both directly and indirectly. It can be seen that the state authorities are not the only public power guiding the governance. E.g. the influence of European Union has had effect on Member States’ policy systems. (United Nations 2006: 191.) However, strict and outright common governance for e.g. family policy in European Union does not exist (Hantrais 2000: 91).

Since the state consists of families, the state exists to help families. This reflects also the principle of subsidiarity. (Sheeran 2006: 137.) In response to take families into account, governments could create a number of programs to support families. These could be

called also as preventive services. However, on the other hand, the government has sometimes been part of the problem and sometimes part of the solution. (Bogenschneider 2006: 64.)

2.3. Good governance as the basis for welfare thinking

Good governance is one part of the government decision-making process being based on such basic values as accountability, transparency, fairness, equity, and ethics, which are essential for well-ordered democratic society. In order to attain the best life quality for the public, “good governance” or “good administration” is a necessity for any government. (Dwivedi & Mishra 2007: 702.) Ethical governance means many things besides the law. It is a culture of conduct where some conduct is automatically sensed as correct and some beyond acceptance (Rohr 1998: ix).

Furthermore, characteristics of good governance are described to include widespread participation by all citizens, management by rule of law, transparency in the actions of government bodies, responsiveness to the citizen’s needs and desires, fairness in the treatment of citizens, effectiveness and efficiency in the use of public resources, public accountability, and the implementation of strategic vision in planning for development.

In order to open up the good governance more profoundly, it should be mentioned important characteristics of it. Firstly, about the participation: All citizens should have a voice in decision-making, as earlier mentioned, either directly or through legitimate representative bodies that represent their interests. This kind of participation is part of freedom of association, as well as the possibility to participate constructively. To this is closely related the equity of good governance: All citizens, not only certain groups, ought to have opportunities to improve and maintain their well-being.

Secondly, the government should follow rule of law: Legal frameworks should be equal and implemented impartially, particularly the human right laws. (United Nations 2006: 7–8.) Relating to this, also social protection systems should be administered fairly:

careless administration can endanger the very existence of the protection itself (Scherer 1997: 52). At the same time, the government actions should be transparent. Transparency is based on the free flow of information. Processes, institutions and information are available to those concerned with them, and enough information is provided to comprehend them.

Thirdly, as mentioned in the earlier chapter, one part of good governance is responsiveness. The state's institutions and processes should be responsive to all stakeholders and associates. The counterpart of this is accountability: administrators in the government, in the private sector and in the civil society organizations are accountable to the public, as well as to other institutional stakeholders. However, the accountability differs depending on which organization is in question, and whether the decision is internal or directed to the public.

Fourthly, good governance should include consensus orientation: it should reconcile the differing interests to reach a broad common opinion on what are the best interests of the group. Where possible, it should also seek to find a consensus on policies and procedures between the counterparts as the government is not the only institution through which authority is exercised. There are also private sector actors and civil society organizations; and the role of good government is to interact effectively with these actors in achieving public goals and objectives. (United Nations 2006: 7–8.) Also in this study, it can be noticed that consensus between the government, counterparts and the citizens vary greatly. According to Esping-Andersen, comparisons of governments' policies reveal a central notion: governments who can negotiate a broad consensus with strong national interest organizations, can more easily overcome citizens' vote. (Esping-Andersen 1997: 75.) In this thesis, this is seen in the empirical part if the citizens of Finland, Germany and Italy trust the government and parliament or not.

Ultimately, according to United Nations, effectiveness and efficiency should also be parts of good governance: Processes and institutions should produce results that correspond to the needs – be effective, and make the best use of resources – be efficient. Accordingly, the administrators should have an efficient strategic vision. Leaders

should bear in mind a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, together with thoughts what is needed for such development. This demands also an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which this vision is grounded. (United Nations 2006: 8.) These are aspects this thesis tries to understand, too. The compared countries have adapted to the demands for modernization and development for their policies to different speed. Moreover, it varies how effectively or efficiently the studied countries are pursuing their services.

However, it is not self-evident, that the government can be simultaneously efficient, effective, equitable and ethical. When striving for efficiency and effectiveness, it can easily happen that they sacrifice the democratic norms of equity and accountability. (Jensen & Kennedy 2005: 235.) In this thesis, the studied three countries might have taken this fact into account more or less seriously.

2.4. Welfare state ideology

Basically, a *welfare state* is characterized as consisting of aspects as basic social rights, reasonable standard of social security covering all citizens, as well as equality between men and women, as well as between different population groups (Silvasti 2003: 103).

Diverse political and ideological purposes are one reason to different welfare regimes and social care groups (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 11). It is important to form country groups since in making comparisons we need simplifications and compact information. Beginning from 1990s regime forming has been an essential part of comparisons. (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 16.) Overall orientations of social policy have led researchers to form family policy models: It tends to exist an orientation that countries with minor parental leave provisions also tend to have less developed public services for the youngest generation. Again the relatively generously organized parental leave benefits exist together with well-developed child-care services for the youngest. (Ferrarini 2006: 5.)

To distinguish between the welfare models, the essential difference is whether families are meant to be the primary source of welfare or not; and whether welfare states allow the family social rights or not (Esping-Andersen 1999: 85). Broadly speaking you can make two distinctions between welfare groups: social care based on public assistance and social care based on family responsibility. The countries will be placed in either of the groups or in-between. Generally speaking it could be still said that the Nordic countries belong to the first group and the Southern European countries to the latter. (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 5–6.) The contradiction is that the more familialistic the state is, the less family benefits are provided (Paskalia 2007: 63).

2.4.1. “The three welfare groups” - model

One of the most significant and extensive welfare state typologies is Esping-Andersen’s categorization of the three different welfare regimes (Ebbinghaus & Manow 2001b: 7–10; Kennett 2001: 7, Allen et al. 2004: 71; Ferrarini 2006: 1). It was the first wide-ranging cross-national quantitative study of welfare policy (Allen et al. 2004: 71).

There are different characteristics between state, market and the family in international comparisons as far as social rights and welfare-state stratifications are concerned. The variations are not randomly distributed, but divided by regime-types. (Esping-Andersen 1990: 26.) These regime descriptions come from political and ideological causes, which dominated in their historical development – as well as with the established welfare states in the 1970s and 1980s. (Esping-Andersen 1999: 74.)

They could be described also as three different ‘social Europes’: The social democratic welfare regime, the conservative welfare regime and the liberal welfare regime (Esping-Andersen 1990). In this thesis, there will be represented two of these welfare state models: Finland belonging to the social democratic welfare regime, and Germany and Italy belonging to the conservative welfare regime. Nevertheless, it is to point out that with these groupings we are talking about welfare *regimes*, not about welfare *states*, nor about individual social policies (Esping-Andersen 1999: 73). Also otherwise, it is important to distinguish between welfare states and welfare systems (Allen et al. 2004:

69). In addition, we need to notice that there is no single pure case. The regimes might have differences and similarities: the Scandinavian model, for instance, is initially social democratic. However, it has crucial elements of liberal method of administration. Similarly, the European conservative regimes have influences of both liberal and social democratic impulses. (Esping-Andersen 1990: 28–29.)

This triad-classification from Esping-Andersen originates from classical European political economy. It is practical to use welfare state classifications: First, they help us to see the forest rather than myriad trees. Second, if we can make groups of similar attributes, it is easier to find some missing part or movement, maybe even causality. Three, the typologies are helpful for generating ideas further. (Esping-Andersen 1999: 72–73.)

In general, the northern European countries are concentrated more on services and on the youth and young families. The continental European nations are more “passive” and pensioner-oriented: On average, the Continental countries spend 2.3 times more on the old as on the young. In addition, in European welfare states, the main difference has to do with the public-private mix: The Nordic countries’ vast concentration on social care is exceptional. In most continental European countries the caring is mainly internalized in the family; therefore women postpone and reduce fertility, or stop working. (Esping-Andersen 1997: 70-73.)

According to Esping-Andersen, traditional familialism, built around the male earner households, is negative both for the employment and for the family formation. However, there are measures for changing this: Family policy that helps reducing dependence on a single income earner, as well as one that makes it possible to combine high fertility rates with female employment. In addition, to support only older citizens in contemporary welfare states is problematic: it ignores the spending on the youth and thus, it would be unsustainable. (Esping-Andersen 1997: 65–67.)

However, the welfare state or the presence of social rights is not definitely the mechanism to fix the inequalities in society. It is more a system of stratification and an

effective way in ordering social relations; it is about the correspondence between rules and preconditions determining the extent to which welfare ideas can offer real solutions. (Esping-Andersen 1990: 22–23.)

2.4.2. Social security models

Social security is a part of a wider spectrum of social policy in the context of the modern European welfare state. In general, it is very difficult to give a precise definition of social security, one that would fit all countries. Countries differ in their conceptions, practices and traditions of providing protection and security to their citizens, and the boundaries between private and public spheres of responsibility cannot be drawn at the same point in all countries. (Paskalia 2007: 18.)

Social security in the European Union Member States is based on the model to which each system belongs. Classically, the social security can be divided into two main models: employment-based system having the pursuit of an economic activity; and the residence-based system, where residence in a Member State assures the social security protection. (Paskalia 2007: 63.)

In Europe, many social security matters are covered by all national systems. The same occurrences can also be internationally found in texts and conventions. These common topics include issues of maternity, child care, sickness, invalidity, old age, death and unemployment. All the systems support and provide for benefits in the case of a risk. Common for these systems is that they strive to give a curative effect when the contingency has happened. Instead, to preventive actions have been paid only little, if any, attention.

Nevertheless, even if Europeans have common origins and characteristics, social security systems in Europe have developed fundamental differences so that nowadays a variety of systems can be found in Europe. It was only in the 1960's, after the Second World War, that the differences in the various social security systems began to be observed.

The most classical or typical division of the social security systems is divided into two groups. The division is made on the basis of whether the rights to social security are restricted to the working population – or whether the rights are based to the entire population. The continental types of social security are examples where work performance is much emphasized. Instead, benefit systems based on universality for all people belong to the Atlantic or Beveridgean type. What comes to social welfare state, the two groups represent social differentiations: the first group reflects the ‘fragmentation’ of the social security system. The latter group reflects the ‘stateness’ of the system, the way how the state discerns the welfare institutions.

According to some scholars, the Scandinavian systems constitute a very distinct model from the first two. And additionally, a fourth group has been identified, containing the southern European States – the ‘Latin Rim’ countries. It could be stated that social security in Western European countries is essentially connected to political and economic developments. Therefore, there are also similarities among the diverse systems and how the risks are protected. All the systems have increasingly absorbed features from the others, and today there is no genuine system of one type or another: some countries with insurance systems have introduced universal practices providing minimum income, and some states with universal social security tradition, have implemented earning-related schemes, which aim at income support in cases of need. (Paskalia 2007: 32–34.)

2.4.3. Other welfare groupings

The ‘three world’ typology of Esping-Andersen has been criticized. “Three welfare groups” might be fruitful for forming descriptions but is less useful when finding explanations (Ferrarini 2006: 10). There has been compelling arguments that the system needs reconsideration, and the social security models or other classifications have been represented instead.

The criticisms could be basically divided in two groups: firstly, according to his theory, the conservative group includes both Central and Southern European countries, which is

a fairly wide assumption. This division has been questioned arguing we should divide additional models – the Mediterranean fourth world so to speak, where also Italy belongs. Secondly, it has been argued that the criteria were too basic how the construction of typology has been done. (Esping-Andersen 1999: 73; Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 17–18.) Also in this thesis, it will be discovered that Finland, Germany and Italy, in all likelihood, belong to separate groups.

There are also many other groupings made. However, they have all resulted in rather similar conclusions (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 18). E.g. Korpi has formed a typology according to which countries are divided depending on whether they support a traditional family maintaining a general family support, or whether they support a dual earner family having dual earner support (Ferrarini 2006: 12).

When social care of small children and children day care services have been under the spotlight, it came out that Esping-Andersen's three groups are not enough. They arrived in conclusion that there are four welfare regimes, of which two form clearly distinct regimes. Firstly; the first and most coherent group is the Nordic regime where the services are publicly organized and mostly also publicly financed. The services are based on universalism: services are meant for everybody. The state governs the social services by legislation forming, but the municipals have a major role in planning and producing the services. According to them the vast supply of public services in the Nordic countries and the high women employment go hand in hand. Another clear regime group are the Southern European countries, including Italy. In these countries are very few social services, which are organized and financed by the government. Still in 1996, when the study was made, social care was seen as a private matter. It was based on a juridical responsibility of the family to take care of its members: either the women of the family are responsible of the child bearing; or the most affluent families might also consume private services. The low service supply is combined with low women employment.

Thus, the Northern and Southern European countries form two extremes of family policy. Other regimes are also recognizable but they are more unclear of their boundaries. (Anttonen & Sipilä 1996, quoted in Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 16–17.)

Basically, however, it can be stated that some countries have invested more on elderly and some more on children. Only the Nordic countries have invested in both groups, which is a sign that the citizenship is based on social care. (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 17–18.) In the Nordic states, it is also the public administration which is seen as the main supplier of services for both children and older people (Hantrais 2004: 180).

Daly (2001) has also divided European countries into four groups according to the extent of public responsiveness. To the first group belong, again, the Nordic countries. In these countries even high quality social care is given to all those who need it. According to the theory, the right to social care is part of the citizenship as it is an explicit right to have benefits and services. Also this theory sees the public responsiveness to finance and to produce the services as being the main character of this regime group.

Similarly, the second group forms the pro-family caring states, including Germany and the most Central European countries. In these countries the social care is still a matter inside the family. The government has only a partial responsibility for family issues. In these countries women need often undergo “care penalties”: the status of the work possibilities and coming retirement pensions are not good when staying at home with family.

According to Daly (2001, quoted in Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 18), to the third welfare group which is a combination of “hot and cold states” belongs also Italy. Differing from Esping-Andersen’s viewpoint, Italy is a distinct country from Central European countries according to the theory. This country-group is characterized as being in imbalance: In some things the public authority is taking a great amount of responsibility and in some no responsibility at all: e.g. in Italy there are organized pre-schools for children – but for children under three years there is no service provided, and the opening hours are not matching either.

This grouping principle discusses the criteria of good quality care. Good social services should be based on high quality and on the freedom of citizens to choose between

services. According to this model, the way the social care is organized has a major influence on the society: well organized social services produce welfare for both sides of the coin. (Daly 2001, quoted in Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 18.)

2.5. Summary

Even if the doctrine is called “New Public Administration”, its principles concentrate mainly on social equity: It takes its ideas from justice and equal principles. Besides that the public agencies should be efficient and effective, the doctrine asks if this service increases the social equity, and sees the common good before the private good. It should not be forgotten the “noblesse oblige”, a duty of the public administrators to serve the public. Besides this, new public service emphasizes that it is the duty of the government to guarantee that the just and equal principles come true.

Even if not all the scholars think there is a citizen’s duty to participate in public life, most of the public administration theories including new public administration and new public service see the citizen participation as a part of fair policy. Thus, for example families should have the possibility to express their wishes concerning family policy. In addition, according to new public service, it is also a citizen’s duty to strive for public interest.

New public service emphasizes to value citizens as people and not to serve them as customers. According to new public service, the public interest is the most important value of the public administration and there should be interaction between the government and the citizens.

There are characteristics which describe how responsive public service should be. It should be just, uncorrupted, open and able to respond. Above all, listening citizens in a sensitive way is important and it should be reciprocal. Differing from responsibility, being responsive is more about listening sentient and reactive. Responsive public

service is equal and it guarantees benefits – for all citizens. It is about hearing the citizens' silenced voices – though always keeping in mind the public values.

Government has a special role and responsibility within a society and it has a great influence on our everyday life. It has namely a certain freedom to decide how the resources are allocated within a society, also family matters. However, to strive for the common good should be the main principle of a governmental agency. In addition, democracy should be part of every government action. Governmental responsibility consists of many duties: Decisions made in the government should be more interested in service rather than in profit. Moreover, the government should be dynamic and be able to see in the future in the more globalizing world.

Characteristics of good governance include rather much same characteristics as the doctrines of new public administration and new public service: It should be based on widespread citizen participation and listen the citizen's needs – fairly, without not excluding an effective and efficient use of public resources. Furthermore, characteristics of good governance are described to include legal and transparent framework as well as being accountable to the public.

One part of government work is the welfare policy. Regime forming is an essential part of comparisons and there exists mainly two divisions among the welfare state ideology: "The three welfare groups" as well as an other division adding a fourth group. Typologies are practical and they are useful for creating ideas further. One essential criterion for groupings is whether they are responsive for families or not. Broadly saying it could be said the Nordic countries belong to an extensive benefit system whereas the Southern European countries to less extensive one and the Central European countries place in the middle. Esping-Andersen's 'three welfare regimes' suggests there are three welfare groups in Europe, where Finland belongs to its own group and Italy and Germany belong to same group. However, social security model and many other groupings suggest there is a fourth group of Southern European countries where Italy also belong.

3. METHODS AND DATA

3.1. Comparative approach

According to Salminen (2000: 14), the future of administrative science depends on administrative comparisons. In this century, the international development is supported by comparative information based on politics, administration, economics and culture (Salminen 2000: 31). This thesis provides comparative information about supporting families.

As Waldo has stated, comparative public administration has its roots in traditions of philosophy, politics, history and sociology, so to mention. After the Second World War the field got its impulse of the geopolitical circumstances: there were vast disparities in wealth, power and stability. (Waldo 1996: v.) In comparative public policy, one of the fields is social policy. When comparing social policy, it is about focusing on the status of social policy, its strategy, methodology and application – as well as comments on previous results and future directions. (Heady 1996: 49.) Also in this thesis, these aspects of family policy in Finland, Germany and Italy are discussed.

In international comparisons the search for exceptions can be an excellent strategy of comparative research: only by comparing can one say that a country is or is not deviant (Dogan & Kazancigil 1994: 12). “Of ourselves, so long as we know only ourselves, we know nothing.” (Wilson 2004: 33). When all is said and done, comparisons are the essential way to control the function. In many instances operations can only be exercised through the comparative method. In addition, at the same time via comparisons you can learn from others’ experiences. (Sartori 1994, quoted in Dogan & Kazancigil 1994: 2.) Concerning the socio-economic changes, governments are also being encouraged to compare their performance with other countries, their counterparts (Hantrais 2004: 164). It would with no trouble be assumed that Western countries in Europe might be very similar in certain policies or that their administrative systems

would have such far-reaching different consequences. Actually, this is what makes the study fruitful between Finland, Germany and Italy.

Studying different ideas enriches our thinking; it provides nuance and depth. Simultaneously, these ideas complicate matters as there are different views of public service and diverse thoughts of correct behavior in a certain role. (Heidenheimer et al. 1990: 2; Lewis & Gilman 2005: 129.) However, at its best, the comparison can truly deepen our understanding in what are the components and effects of administrative culture, public management and politico-administrative policymaking (Salminen 2000: 31; Heidenheimer et al. 1990: 2).

As Salminen (1999: 56) has stated, when the approach is to make a comparison between a phenomena or cases, it must be analogous and selected characteristics must be compared systematically. Also in this study the comparison is applicable since the same selected aspects and variables of family policy will be applied to each country. Therefore, that Finland, Germany and Italy have different backgrounds do not affect the reasonable implementation of the study. As Salminen (2000: 25) still has noticed, this type of case-comparison concentrates on the analogous comparison of similarities and differences. In addition, the concepts must be universal. They are not arbitrary, culturally bounded concepts; on the contrary the studied concepts are same in every country.

One aim in making comparisons across nations is that policy strategies used in one country often have significant impacts on policy-making in other countries. In order to function successfully, we need to understand the diverse problem-solving approaches that nations adopt. Also this study makes us to broaden our understanding of the countries' policies.

According to Heidenheimer et al. (1990: 4), comparative public policy is about how, why and to what effect different governments practice particular actions or inactions. Even an inaction, or non-decision, becomes a policy when it is thought over longer time

in a fairly consistent way against pressures to the contrary. In this thesis, it is the “family unit” which actions or inactions are analysed.

In comparative study of public policies, it is typical to emphasize a particular policy field. Furthermore, the discipline takes elements from several different fields. (Heidenheimer et al. 1990: 6–7.) Likewise, even if this thesis concentrates on one field, family policy, it draws elements from other fields like political science and demographic studies, as well as from the realm of jurisdiction.

3.2. Qualitative research

This is a qualitative comparative study of family policy in Finland, Germany and Italy. According to Creswell, a qualitative study includes making metaphors, and developing matrices and tables, and simultaneously breaking down the data and making them into new forms. The result will be based partly on re-representation of the data, and partly on researcher’s own interpretation. (Creswell 2007: 43.)

Qualitative study consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world perceptible. Qualitative research has a naturalistic approach to the world. This means to study things in their natural settings, trying to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln 2005: 3.) In addition to these approaches, qualitative research has a strong objective towards transforming the world (Creswell 2007: 37). Also this kind of comparative studies of government policies, in this case family policy, are a step toward improving the policy systems.

According to Hantrais (2004: 164), a qualitative approach that take into account context specificity, and the motives and meanings of actors, provide an effective tool for figuring out the possible effects of social policies. Especially when it examines the whole process from policy formulation to practice, e.g. meaning the lived experiences of families, it is valuable to see the match between policy objectives and outcomes for

families. In the end of this study, for instance, it is showed the level of families' satisfaction with the public policy.

In general, in a qualitative study you aim to develop a complex and detailed picture of the issue under study (Viinamäki 2004; Creswell 2007). This includes reporting multiple perspectives, taking into account the many factors involved in a matter and generally outlining a larger picture of the whole. It is not compulsory to analyze large cause-and-effect relationships among different aspects; rather it is to identify the complex interactions in the situation. (Creswell 2007: 39.) Due to this the amount of the cases should stay limited in terms of the depth of analysis and better understanding: an increase in the amount of the cases makes the study more complicated. (Viinamäki 2004: 29.) Therefore, this study remains in the three countries in order to get an adequate and compatible analysis of the countries.

Typically qualitative studies “are emotion laden, close to people and practical” and one good reason to accomplish a qualitative research is to hear silenced voices (Creswell 2007: 40, 43). This study about family policies is also to confirm this since it will show there are significant differences in the responsiveness of governments' family policy and that citizen's opinions are not that much heard everywhere – there are some silenced voices. Secondly, it is useful to use qualitative research when a problem needs to be explored (Creswell 2007: 51). As already mentioned in the introductory chapter, people might generally assume that social policies among European Union are rather similar. And even if the policies differ they might not know why and how much, especially when studies in the field have not been that much accomplished.

It is ideal to use qualitative research in order to follow up quantitative findings (Creswell 1997: 40). In this thesis, quantitative sources as tables and statistics will be interpreted with the help of qualitative information. The empirical material is seen as an indicator to what extent the countries are responsive. In the end of the empirical part this thesis presents citizens' opinions about family policy in the three countries, which are to authenticate the previous observations.

However, as Creswell has emphasized, sometimes qualitative studies do not have “right” stories: They might not have endings, only questions. However, it can be sought to create an accurate reflection of the gathered material. (Creswell 2007: 51.) Also this thesis, besides conclusions it makes, also raises some questions.

3.3. The empirical data

Documents are one of the basic types of information and it is possible to do a qualitative research by examining documents (Creswell 2007: 38, 43.) Usually in a qualitative research it will be gathered multiple sources of data rather than basing the study only on a single data source. After collecting the data it will be organized into categories and into more abstract groups of information and larger dimensions. (Creswell 2007: 38–39, 51.) In addition, there should be a “methodological congruence” in the study so that the purposes, questions, and methods of research are all interconnected and interrelated so that the study appears as a cohesive whole (Creswell 2007: 42). In this study, the data is organized into categories. The categories are congruent with each other and the concepts used are more or less interconnected.

The empirical material in this thesis consists of administrative and public policy literature, statistics and several types of documents provided by the governments or institutions and organizations such OECD, European Commission, Eurofound and Nososco. In addition, there are used constitutions and other legislative sources.

4. COMPARATIVE OBSERVATIONS OF FAMILY POLICY

In this part comparative observations of family policy are handled. Such matters as history, demographic situation, values, general welfare state ideology, legislation, financing, the amount of benefits, as well as citizen's opinions about family policy are discussed.

4.1. Historical development of family policy in the three countries

There are some comparables which are impossible to measure, but which still have an effect on the country's administration. History is one thing which has an enormous influence on national configurations. "The older a country, the more it has been shaped by its history." Some countries may have similarities in their systems; however, they can never be identical, because the attributes and features are constructed differently for each country. (Dogan & Kazancigil 1994: 11.)

The historical background can also be seen as the reason for decision-making in politics. Choices from the past can limit the availability of future alternatives. (Krasner 1988, quoted in Peters & van Nispen 1998: 52–53.) It is argued that the effect of the policies depends on the institutional settings where it is put into practice. It is a different thing to implement specific policies in another country with a different history and cultural background. If a country would like to enhance its family policy, it should look for the specific methods that would be feasible and reasonable in that particular country. (Björklund 2007: 36–38.)

The present policy instruments and political culture can be seen as part of historic development (Peters & van Nispen 1998: 53). Because cultural differences stemming from the history can be enormous between countries, the basic country descriptions are a prerequisite for the comparison, since these can be the answer to "why"- questions (Heidenheimer et al. 1990: 3; Salminen 2000: 23). Therefore, it is relevant to illustrate how the development of welfare state has proceeded in Finland, Germany and Italy.

Finland

Finland had an employee industrial accident insurance dating from 1895. Otherwise, Finnish social security remained underdeveloped compared with other western European countries until the Second World War. Most Finns did not have any kind of social security scheme, except the civil servants of the state, who were covered by a Pensions Act since 1924. Social security at this time mainly depended on municipal poor relief; Finland was a poor country which economy was mainly based on agriculture and forest industry. In addition, the civil war had also had its impacts dividing the country both politically and socially.

Finnish social security began to develop towards the end of 1930s. The first major reform was the National Pensions Act dating from 1937. This resulted from the new government co-operation between the Social democrats and the Agrarian Party and was seen as a significant socio-political reform showing a democratic direction. This reform together with the Maternity Grants Act from 1938 and the new Workers' Industrial Accident Insurance Act from 1935 represented significant progress in the development of Finnish social security.

Since the Winter War a new way of thinking, namely common responsibility, fairness and social security emerged. In the post-war period Finland developed into a state dominated by labour market organizations. The family allowance was a significant socio-political reform; it covered all the families with children. In 1950, 592 000 families with 1 262 000 children received allowances. Mothers became eligible for maternity grants in 1949.

Social Assistance act was created 1956. Absolute poverty was not anymore required; preventive care could also be given to people of limited resources. Social assistance included compulsory maintenance and care, as well as other support to improve the income and the state of health of the claimant and its family.

The status of social welfare in the field of social policy changed in the 1960s and 1970s. By the mid-1970s Finland had changed from an agrarian society to an industrial service society. New pension systems and sickness insurances constituted a significant enlargement of the social security system and the emergence of modern social insurance. In addition, children were discharged from the legal obligation to provide for their parents. The need for social services was also increased by the change in family structures as well as by the increased participation of women in working life. New social issues, like the need for children's day-care came up and the reform of children's day-care in 1973 made that local authorities became responsible for the arrangement for all children in need of such services.

The Children's Day-Care Act and the Primary Health Care Act were building blocks for the Finnish welfare state in the 1970's and 1980's creating the basis for enlarging the scope of universal public services. Also by the end of 1990's a growing emphasis on services was visible in family policy expenditure. Children's day care was expanded during the recession of 1990's and afterwards. Instead of part-time day-care and family day-care, a shift of emphasis towards full-time day-care started to dominate. In addition, improvements in family allowances and child home care allowances were made. (Niemelä & Salminen 2006: 1–50.)

Germany

In Germany social insurance was introduced comparatively early as part of Bismarck's political strategy in the 1881 being the great national social insurance program first in the world (Heidenheimer et al. 1990: 13; Bahle 2010). After Germany was united in 1871 under the leadership of Otto von Bismarck, the nation developed a common government structure and social policy. Already before the official legislation, there were numerous voluntary corporate and municipal help- and support funds to cover social risks.

Bismarck organized an extensive social law to cover the biggest risks of life. The laws grounded by the emperor were the foundation for German social legislation. To the time

of unification, only 10% of the population were included in the social insurance system, as they nowadays are almost 90%.

Officially the German decentralized social policy was established in 1889 and many laws laid the foundations of the German social welfare system already in the 19th century. Most efforts were completed by the mid-1920s. Legislations to cover illness, accidents and old age and invalidity were laid. The Hitler regime (1933-45) introduced major changes in individual programs and program administration. In 1942 all employees regardless of occupation were covered by accident insurance, by unlimited health care, and maternity leave was extended to 12 fully paid weeks with job protection.

The Weimar Republic started the basic social services, but family benefits and family allowances were not introduced, except for a short period after World War I. In general, the German family policy was underdeveloped in comparison to other Continental European countries during that time.

From the beginning the German social insurance system has been strongly based on dividing groups according to professions. Despite their objectives, the Nazis did not have any major effect on supporting families. For example, family allowances were primarily only for large families. They failed in this sense and German welfare state became strongly employment-centred.

Ministry of the Family was established 1954 and parental leave and child-rearing benefit were introduced in 1986. Two separate German states evolved after World War II, each with its own social policy programs. Later West Germany moved back to decentralized administration and control. In West, the return to separate earnings-related and means-tested benefits for different groups meant that social insurance, social compensation, and public assistance were not integrated into one overall administration. In the mid 1970s, legislators tried to unite the goals, the protection, and the entitlements as much as possible. But they failed to develop a coherent and uniform system that would have eliminated disparities in individual rights. Indeed, by the mid-1990s the

disparities in welfare benefits in unified Germany had become even more significant than before. (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales 2009: 1; Bahle 2010; Country studies 2010.)

Italy

A two-tiered economy is common for Italy because of the relative poverty in the South and the Wealth in the North. Italy was not unified until the end of the 19th century. The first obligatory social insurance systems were introduced between 1898 and 1919. The national social insurance system was finished and stabilized throughout the 1950s and 1960s. However, beginning from the 1970s the process of regionalization started and this had a vast impact on the welfare state sphere. (Ferrera 2005: 192.)

There were in Italy late 1960s social movements which contributed in more liberal social attitudes. They made possible more liberal family culture and contributed to various examples of relevant legislation. Thus e.g. family planning services were introduced in 1975. Even the extended family, which was the general pattern of Italian life, showed a remarkable decline in the whole country during the 1980s, including Southern Italy. (Niero 1996: 117–131.)

In the late 1970s Italy had a wide expansion of welfare provisions. The National Health Service established in 1978 is to be seen as the first universalist welfare state scheme ever introduced in Italy – and also as a sign of decentralized policy. The local health authorities became responsible for health services, even for family planning services. However, also problems arose: Italy did not have an overall National Health Plan: This resulted in advantages of the most affluent and effective organized regions and towns. (Niero 1996: 132.)

For a longer time, incrementalism has been the overarching principle in the development of Italian welfare state. It is also to remark that Italian welfare state has been based on a series of ideologies and that the social policy is much connected to the broader cultural, economic and social climate of the country. (Niero 1996: 132.) Even if

the proportion of GDP in social expenditures in the 1960s and early 1970s was high by OECD standards, the philosophy and the way to provide welfare were old-fashioned. Italy implemented a universal approach in health policy not before the late 1970s, and extended its social security system to most groups in society. During this time many other European countries were having problems with social policy and slowly the problems reached Italy as well: Italy was mainly accused of its unclear decision-making process, lack of public participation, legislative overregulation and of its clientelism and corruption.

Because of these debates, several proposals towards a more modern welfare system emerged. However, the suggestions were ignored. Due to the inflation of 1980s government wanted to keep the public expenditure under control. Nevertheless, in the beginning of 1990s the insufficient measures and the lack of an overall strategy led to the radical policy changes which can be seen as a turning point. (Niero 1996: 117–131.) Because of their special geoeconomic or geocultural situation, five autonomous regions were established in the 1950s and early 1960s. The other fifteen ordinary regions became fully operative not before the late 1970s. Regional disparities were still wide, though. Due to this the 1980s also witnessed the emergence of regionalist parties, e.g. Lega Nord supporting the independence of Northern Italy.

Italian welfare state is witnessing a clear dynamic of regional differentiation in important policy areas, though Italy has tried to move towards more universalistic system. However, external economic pressures and rising deficits meant that the universalistic welfare state never became fully developed. Public debt rose dramatically in the 1980s. This was due to the government's efforts to meet demands for more services without raising taxes. This resulted in the fact that Italy has today the largest debt in Europe. (Ferrera 2005: 192–203.) In addition, in 1994 the government caused massive social unrest as policymaking was not based according to national consensus (Esping-Andersen 1997: 75).

4.2. A current question: Demographic pressure on family policy

Demographic facts

“Europe is facing today unprecedented demographic change.” So goes the starting sentence of the European Commission Green Paper about confronting the demographic challenges. (Björklund 2007: 9.)

Ageing in the societies has started: The baby-boomers after World War II are now reaching their retirements from the labour market. These changes are putting much pressure on family policies. The population aged 60 years and above will be growing by 2 million people every year for the next 25 years. (European Commission 2008b.) The imbalance in societies will be even greater due to the fact that the number of the elderly is increasing in absolute terms as well due to the rising life expectancy (Saraceno 1997: 86). In addition, the family models have also changed intensely over last decades. (Scherer 1997: 44; European Commission 2008a: 1–5.)

Ageing poses a major threat to welfare states and their finances (Esping-Andersen 1997: 70); ageing indeed is seen as a “growth industry” (Clark, Burkhauser, Moon, Quinn & Smeeding 2004: 1). It has even been called as one of the greatest challenges in the history of welfare state (Ferrarini 2006: 1). It would be impossible to ignore the fact that ageing and its implications are major issues for our well-being (Clark et al. 2004: 1). OECD estimations indicate that if current benefit standards are maintained, ageing alone will cause pension and health costs to double or even triple by 2040 (Esping-Andersen 1997: 70). Even a late forming of family will have wide social and economic consequences. (Scherer 1997: 44.) Economically seen, one needs to make good decisions about policy and understand the direct and indirect effects of various actions (Clark et al. 2004: 1).

Many countries in Europe, including Italy, have faced severe problems in their welfare systems: In Italy about one-third of total annual public deficits are because of the pension contribution shortfalls. (Esping-Andersen 1997: 70.) Forecasts indicate that

Italian and German populations, having one of the lowest fertility rates in Western nations, will begin to decline in the next 25 years – if there is no change in policies. Populations in these states are becoming much older since 20 percent or more of their population will be over the age of 65 (Clark et al. 2004, appendix 1). The situation has to do also with familialism: Italy, a familialistic country has the world's lowest fertility levels while the most de-familialized Nordic countries boast the highest fertility levels in Europe (Esping-Andersen 1999: 67).

Usually the countries strive for maximum production. Still, in order to attain high GNP, it also needs population. Thus, economically seen, social policy is effective: it creates trust as well as economic and population growth (Kuusi, quoted in J.P.Roos 2007: 22). In addition, wealthy economic situation is usually good for children and wealthy children are good for the economics (Save the Children 2000: 20). Thus, it would be profitable to create a functioning family and social policy system.

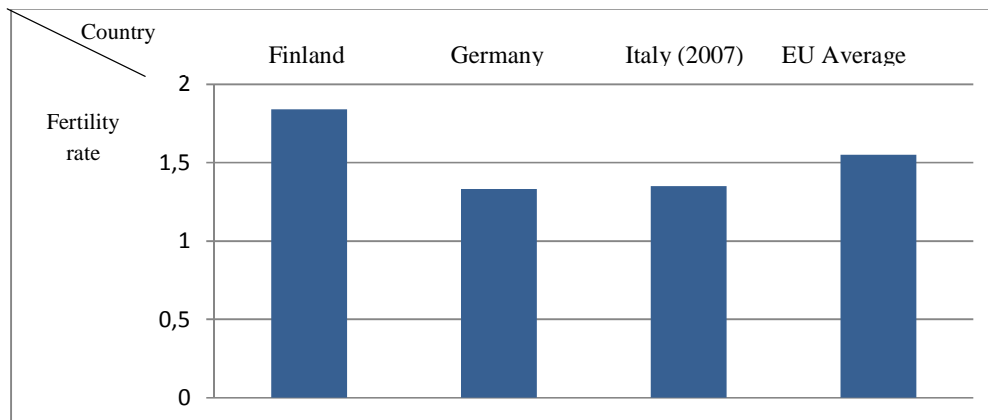
The demographic pressure is a current topic since the future of welfare states is not that optimistic either. According to George (1996: 196), most of the indicators examined suggest that future demand for welfare will rise. This poses a challenge to the national governments. It could be stated that European welfare state is not adapting with sufficient speed to meet the needs (Taylor-Gooby 1996: 216–217) and different national systems and governments have answered to the new social and demographic conditions to different degrees (Taylor-Gooby 1996: 216–217; Saraceno 1997: 91; Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 19; Paskalia 2007: 7). The Mediterranean countries appear to have been least successful in adapting to changes that should meet the future needs (Taylor-Gooby 1996: 216–217).

The variation between Nordic countries with generous family policies and other European countries with less generous family policies accounts for approximately 0.4 higher fertility rates in Nordic countries. (Björklund 2007: 36–38). However, it should be 2.1 births per woman in order to keep the population at about same size. Countries with lower fertility rates will have proportionally more older than young persons. (Clark et al. 2004: 13–14). This is seen in appendix 1: All the information given in the table

support the fact that countries with more responsive family policy also have more optimistic statements about population growth or median age. Since Germany and Italy have lower fertility rates than Finland, their population proportion over 60 years is also higher. Again, their population proportion under 15 is lower than in Finland.

As seen in table 1, Finland's fertility rate is around 1.8 compared to Germany with 1.3 and Italy with approximately 1.4. Finland has around 0.4 births more per women than Italy and Germany. That is typical amount for countries with more generous family policies as earlier mentioned.

Table 1. Total Fertility Rates in Finland, Germany and Italy in 2008 (Eurostat 2008).



What to do?

Changing family patterns must be taken into account in policy-making and in the modernization of family policies (European Commission 2008a: 1–5) since the ageing crisis depends not only on pure demographics, but also greatly on family and employment policies (Esping-Andersen 1997: 70.) According to some, it is the responsibility of policy-makers to answer to the demographic changes (Clark et al. 2004: 3).

During some decades it has been made cross-national studies about fertility levels and family policies (Björklund 2007: 36–38). Many studies show that generous economic support in the form of modern family policies truly has an effect on fertility behavior (Saraceno 1997: 85–86; Esping-Andersen 1997; 1990; 1999; Clark et al. 2004; European Commission 2005: 5; Anttonen & Sointu 2006; Björklund 2007). If the society helps and if a great part of the costs will be provided by the tax revenue, the burden of the expense is not that huge (Malms & Helavuori 2009: 56–57).

Many studies also show that by creating good possibilities to combine work and family may be one solution to relatively high fertility rates (Esping-Andersen 1997: 74; 1999; Paskalia 2007; European Commission 2008a: 5). Of course, this requires adequate and affordable care services. Furthermore, it has been showed that countries especially with high amount of female employment have higher fertility rates, too (Saraceno 1997: 85–86; European Commission 2008b; Duvander, Ferrarini & Thalberg 2008).

It has been studied, that one of the main reasons for not creating a family have been the financial costs (Saraceno 1997: 85–86; Kuusi, quoted in J.P.Roos 2007: 22). The main difficulties in family life were seen to be related to costs of housing and raising children (Esping-Andersen 2002: 63; Kuusi, quoted in J.P.Roos 2007: 22). According to a recent study, the first year of a child costs for the parents around 7000 € and before the child is 18 years the costs will be around 100 000 €. The costs are most expensive during the first year of the child since the income is at lowest during the maternity or paternity leave. (Malms & Helavuori 2009: 56–57.) Therefore, a new philosophy of dividing the costs of children in the society is needed (Esping-Andersen 1997: 74). That is almost an inevitable action towards more responsive family policy.

The studies also show that it is not any specific policy instrument; rather they are all the procedures and the political culture concerning family policy which affects the situation. The presence and the interaction between various policies are to raising the fertility levels: E.g. the Nordic family policy model with childcare and parental leave which aims at support both parents to combine parenthood and participation in employment. (Björklund 2007: 36–38).

4.3. Role of values

Value means “a belief, standard, criteria, or a preference that is held by an individual” or shared between groups. Around ethics interest in the family is seen as an important value since the family is the fundamental part of society (Sheeran 2006: 132). Also for the vast majority of Europeans the family is an essential value (Hantrais 2000: 95). Values are also important to take into account in the policy making: According to Armingeon & Beyeler (2004: 7), the more a policy idea goes well together with prevailing national values on the country – the more there is possibility this policy comes true.

Good administration and values go side by side; basically good administration means a burden of values (Salminen 2005: 8). Democracy, transparency, equality, integrity and responsibility are values which are traditionally related to good administration (Eskola 2006: 4). They belong to administration also in the sense that values which belong to administration are expressed in the law. Besides this, values often determinate how the ethical thinking in public service is seen. (Salminen 2005: 8–12.) Values are the principles that illustrate which administrative actions are seen as proper administration. There are many important values which are emphasized in the administration. But, if the values consist only of effectiveness and economic efficiency, it is not a good basis for administration (Viinamäki 2005: 32), thus values of fairness and objectivity challenge the economical values (White 1999: 21, quoted in Niemi & Salminen 2005: 29). Thus, it could be summarized that the values for welfare should have priority.

“Values form the foundation of the public service.” All the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development) countries hold a set of certain core values. For instance for Finland, Germany and Italy is common that they had all listed values as impartiality, neutrality and objectivity as the most frequently stated values. On the other hand also differences exist: such values as legality and fidelity to the state were listed as regular values only in Germany and Italy, whereas values as responsibility and accountability were listed as frequent values only in Finland and Germany. (OECD

2000: 33.) It should be mentioned, that the values mentioned in the lists should also come true in practice (Kajaste 1998: 11, quoted in Niemi & Salminen 2005: 29).

Also the functionality of good administration depends on values. At the opposite of good administration is weak and unresponsive administration. Corruption has been defined as the biggest obstacle for developing good governance (Niemi & Salminen 2005: 29, 34). This also according to United Nations; Corruption is known to be especially harmful toward the most vulnerable and deprived in the society (Dwivedi & Mishra 2007: 701–702). This can also be related to families: Families are also a vulnerable institution in the society, due to the extra expenses, among others.

Social capital has been measured in nations to show which values are appreciated. According to Kananoja it is a significant factor in a society: The purpose of social capital is to aim at the common good. The more citizens trust each other and the state, the more there is general integrity. The more citizens can take part of society decisions and the more impartial and equitable the income distribution is, the better the situation is. (Kananoja 2003: 194–196.)

The existence of maladministration is to affect to the social values as well. General trust in society is to affect positively citizen's well-being. People who live in less corrupt societies as well as those living in a stable democratic nation are likely to express more trust (Eurofound 2009: 55). The trust in political institutions is thought to derive from a cultural disposition for trust as well as from a cognitive evaluation of the performance of the institutions. Thus, it is connected to general feelings of trust in society. Trust on political institutions may be used as an indicator of people's trust in the country's democracy. (Eurofound 2009: 55.) This may come from the fact that political decisions should always be guided by the values and priorities of citizens (Ferrarini 2006: 159–160).

Of the Western European Union countries, lack of trust in such institutions as government and parliament is most evident in Italy. People in the Nordic countries

expressed the highest levels of trust whereas Central European countries were placed in the middle. (Eurofound 2009: 55, 62.)

It is the government and the parliament who in the first hand make the decisions concerning family policy. Thus, it is relevant to show how Finnish, German and Italian citizens evaluate the performance. Tables 2 and 3 could be seen as indicators that Finnish citizens see the policy functioning well and that they trust on the country's democracy: 70 % of citizens trust on government and 67 % trust on parliament. In Germany and Italy it is the opposite: In Germany 29 % trust on government, and 31 % on parliament. In Italy one fourth of citizens, 25 %, trust on government and 26 % trust on parliament. This reveals about the citizens' satisfaction or dissatisfaction toward the policy: As said the trust in political institutions is thought to derive partly from the citizens' evaluation of the functioning of the institutions. In other words, if they do find the country's policy being responsive.

Table 2. Citizen's Trust on National Government in 2006 (European Commission 2007).

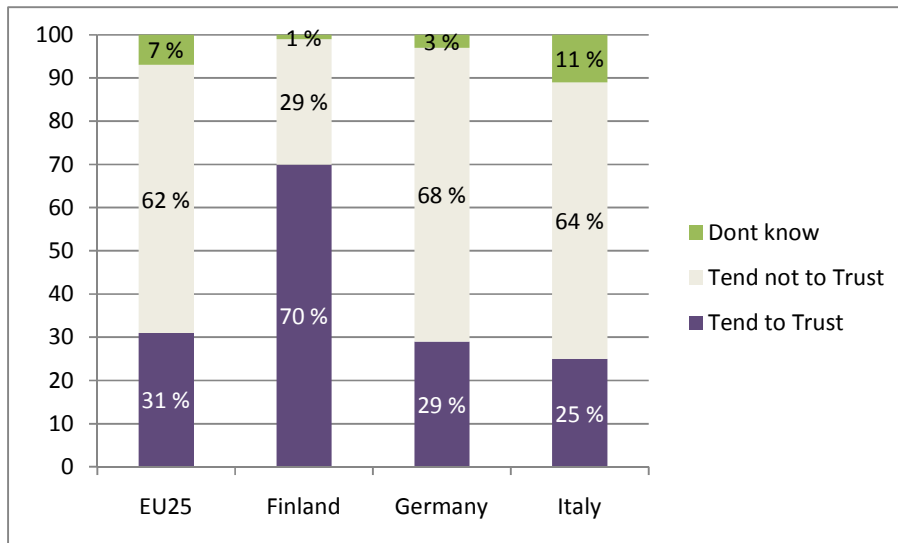
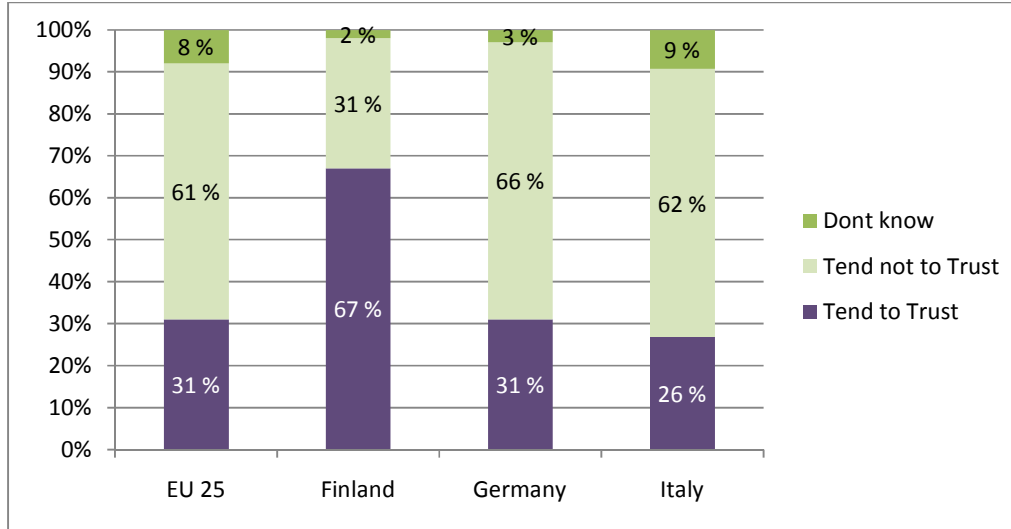


Table 3. Citizen's Trust on National Parliament in 2006 (European Commission 2007).



4.4. Welfare state ideology in the three countries

4.4.1. Finland

Finland and “The three welfare groups” model

With this regime it is referred to Nordic countries. The reason to call this system “social democratic” refers to the fact that during the biggest social reform few decades ago, social democracy was the dominant force (Esping-Andersen 1990: 27). In general, this regime arrived quite late; In Finland it was established around 1960s (Esping-Andersen 1999: 78). It is also clearly the smallest regime group. Universalism, risk treatment, generous benefit amounts and striving for equality are typical for this regime. The latter could be expressed also as “an equality of the highest standards”. (Esping-Andersen 1990: 27–28.) The system might not always differ so much from other Western European regimes – but the difference is, the Nordic countries have brought the welfare thinking furthest. In addition, they have assured citizen-based rights automatically for everybody – and not contribution-based benefits as in many other regimes. (Esping-Andersen 1999: 78.)

To maximize the equality and well-being, the Nordic countries have no or minimized market thinking. This is possible if the benefits are adequate. Actually, it is not only Nordic regime which includes social democratic thinking. It is rather the liberal regime which provides rather modest benefits compared with the two other systems. However, what makes the Nordic nations unique, including Finland, is the fact that they with generosity provide universal benefits: Rich and poor receive the same rights and benefits. In addition, in this regime, the state plays a major role in promoting well-being and life changes. In the 1960's the Nordic states started to provide services catering to family needs, especially care for children and the elderly. (Esping-Andersen 1999: 78–80.)

Secondly, the social democratic welfare regime is characterized by its comprehensive socialization of risks (Esping-Andersen 1999: 79). It is committed to heavy burden in maintaining a solidaristic and universalistic welfare system (Esping-Andersen 1990: 28). However, it cannot be too little emphasized that there are many things to affect the functioning and benefit of the system, to begin with the ethicality, actually the whole culture. If there is unethical behavior in the regime, it is much to reduce the profitability of the governance and the public economy.

Social rights are seen as an entitlement in the social democratic regime-type; this has resulted in new middle classes. They pursued an idea that the services and benefits would satisfy even the most demanding tastes of new middle classes. Second, the equality would mean also that there is work available for everybody and workers can enjoy better earnings. Still, the approach is tailored to different needs. Factory workers have entitlement to the same rights as civil servants and all the social classes are under the same social security system. However, benefits are distributed according to accustomed earnings. This system doesn't require market forces. Consequently, it constructs solidarity for all. (Esping-Andersen 1990: 27–28.) Nordic system has always pursued equality by encouraging to work rather than by income maintenance or job protection (Esping-Andersen 1997: 67).

The social democratic regime aspires to deliver benefits preemptively, too. As far as family policy is concerned, it will emancipate it and help familyhood already beforehand the need is exhausted. The idea behind the liberation of family is to give capacities for individual independence. This signifies liberty for citizens, too. In consequence of this, the welfare state transfers benefits even directly to children and takes responsibility of caring for children. (Esping-Andersen 1990: 28.)

Finland according to the social security model and other relevant notions

Inside the social security model, social rights and benefits in the Scandinavian or Nordic countries indeed don't differ from the British or from the Atlantic model in the sense that they both are based on social citizenship. However, it is still much argued that the Nordic countries constitute a separate model. Their aims what they are pursuing are different: even if their foundation is to grant universal benefits for all, Nordic systems also provide significant extra income-related benefits, financed by contributions. Of this can benefit those who have been actively employed. Therefore, their system is said to have a dual objective: both to grant a minimum income benefit at the level of subsistence for everybody; and to provide considerable supplementary benefits concerning income. In general, concerning social policy, it cannot be stated that Finland would be that remarkably distinct in every aspect. However, the answer has so far been that they are the key aspects of policy and welfare which distinct the Nordic countries from other European models and make them to form an own group. (Paskalia 2007: 35–36)

First of all, it is clear to see that when welfare or living conditions are the case, a 'Nordic model' seem to persist as they have systematic similarities; Nordic social policies have more evidence for similarity than dissimilarity. The similarities include things like lower level of income inequality and low poverty rates. In addition, gender equality the Nordic countries have brought furthest. All Nordic countries, including Finland, have the lowest gender gap in earnings, as they also in general have higher labour force participation and relative low gender disparities in wages. You could even

speak about “a Nordic equality model”. In general, redistribution of benefits has been most obvious in the Nordic countries, including Finland.

Gender equality has already long time been an emphasized value in Nordic countries. Thus, it might have affected the shape that gender policies have taken. These statements are not directly about family policy. Nevertheless, they reflect to family policy as well. Therefore, e.g. mothers with small children in the Nordic countries do not need to be economically dependent as much as elsewhere. (Kautto et al. 2001: 263–267.)

Even if there are slight differences among the policies in the Nordic countries, they all, including Finland, belong to the same model and have followed the pattern of ‘modernized motherhood’ (Lewis & Ostner, quoted in Paskalia 2007: 98). Moreover, the Nordic countries are moving in a direction whereby children’s day care is securing the same rights as basic education for children. (Niemi & Salminen 2006: 9–23.)

At best the Nordic welfare model is described due to its wide production of welfare services and equality within. It has been discussed if the Nordic welfare states based on equality in the competing and global world cannot afford the system based on equality. However, the Nordic welfare state regimes have been exceptional in providing for economical, social and educational rights. These achievements have not been an economical hindrance: it has resulted in wide social rights, marginal poverty and the status of women have increased. (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 11.)

All in all, even if also Finland has disadvantages in its system and is even partly a low support giver in child matters when compared to Nordic standard (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 116–117), it is still the most responsive country in family policy between the three countries – and this belonging to the Nordic group. The public policy support may not directly strive for higher fertility rates, but the overall generosity of benefits, which are relatively high, redistribute income levels between social groups, thus resulting in raised life quality (Hantrais 2004: 185).

4.4.2. Germany

Germany and “The three welfare groups” model

The German welfare model is an example of a ‘conservative-corporatist’-system. (Esping-Andersen 1990). The reason why it is called “conservative regime” signals the dominant political movement. In most of continental Europe, liberalism has not gained ground; also the socialists were often excluded from the policymaking. The core of this regime type is a blend of class division and familialism.

Germany had welfare reforms after World War Two. Most Continental European countries copied these models. However, the reforms were far from equal politics. For this model is typical risk pooling and familialistic values deviating from the historical legacy meaning that Germany has had highly centralized government. The civil service can enjoy large benefits and much more luxurious priorities than “the others”. Concerning pensions Germany has been the case of modest corporativism and the basic distinction has only been made between factory and office workers, whereas health insurance is divided in 1,200 different regional, occupational or company-based funds.

Familialism is typical in Germany. It is a mixture of the male bread-winner favoritism of social protection and the centrality of the family who takes care of its members and is ultimately responsible for its members’ welfare. What characterizes Germany is the legal instruction that parents are responsible for their children and children are responsible for their parents in case of need. Even adults do not get social support if there are parents who could support them. In addition, there is also a systematic unwillingness to provide social services, as it assumes there are the general male bread-winner model and the practice of family wage. Therefore, the remaining group getting provisions are often “atypical” households as lone mothers.

The conservative model favours rather a passive support to employment management. They do prioritize a strong job protection for already employed adult, male householders. Active training policy or to work hard to get good employment situation

is marginal. To deal with youth or female unemployment in a conservative regime is a question of family support or of induced labour supply reduction. This can be e.g. in form of discouraging married women entering labour market or supporting early retirement. When we compare the conservative regime with social democratic welfare states, the uniqueness of the continental countries is even stronger, as we notice that the social democratic states are uniquely de-familializing. (Esping-Andersen 1999: 81–84.)

Germany according to the social security model and other relevant notions

Social security systems in this model are based on work performance. The benefits are restricted to well-defined categories of the employed people. Therefore, the insurance model is the typical feature of these systems. The schemes are divided into many groups addressing specific fragments within the workforce. Even if the principal purpose is income maintenance in times of need for those covered by the schemes, the system actually deteriorates the class and status differences within the workers, supporting only partial solidarity.

The social security model, as well as Esping-Andersen's model, interprets the system originates from the early German insurance schemes from Bismarckian times. This system prevails mainly in continental countries with a strong religious tradition. In Catholic countries where the 'subsidiarity' prevailed, social security could not develop to an advanced level. The matter of subsidiarity, e.g. that the state is expected – and even permitted – to help citizens only when the family as a first option has exhausted its capability to help.

In other words, social security in this system has developed on a fragmented basis. Stronger family influences had left not much space for the development of state responsibility. Moreover, the relationship between Church and the State was considered to be essential for the emergence and development of social security and its articulation in distinct models. In the Catholic countries, the Church by tradition assumed

responsibility for the care of the poor and sick as well as education and maintaining e.g. schools and hospitals. This was the case well into the 20th century. (Paskalia 2007: 34.)

German model could be described to lie somewhere between the Nordic and Latin social models. According to Hassel (2001: 154–155), differing from more universal, egalitarian models of social-democrat regimes in Nordic countries, the German welfare system aspires to sustain some traditional differences by preserving the differentiated treatment of social groups. For instance, the public policy is driven by the desire to raise children within a two-parent, preferably, or exclusively, married couple (Hantrais 2004: 160). Also otherwise differentiated treatment exists between civil servants, farmers and the self-employed. The German social security system is also based on an assumption that everybody are working. This discriminates citizens not in employment. (Hassel 2001: 154–155.)

As far as the administration and policy formation of German social security is concerned, organized political activities have much room for public functions. As a corporatist country, the speciality of the German model are the importance and the autonomy of their organized interest associations which officially lead many of their public functions and belong to the organizational structure of social security. Parties, welfare organizations, churches and trade unions are examples of these interest groups. (Hassel 2001: 154–155.)

Germany is an example of a country that during the latest years has been struggling with low birth-rates and problems of women to combine paid work and family responsibilities (Ferrarini 2006: 159). Policy measures are dedicated for families more to be able to combat with everyday life – not for supporting whether or not to have children (Hantrais 2004: 185). Among Central European countries Germany is a country where social services and other benefits are more focused on elderly with many services.

Typically, woman employment in Germany is low (Anttonen & Sipilä 1996: 17, quoted in Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 16–17). In addition, public policy influences the family-

employment relationship. In Germany, e.g. the parental leave is found ambivalent. The taxation system is seen as favouring the male breadwinner providing a further disincentive for women to be employed. (Hantrais 2004: 185.)

The family belongs to the core of German and Christian democratic ideology, but there appears to be a gap between idea and practice. German family benefits are modest by comparison: Public support on family policy as percent of total social expenditure is medium. In addition, Germany is situated in the middle when compared child benefit packages. (Bahle 2010.)

4.4.3. Italy

Italy and “The three welfare groups” model

According to Esping-Andersen, Italy is said to belong to the same conservative welfare regime as Germany. The social Catholicism and its doctrine subsidiarity have been particularly strong in Southern Europe. As well as in Germany, also in Italy the etatist heritage was postponed in the new post-war welfare state.

Italy, in contrast to Germany, has a unified health programme while Italian pensions are divided in more than 120 occupational plans. (Esping-Andersen 1999: 82–84.) Also otherwise, Italy has a great emphasis on pensions. This might possibly allow for intra-family economical assistance from the old to the young, but it is not guaranteed and the social inequality still exists. (Esping-Andersen 1997: 75.)

In Southern Europe, as in Italy, familialism is an important attribute of conservatism. To give the family benefits is often seen as unnecessary due to the practice of “family wage”. (Esping-Andersen 1999: 82–84.) Due to the familialism, Italy is more “pensioner state” rather than “welfare state”. The contradiction of pro-family policy in countries like Italy is that it maintains family responsibilities – but at the expense of declining fertility rates. (Esping-Andersen 1997: 64, 67.) Interestingly, family policies are extraordinarily undeveloped in the most familialistic regimes, as in Italy (Esping-

Andersen 1999: 51). And, as already stated in the German case, also in Italy prevails a legal instruction that parents are responsible for their children and children are responsible for their parents in case of need.

The Italian system, belonging to the conservative regime, assumes the standard model to be the male bread-winner family. Therefore, transfers for ‘atypical’ households, e.g. lone mothers, tends to be insignificant. This type of residualism has parallels with the liberal model. However, its target is very different: conservative residualism is above all a response to a family failure whereas liberal residualism means picking up bad risks left behind by market failure. Nevertheless, in both cases, the approach supports social assistance over rights, such as the Italian social pension, or in Germany the German “Sozialhilfe”. (Esping-Andersen 1999: 82–84.)

Italy according to the social security model and other notions

It was not many years ago, that southern European welfare states were only a matter of little academic research interest. In the past, they were either not included in the comparative social policy studies, or they were included within broader “welfare families” or regarded as under-developed systems having a bit similar development as their more developed counterparts to the North. (Paskalia 2007: 37.)

According to the social security model, Italy is positioned to belong to ‘latim rim’ countries. However, it is also positioned to belong to the continental, that is to say, in the conservative group as in welfare state grouping to certain extent. However, the social security model greatly emphasizes Italy does not exactly belong to the same group with Germany, as Esping-Andersen’s theory partly do. This “fourth group” has been characterized as rudimentary, undeveloped welfare system. In some of the countries belonging to this group, there is no right to welfare. Instead, welfare traditions from the past associated with the Catholic Church appear to exist.

Some social security schemes function as basic income arrangement. Employment structures might be radically different and often include rural orientation. This scheme

provides a system to economically barely survive and thus reveals a different – non-northern European – ‘welfare’ state background. In addition, these countries do not strive for full employment, especially with respect to women.

Many of ‘Latin rim’ countries have taken big steps and have made strong promises in their legislations pointing towards a ‘modern welfare state’. However, the implementation of the legal, institutional and social levels of these plans appears to be lacking.

This categorization has been criticized for regarding southern European countries as old-fashioned and that is has not been taking into account the development and expansion of welfare systems in 1970s and 1980s. Anyhow, according to the social security model, it is the centrality of the family which is the important key feature in all southern European regimes. Even if we cannot speak of a specific family model, in all of the ‘Latin Rim’ countries, including Italy, there are certain common functions in the family units. This helps e.g. understanding the women employment policy. In spite of all, the family functions as a safety net being the source of security and support to their members: among others the family provides the childcare and services to the sick, elderly and disabled. Also in case of unemployment, families bring together their income from different sources. When in other countries they are the state welfare grants which provide you the welfare, in ‘Latin rim’ countries, as Italy, it is the family which tries to make it possible to their members to have availability to welfare. (Paskalia 2007: 36–37.)

However, the southern European countries, where families often appear to be in most need of financial support, are generally those where governments have not the funds available to invest in support measures (Hantrais 2004: 160). In southern European countries, as in Italy, governments are criticized for the low level of provision, which is seen as unhelpful in preventing poverty and does not mean family support in times of need. In addition, since services are delivered at communal level, the different distribution of services emphasizes the internal disparities within the country. (Hantrais 2004: 176–177.)

Even if in southern European countries' public childcare strategies are planned with enabling more women to enter and remain in working life when they have young children, a frequent complaint is about the mismatch between working hours and opening hours of childcare centers which are not coherent. (Hantrais 2004: 189.)

4.5. Legislative foundation of family policy

Good legislation does not necessarily make good government, but good government cannot emerge without good laws. The conditions necessary for respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law cannot improve without an adequate legal basis.

Legislation and its implementation are therefore critical to the development of democracy and the rule of law. Also, for democracy to function properly, laws have to be prepared, drafted, discussed, and adopted through an open and transparent process that involves actors outside parliament and government. (OSCE 2010.)

The system of laws is the foundation for the pursuit of policies. They define the civil rights and duties of civil servants. (Roos 2007: 8.) The public family policy is justified in "lex patriae", the national law as well as in international agreements. Public servants influence policy through recommendations to the legislature. (Denhardt 2008: 47.) With information about the legislative structures it is easier to explain the causes and consequences of welfare states (Esping-Andersen 1990; Ferrarini 2006). Thus, it is relevant to give a description concerning family policy legislation in EU, Finland, Germany and Italy.

4.5.1. EU

Objectives

The EU coordinates and encourages national governments to combat poverty and social exclusion. It encourages them to reform their social welfare systems by learning from each other and controlling which policies function best. EU supports the countries to clarify the challenges posed by demographic change and to prepare for the changes of

population ageing by focusing upon the opportunities. In addition, EU encourages the member countries to report regularly with data and information. This is important for the comparisons across the EU. (European Commission 2010a.)

The dimensions of societal wellbeing are included in the Lisbon Strategy and are a focus of EU social policy. This is seen in the renewed EU Social Policy Agenda, which reflects the social services of general interest, solidarity and social inclusion. (Eurofound 2009: 53.) Also otherwise, in last decade, family matters have gained greater importance on the EU policy agenda (Hantrais 2004: 131).

In 1997 they required EU member states to improve childcare provision (Hantrais 2004: 164). In addition, already in 1997 OECD also stated that policies should ensure that those who have children are able to combine family and career duties, and that parents need the possibility for child care facilities which are reasonable with their employment patterns. (Scherer 1997: 13, 47.) Still, EU does not control it. According to Scherer (1997: 47), in many countries inside Europe, the governments are supporting one-earner systems. In these countries, starting a family has declined and family sizes continue to fall.

Legislation

The legislative framework for EU social policy has been modest when compared to legislation on other fields (Cairns 2002: 271). European law has consistently had the judgment that social policy decisions should be accomplished at national level, performing according to the subsidiarity principle to accommodate differences in welfare systems. Therefore, one point making big difference in the family policy is the legitimacy of state intervention in family affairs, which differs greatly between the member states. Besides this, if policy formulated at EU level is effectively implemented in member states remains uncertain due to the fact that effectiveness in monitoring, policing and applying sanctions can vary greatly between the countries. (Hantrais 2004: 163–164.)

*“Article 33**Family and professional life*

- 1. The family shall enjoy legal, economic and social protection.*
- 2. To reconcile family and professional life, everyone shall have the right to protection from dismissal for a reason connected with maternity and the right to paid maternity leave and to parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child.*

*Article 34**Social security and social assistance*

- 1. The Union recognises and respects the entitlement to social security benefits and social services providing protection in cases such as maternity, illness, industrial accidents, dependency or old age, and in the case of loss of employment, in accordance with the procedures laid down by Community law and national laws and practices.” (European Commission 2010b.)*

European Union has a rather extensive legal basis for member states. Though, since there still exists the subsidiarity principle to let the member states decide themselves about their family policy and EU is not controlling their policy, it does not mean these paragraphs of law would come true.

4.5.2. Finland, Germany and Italy

Constitutions are a necessary part of democratic or republican government: it is the fundamental law establishing the character of a government by defining the basic principles to which a society must conform. (The Free Dictionary 2010b.)

In Finland, Germany and Italy, the Constitution has the highest hierarchy in the national legislations (Ismayr 1997:9; European Judicial Network 2007). However, the content and implementation of the constitution might vary, since the constitutions in Western European nations manifest themselves as a compromise between different political trends. This is seen as an important prerequisite to have wide consensus, stabilization and democratic legitimacy. (Ismayr 1997: 12.)

Finland

Finland has its legal roots from the Swedish tradition. Parts of the Swedish General Code of 1734 formed the basis for Finnish law even under Russian control and many Swedish laws relating to the family continued to apply after Finnish independence in 1917 (Bradley 1996: 30). For instance, the tradition of the Chancellor of Justice dates back to the 18th century. The Chancellor's duty is to control the lawfulness of the governments and public officials' actions. (The Office of the Chancellor of Justice 2010.) This is a unique institution bringing stability.

As earlier stated, social democracy and the advanced welfare states have had a major influence on the legal regulation (Bradley 1996: xiii-xiv). In general, comparative family law has been well developed partly only in Nordic countries, where they have had a progressive reputation and are commonly seen as setting trends for developed countries. For example, what comes to children and family already in earlier times: "In the field of family law... many questions on which reform was proposed in Continental Europe only after the Second World War were raised or even solved in Scandinavian law much earlier..." (Zweigert & Kötz 1987: 294.)

The cornerstone of the Finnish legal system is the rule of law: The main right of a citizen is the extensive legal protection, to get the matter appropriately dealt and without unjustified delay. (LAKI24.fi)

The Finnish Constitution takes family and social policy into account in section 19:

*"Section 19 - The right to social security
Those who cannot obtain the means necessary for a life of dignity have the right to receive indispensable subsistence and care.
Everyone shall be guaranteed by an Act the right to basic subsistence in the event of unemployment, illness, and disability and during old age as well as at the birth of a child or the loss of a provider.
The public authorities shall guarantee for everyone, as provided in more detail by an Act, adequate social, health and medical services and promote the health of the population. Moreover, the public authorities shall support families and others responsible for providing for children so that they have the ability to ensure the wellbeing and personal development of the children.*

The public authorities shall promote the right of everyone to housing and the opportunity to arrange their own housing.” (Finlex 2007.)

Finnish Constitution emphasizes that all the families and citizens are under protection. It comes out from the text that despite of citizen’s background, welfare and well-being must be granted.

Germany

Nowadays, Germany is described to be legally and politically a stabile country (Facts about Germany 2010). Historically seen, the German law goes back to Roman law as well as to other legal foundations in the various German regions (Facts about Germany 2010). The German Civil Code, in force from 1900, had its emphasis on a bourgeois, conservative model of the family. Authority to family matters was imposed to the husband, who was also principal actor what comes to the property. This remained under National Socialism and until 1953, when the courts created a paragraph of equality in the Basic Law of 1949. The official Law on Equal Rights of Men and Women of 1957 gave married women independence concerning the property – but still cast her as a housewife. Still, there were remnants of the conservative family model in the Civil Code until 1976 (Bradley 1996: 14), which still partly exist.

German Constitution states in article 6 about “Marriage, Family, Children Out of Wedlock”:

- (1) Marriage and family are under the special protection of the state.*
- (2) Care and upbringing of children are the natural right of the parents and primarily their duty. The state supervises the exercise of the same.*
- (3) Against the will of the persons entitled to their upbringing, children may only be separated from the family, pursuant to a statute, where those so entitled failed or where, for other reasons, the children are endangered to become seriously neglected.*
- (4) Every mother is entitled to protection by and care of the community.*
- (5) Children out of wedlock, by legislation, have to be provided with the same conditions for their physical and mental development and for their place in society as are legitimate children.” (University Bern 2009.)*

In German Constitution the responsibility of the family is much emphasized. It lets one understand there are maternity benefits, though it not emphasizes if really everybody are protected.

Italy

Italian law is based on the civil law, the revived classical Roman law. Thus, the Italian law tradition has a long history. (Pennington 2010.) The complexity of its system is overwhelming and one of the most difficult western legal systems. Italy has an impracticable amount of inconsistent national and regional laws, regulations and judicial exegesis appears extremely complex. (Trautmann 1997; Pennington 2010.) Since centuries Italian law system is overloaded with hierarchy, highly formalized processes, enormous court queues, disastrous penal systems and numerous unsolved crimes. In addition, the basic rights are at risk due to the combating against mafia. Due to the mentioned facts Italy can be called as the birthplace of law and grave of justice. (Trautmann 1997.)

As stated in many points in this thesis, the variations of social services among the countries might have e.g. cultural and juridical reasons. In Italy, for instance, the families have a juridical obligation to help family members in need of social care – something that does not exist in Nordic countries. (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 21.)

Italy's Constitution emphasizes the issue of marriage. The same way as German Constitution, the Italian one mentions the protection for mothers and children – especially for large families. However, it does not emphasize that everybody, also small families, in every case, would be protected, as the Finnish Constitution does.

Italian Constitution mentions family matter in three diverse articles:

“Art. 29

The Republic recognises the rights of the family as a natural society founded on marriage.

Marriage is based on the moral and legal equality of the spouses within the limits laid down by law to guarantee the unity of the family.

Art. 31

The Republic assists the formation of the family and the fulfillment of its duties, with particular consideration for large families, through economic measures and other benefits.

The Republic protects mothers, children and the young by adopting necessary provisions.

Art.37

Working conditions must allow women to fulfill their essential role in the family and ensure appropriate protection for the mother and child.” (Senato della Repubblica 2010.)

In addition, it could be mentioned that Finnish law consists of altogether 1700 acts and regulations (Finlex 2010). The body of German federal laws includes approximately 1900 acts and 3000 statutory instruments (Facts about Germany 2010). The Italian national law consists of approximately 200 000 law paragraphs covering overwhelmingly large amount of paragraphs when compared to other European law, e.g. the French law which consists of 8000 paragraphs (Trautmann 1997). Already this can explain something about the citizen satisfaction and differences in family policy responsiveness. It can explain whether and how clearly, effectively and transparently the citizens are served – to what extent do the concepts of good governance come true.

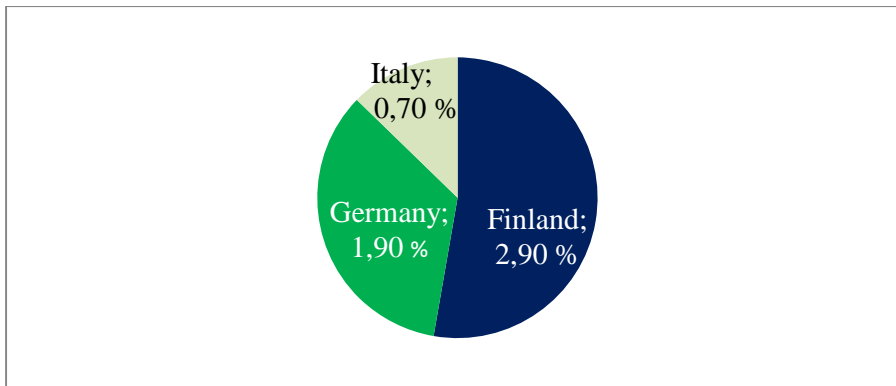
4.6. Financing and the benefits

It is important to illustrate the concrete benefit amounts since “reality displays much greater complexity and ambiguity than theoretical models” (Kautto et al. 2001: 263).

4.6.1. Expenditure on families

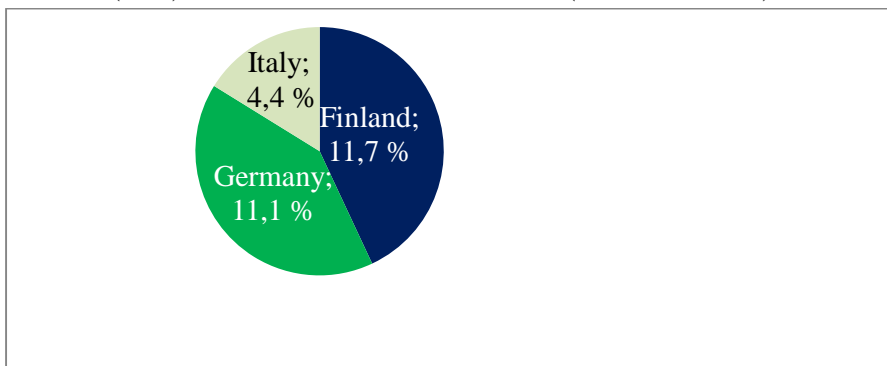
In general, it is good to support families since otherwise, as Scherer mentions, cutting government expenditure increases the pressure of citizens to provide for themselves (Scherer 1997: 55). Expenditure on families and children of GDP is in Finland 2, 90 %, in Germany 1, 90 % and in Italy 0, 70 %, as shown in table 4. As percentages of GDP, one cannot see that much difference between the countries, though Finland spends most of the three. Germany uses 1 % less than Finland and Italy 2, 2 % less than Finland. The differences remain relatively small.

Table 4. Expenditure on Families and Children as Percentages of GDP in the Three Countries in 2006 (Nososco 2009a).



In table 5, one can see how the expenditure of total social protection is allocated. Finland uses 11, 7 % to family and children, Germany spends 11, 1 % and Italy uses 4, 4 %. Germany's expenditure does not differ significantly from Finland's expenditure. However, as one can see later in table 6, Finnish citizens receive double as much benefits as Germans. Thus, it can be that benefits in Germany are reserved e.g. more for large families. Italy's expenditure on families and children shown in table 5 are more or less congruent with the amount of real received benefits, as displayed in table 6 about "effective parental leave".

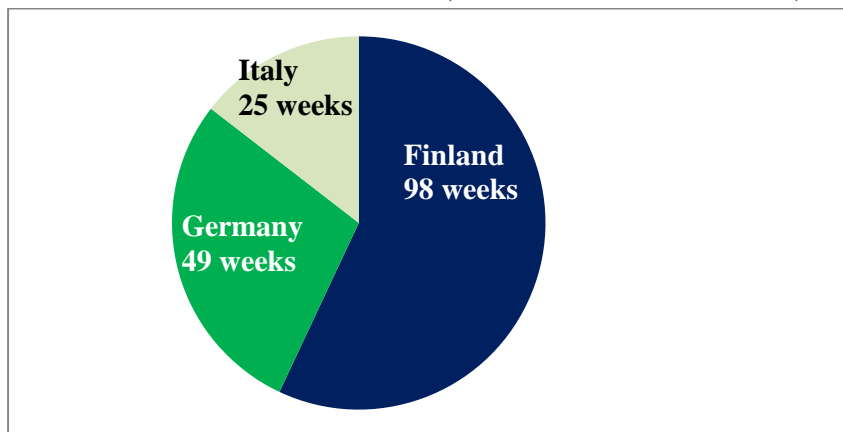
Table 5. Benefits to Family and Children as Percentage of Total Social Protection Benefits (TPS) in the Three Countries in 2006 (Nososco 2009b).



4.6.2. Temporal and financial benefits

It is possible to sort out the countries according to what is the “real” amount of parental leave and how “effective” it actually is. “Effective parental leave” is a result of all the leaves and benefits which you get by proportioning the leave with the financial benefits during the leave including the variables of maternity leave and financial maternity benefits. (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 42.) This is an important calculation, since practically seen, e.g. a cash benefit received or a tax cost avoided may be indistinguishable in their effect on a family’s disposable income (Heidenheimer et al. 1990: 18).

Table 6. “Effective Parental Leave” (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 43).



The “effective parental leave weeks” are possible to sort out in three groups among EU countries. To the first group belongs Finland with almost hundred weeks being one of the longest countries of effective weeks in the EU area. In Finland, and in general in the Nordic countries, one gets high amount of benefits during the maternity leave and paid leave is long compared with other countries. In addition, especially the fact that the benefits during the parental leave are equal to benefits of maternity leave, which is still exceptional, makes this country group distinctive.

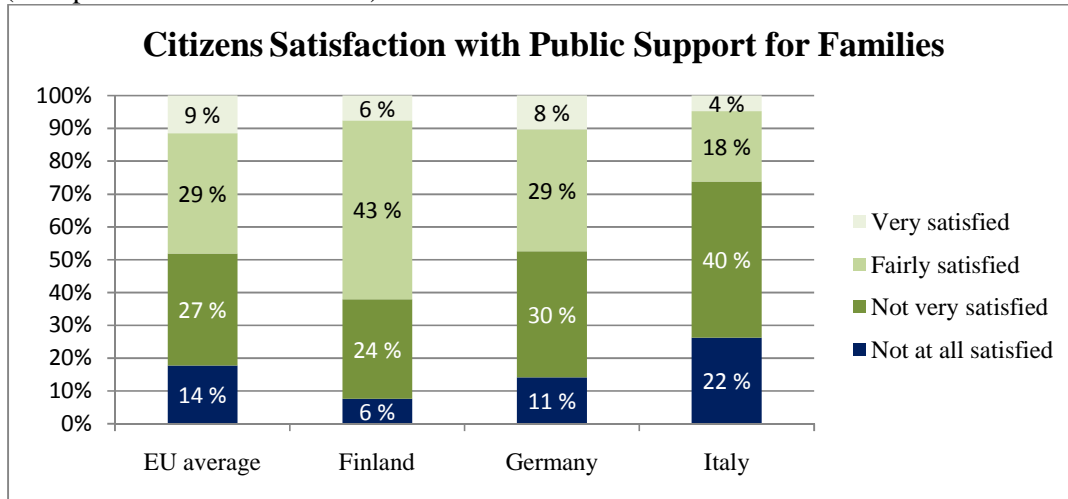
To the second group belongs Germany – countries with around 50 weeks. During the maternity leave women get a benefit which is relatively high compared to average salary. However, the parental leave, which is generally quite long, is mostly unpaid or very low paid, which above all, is usually based on one's income. In addition, when comparing the expenses, these countries are placed in the middle.

To the third group belongs Italy. Even if the maternity leave is relatively good compensated in Italy, during the parental leave citizens get very low assistance which makes Italy belonging to the group of least effective parental leave weeks. In addition, the duration of paid leave is short and the parental leave is mainly unpaid or one gets very low compensation of the period compared to the salary. Furthermore, countries of this group do not have long parental leaves. (Anttonen & Sointu 2006: 42–44.)

4.7. Citizens' opinions about family policy responsiveness

The amount of citizen's satisfaction in EU about family policy corresponds the amount how ambitious and flexible the child benefits programs are and how responsive the government is. According to Eurofound, the highest satisfaction regarding family life is expressed by people in the Nordic countries (Eurofound 2009: 37).

Table 7. Citizens' Satisfaction with Public Support for Families with Children (European Commission 2008a).



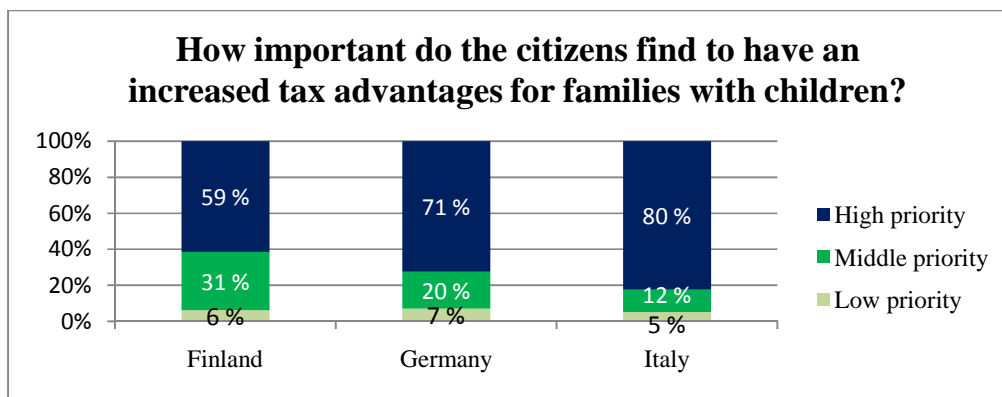
As table 7 shows, a majority of European Union citizens are not satisfied with public support for families with children; especially the southern European countries as Italy, show dissatisfaction towards public assistance. This includes also Italy where very or fairly satisfied are 22 % of all respondents compared to Finland with 49 %. Germany seems to place itself in the middle with 37 % being very or fairly satisfied; around the same percentage as EU average. (European Commission 2008a: 7.) This seems to reflect also in general to family life: Respondents in southern European Member States do not have such a high satisfaction with family life than those in northern and central EU member states. Very satisfied with family life in Finland are 54 % of respondents, in Germany 52 % of respondents and in Italy 41 % of respondents.

To find the right work-life balance was also perceived to be difficult. The countries are following more or less the same paths as with citizen satisfaction. Exception of all the 27 interviewed EU countries was Finland, where only 20 % found it difficult to combine work and family. In Germany 46 % of respondents found it difficult to combine career and family and in Italy the amount was 52 %.

Two-thirds of people thought that public measures to give greater tax privileges for families with children should be important. Again it is to point out that the percentage

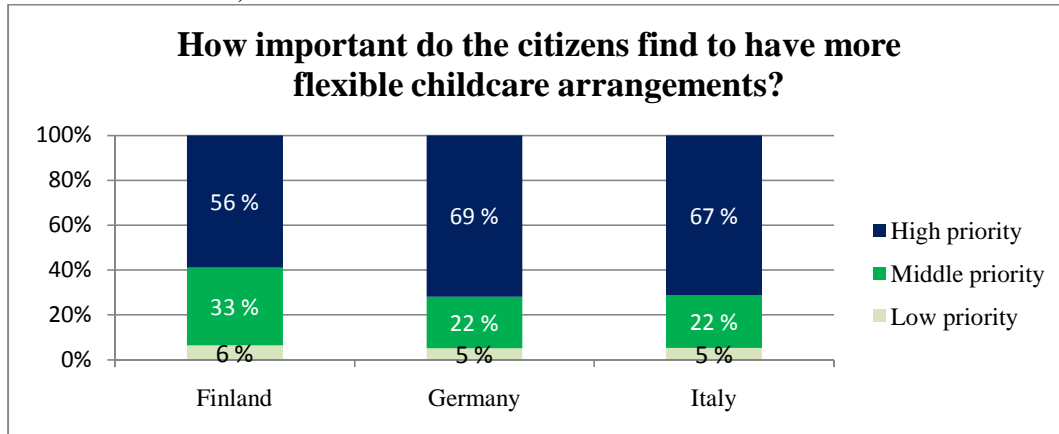
values correspond with earlier statements. In the countries where the state is not supporting families that much, the citizens wish increased tax advantages for families with children, as seen in table 8: In Italy 80 % of citizens give it high priority compared to 59 % in Finland. Germany is based “in the middle” with 71 % of citizens wishing increased tax advantages.

Table 8. Citizens’ Opinions about an increased Tax Advantages (European Commission 2008a).



Rather similar case is with the importance of having access to more flexible childcare arrangements: In Finland 56 % set high priority on it, in Italy 67 % and in Germany as many as 69 %, as seen in table 9. (European Commission 2008a: 5–8.) This again is following the amount of how responsive are the governments to family policies in the countries; the citizens set higher priority if there is not much support.

Table 9. Citizens' Opinions about flexible Childcare Arrangements (European Commission 2008a).



4.8. Summary

History is “a comparable”, which has an enormous effect on country’s administration. Although Finland was longer a relatively underdeveloped country, it later created an extensive welfare system. It started responsible family policy and in the 70’s the status of welfare changed: The state started to be responsible for children’s day-care, too, and 1990’s, the family policy was even more expanded.

Germany, a pioneer and country first introducing social policy, has been covering the biggest risks of life, though not taking all citizens into account. Steps towards families were created already in the 1950’s, but German social security system was long time based only on employment-centered system, and thus not covering all the citizens. In 1990’s, the family policy large disparities in welfare benefits among citizens were still to find.

Italy had relatively much progressive development during the 1960’s and 1970’s. Welfare provisions were expanded and family planning services were introduced. However, even if their social expenditures to that time were high, the way to provide service was slow and old-fashioned. To that time Italy reached problems which

nowadays still exist: unclear government and legislation procedures as well as corruption.

With the changed family models also the fertility rates in Western countries are alarming low. Women's low employment participation, as well as insignificant family policies have a direct connection to the matters. However, many studies show the fertility levels can be raised with responsive family policy methods.

There are values in the societies – of which family is one value. There are also values related to good administration; these again create trust in society. It seems that citizen's trust on national government and parliament is congruent with the amount to what extent the state is responding to citizens needs.

Welfare groupings are made partly on the criterion how they are treating families. To Nordic welfare grouping, including Finland, are typical generous benefit amounts, equally for everybody. This has resulted in middle classes. Social security in Finland is based on citizenship. It tries to cover the risks already before the risk has happened. What makes the Nordic system different is the fact that the citizens also otherwise get a lot of benefits. All this have been good for the economy and general well-being.

German welfare model is a mixture of familialism and class division. E.g. for civil service there are larger benefits. There is a legal instruction that parents are responsible for their children, more than the state. Social security in Germany is based on employed people. The system of giving the responsibility for family of the welfare prevailed in Catholic countries and social security could not be developed to be based on solidarity for all: there seems to be a gap between idea and practice.

According to “the three welfare groups”, Italy belongs to the same group as Germany. Italy's system is described being extremely familialistic, also carrying a legal instruction that the family is responsible for their children. Social security model and many other models though emphasize Italy belongs to another group, to the ‘Latin’ countries. They have characterized Italian system being more undeveloped: economic

benefits for families are low and poorly organized. Implementation of more modern welfare plans appears to be lacking.

Even if EU slowly has more objectives concerning families and supports the member states to be active in family policy, it still lets the countries decide of their family legislation themselves and perform according to the subsidiarity principle. Thus, EU's "regulations" do not have much effect on family policy.

Finland has the typical Nordic legal history which bases rather much on loyal welfare thinking. Concerning family matters, it states that in order to ensure the wellbeing and personal development of the children, the public authorities must support the families and others responsible for children. It emphasizes that everybody shall be covered by assistance at the birth of a child. Furthermore, the Finnish Constitution clearly states that everybody who cannot afford welfare themselves have the right to it. This is a sign of a very responsive policy and a unique statement of all the three countries.

German law goes back to a conservative assumption of the family. Even if Germany is nowadays seen as legally a well-balanced country, it has very many remnants from the conservative family idea, which are to see in the Constitution. In its article about family it mentions children out of wedlock are also legitimated for social protection. This is something, that Finnish constitute does not even mention since it more probably sees it as an obvious matter that children outside marriage are entitled to benefits. As in the Finnish Constitution, also in Germany families and mothers are all covered by special social protection of the state. Germany is the only country of the three, where it emphasizes that parents have the legal duty to in taking care and upbringing their children.

Italian Constitution comes from the renewed Roman law. Though the classical European law, the country is also called as grave of justice due to its countless complex legal systems, hierarchy, unsolved crimes and abuse of basic rights. The Constitution guarantees to protect mothers and children. It also mentions to give protection to families, though mostly if necessary, or if they are large families in question. They do

not emphasize that all families would be covered. Marriage is also mentioned in the German Constitution, however, the Italian Constitution has even more conservative assumption about families: “Family is ... founded on marriage” which does not included in Finnish Constitution about families at all.

All in all, the constitutions of all three countries guarantee at least rather extensive consideration of the families. However, the implementation of the law paragraphs varies.

Information about family policy financing goes congruent together with citizen satisfaction. The greater the state expenditure on family benefits is, the more satisfied are citizens with the policy.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis analysed government responsiveness to family policy in Finland, Germany and Italy. In general the main aim was to illustrate and describe these countries' family policy practices and afterwards analyze to what extent are the systems responsive, as well as to find explanations for their differences.

These countries have all national social principles. All of them are just administered differently and to a different extent, since serving citizens comes true differently in different nations, partly due to the fact that the status of governing family policy has also cultural, economical, demographical and historical reasons, so to mention.

The government affects extraordinary much our everyday lives. It is clear that the public policy – and if they are responsive or not – has a major impact on family organization and family well being. This makes the ordinary life of a Finnish, German and Italian citizen look relatively different.

The method for this research was a comparative approach based on documentary analysis. It utilizes various forms of sources including books, articles, statistics, legislation and relevant Internet sources as government and ministry websites.

This thesis analyses family policy responsiveness from the viewpoint of public administration doctrines new public administration and new public service. In addition, it studies the matter with the help of theoretical notions about responsiveness and good governance.

The matter of public interest should be the most excellent value of public administration. According to many scholars it is the duty of the government to assure that the issues of justice, fairness and equity come true. This is it; it is the responsibility of the government to strive for responsive family policy. If they are not the government and the leaders of the country organizing it, who will create it? If the administrators are not thinking about the citizens in the first hand, who will they serve first and foremost?

As most of the theorists state, there should exist fairness to the groups most in need in the society. In this case they are families. All the three countries take families into account, just to a smaller or greater extent. And actually, it could be made an assumption that the existence of social rights do not guarantee to fix the inequalities in the society. It is more about the stratification: For instance families are one group to which states should be responsive.

All of the theories used in this thesis state that governments should be sensitive to the opinions of citizens: There should exist citizen participation. This is important since as some theorists have stated, citizens are actually “the owners of the government”. That citizens have possibility to give their opinions in citizen surveys, as showed in the end of the empirical chapter, is already citizen participation. Finland scores above the EU average, where half of the population are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with public support for families. In Germany this amount is 37 % and in Italy around one fifth. For sure, it is not possible to please every sector in the society, but when only a small amount of citizens are satisfied, it rises a question should the government listen citizens more? If there prevails dissatisfaction among the majority of opinions, why not alter the situation or does the government has priorities somewhere else? Sometimes the reason can lie behind the fact that the government just does not have tools or resources for alleviating the situation if the aspects of good governance are not valued that much in the society. These aspects can be concepts as transparency, responsiveness, fairness, effectiveness, accountability or development planning.

Public administration theories emphasize the fact that when the governments do not continuously try to correct the inequalities, the problems will unavoidably deteriorate. From the historical descriptions about welfare and family policy development in Finland, Germany and Italy, we can see that in all the studied countries, in Finland, Germany and Italy, the social security started its genuine development after the Second World War. Germany has the oldest tradition concerning social and family services. Finland and Italy have younger traditions, though Finland has brought it furthest of the three countries, whereas Italy did never develop its family policy to a very high level.

Each of the studied country has a history of its own and it is important to take it into account when analyzing policies of a certain country. Finland has gone through the typical Nordic development with extensive social services available – for all – and especially being responsive towards families. Germany covered the biggest risks, though not taking families particularly into account. Even nowadays is the social security divided according to professions more to observe – than an extensive assistance available for everybody. Italy created in the 70's largely same sort of extensive welfare services as other Western nations. However, the disparities between the North and South were wide, which still continue to be. Problems which Italy faces today date back to that time when the country was already accused of unclear governing, lack of public participation, unclear jurisdiction and corruption. What comes out of both historical statements and welfare state groupings it seems that Germany has always been dividing people to groups. Even if the German welfare system was first in the world, it seems it developed to a certain point – and then stopped. The extensive Finnish child and maternity benefits were a kind of modernized version of the German model.

In the chapter about values it is found out that the values differ between Finland, Germany and Italy. It has been expressed through this thesis that properly governed politics arouse trust in citizens: It should be created trust in order to serve citizens responsively. As seen in the tables about citizens' trust in national government and parliament, it came out that around two third of Finns trust in both institutions, fairly double above the EU average which is 31 %. Italian and German population tend to trust significantly less, from 25 % to 30 %. Interesting fact is, that even if the real, total benefit amount in Germany is double as high as in Italy, as seen in table 6, German citizens who clearly state that they do not trust on government or parliament, are even more than in Italy. As tables 2 and 3 reveal the German citizens wish more from the government. In the legislation they guarantee rather extensive family assistance, still, at the end, they remain having only half of "Finland's benefits". Strengthening trust is important since it is the government who plays a key role in allocating the public services. If the citizens are not satisfied with the allocation, trust is not created either. It could be an assumption that the more there is trust on state-run institutions, the more responsive the government seem to be.

One reason for Germans distrust towards government and parliament being even higher than in Italy is since in Italy around tenth do not know if they trust or not. This is interesting; it seems that if the government is not that responsive, one do not know if one should trust or not, or you are more willing to show more distrust. In Finland citizens who do not trust are 1 to 2 %.

In this thesis, “three welfare groups”, social security models as well as other groupings were included. It is useful to form country groups when making comparisons. It can be stated that at the end all the groupings base to very similar assumptions and have arrived in rather similar conclusions. In other words, they have separated Finland, Germany and Italy to separated groups, as this thesis also it discovers.

However, not all of the welfare groupings end in same result: “Three welfare groups”, one of the most famous groupings made by Esping-Andersen suggests that besides liberal and social democratic group, where Finland belongs, to the conservative group belong both Italy and Germany. However, social security model and many other models criticize this statement being too inaccurate. It is true, that Germany and Italy have many differences in their policy systems, although they have more similarities with each other than with Finland. Still, as this thesis also shows belong Italy and Germany in many parts to separate groups, even if they are both familialistic countries: Table 6, “effective parental leave” and table 4 about “expenditure on families”, as well as juridical information reveal that the benefit amounts and assistance concerning Italy are much lower than Germany has. Thus, the classification “the three welfare groups” is not that accurate.

That Esping-Andersen (1990; 1997; 1999) has only formed three groups, is a kind of statement emphasizing the distinctiveness of the Northern group but still putting for instance Germany and Italy in the same group. Still, it seems that Germany in almost all the aspects studied in this thesis is situating between the two other countries. Table 5 about benefits to families and children and table 7 about citizens’ satisfaction support this notion, too.

European Union does not have much word on member states' family policy and they are the nations themselves to create and monitor their family legislations. In juridical facts are also some reasons for the differences in family policy responsiveness to find. Finnish Constitution emphasizes, that all the citizens are covered for security. Families are naturally included. The German Constitution states to cover all families, married couples so to say, and mothers, where the Italian Constitution let one suppose the state would give some assistance if necessary, mostly for large families. It also says to assist and protect mothers and children – however, apparently not all families. In reality the amounts are low as showed in table 6. It looks that the Italian Constitution promises some similar benefits as the Finnish and German ones, it might just do not have capabilities providing it.

Finnish juridical system is described being fluent in its processes; this might also explain that the citizens find the system relatively responsive. German legal system is described stabile, though somehow conservative, and the citizens find the family policy likewise moderately responsive. Italian legislative body is being blamed due to the juridical complexities, hierarchy and mafia issues, which complicate the whole administration, as explained in the chapter about legislation. These facts give valuable information concerning government responsiveness.

What comes to the area of family policy, of the three countries Finland has succeeded being most responsive and efficient. Finland has highest expenditure on families and children, following Germany and at last, Italy. Even if expenditure on families and children as a percentage of GDP is not that much higher as Italy, or especially Germany has, Finland has made best use of resources and stands in the table of effective parental leave as one of the EU countries giving the greatest temporal and financial benefits. Effective parental leave is a good tool to measure the “real” amount of financial, material and temporal assistance: it is a mathematic calculation which puts together all the benefits concerning family assistance. Finland gives support to families with 98 weeks. Germany scores half of “Finland’s weeks” with 49 weeks and Italy has half of Germany’s amount with 25 weeks. In this sense, Finland is besides being most efficient what comes to the GDP also most equitable towards families.

It can be that governments both in Southern and Northern Europe are everywhere responsive to family needs – just to a different extent. In Finland you get the benefits from the state, and in Italy and in Germany partly from the family. But, who guarantees the citizens also get the assistance from the family? It is not guaranteed they have the financial resources for it – this is one of the differences that makes Nordic countries more equal.

Even if it could be naturally assumed that financing these welfare states costs a great amount of money, it can be at the same time stated that it has brought these countries wealth as well, as it seems that equality and transparency go hand in hand with generous and responsive welfare systems, as in the Nordic countries. The thing that Germany and Italy seem to concentrate more on senior citizens, is not profitable in the long run. It might be that they maintain better the family responsibilities – but with the expense of declining fertility rates.

The European Union and the member states, including Finland, Germany and Italy, admit the fact that declining fertility rates are alarming. Still, concrete policy steps in order to improve the situation are in many countries missing. Various research results confirm the fact that countries with sufficient family policy have highest fertility rates. Furthermore, if the women employment rates are high, the fertility rates are high as well.

The policy practices should be also created according to current circumstances. In the European Union nations, family conditions have changed and work-related matters are not the same as 50 years ago. Finland has succeeded in answering to the demands of today best of the three countries. Also in order that the fertility rates stay balanced, families need support. The system in Germany, that a family with children should be based on a married couple is not anymore according to today's standard and might lower the fertility rates, too. Again, in Italy, even if their public childcare strategies are planned with more women to enter in working life, the accessibility and opening hours of childcare centers should be made according to the needs of citizens.

As a sum, to create a well-functioning family policy, it is above all being responsive. To form a good welfare state it is about thinking the public's best and the common good. In this case it could be asked from the Finnish, German and Italian citizens how satisfied they are? Citizens' opinions seem to be congruent with the information about the amount of benefits: the more responsive benefits the citizens get, the more satisfied the citizens are, as tables 6 and 7 reveal. Finnish citizens are most satisfied, they receive most family benefits of the three, and their fertility levels are also highest as seen in table 1. Germans are a bit less satisfied, they receive half that much benefits as the Finns do and their fertility levels are lowest of the three. Italians are at least satisfied of the three; they get one fourth of the amount of family benefits that Finns do get. Their fertility levels remain around the same as Germans have. It seems that German population is even more troubles with the fertility levels as the population growth rate in appendix also reveals: it is not growing at all. In Finland population grows 0.3 % per year and in Italy 0.2 % per year.

If European Union should be a coherent and rather similar group of countries, the countries shall not be very different. At least in the area how responsiveness the governments are to family policy in Finland, Germany and Italy, there are big differences making large diversity in the citizen's life-organizing in each of the countries. Therefore, it might give idea how similar or dissimilar the member states of European Union are allowed and thought to be? It seems that, despite of some objectives concerning family policy, the values of European Union are based more on financial targets and financial congruence, and not on social targets.

As came out from the theories, public administrators should pay attention to the future generations. One could assume that some bigger changes are not coming in these countries what comes to family policy. Still, it is to keep in mind that Italy and Germany are the countries with record low fertility rates in the world that some changes should be made in order to alleviate the situation. Also otherwise it is good that public administrators pay attention to the future politics.

During the study some future research suggestions came in. The differences of policy making concerning families in European Union countries could be more studied. The differences in such an important issue as supporting families and children could be more emphasized. In addition, it could be made even more micro economical studies about the family policies effects to well-being, the fertility rates, and thus, to the capability of welfare maintenance.

I want to finish this thesis with the famous words of John F. Kennedy (1963): “Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future.”

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APPENDIX 1. Background Information (WHO 2008).

Population annual growth rate (%)

Country	Value	Latest Year
Finland	0.3	2006
Germany	0.0	2006
Italy	0.2	2006

Population median age (years)

Country	Value	Latest Year
Finland	41	2006
Germany	42	2006
Italy	42	2006

Population proportion over 60 (%)

Country	Value	Latest Year
Finland	22.0	2006
Germany	25.0	2006
Italy	26.0	2006

Population proportion under 15 (%)

Country	Value	Latest Year
Finland	17.0	2006
Germany	14.0	2006
Italy	14.0	2006