

# Annotated Bibliography on Gender, Work and Family Issues in Finland

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May 5, 2009

"Eurostat". 2008. European Commission, Retrieved 02/15, 2009.

([http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=1090,30070682,1090\\_33076576&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1090,30070682,1090_33076576&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)).

Eurostat offers exhaustive and very up-to-date information on Finland. Available are graphs and charts pertaining to nearly every aspect of Finnish society. More importantly, current and official statistics are available, including employment by gender, age, and part-time/full-time status, marital status, parental status, etc.

"Ministry of Social Affairs and Health". 2007. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Retrieved 02/15/2009, 2009. (<http://www.stm.fi/Resource.phx/eng/subjt/famil/index.htx>).

This governmental website presents comprehensive and current information on Finnish family policies and services. There are detailed reports on early childhood education and care and daycare, gender equality, parental leave and financial support. Also offered are more specific "brochure" links to campaigns for significant family-work issues such as paternity leave and parental support in the form of special care allowance and subsidized daycare. Keeping up with its good reputation, Finland boasts a 3% GDP expenditure on family policy with a large percentage of that going towards child allowances and daycare. This site also maintains that a special effort is made to intervene in any situation of crisis and prevent exclusion.

"Statistics Finland - Tilastot aiheittain - Families.", Retrieved 3/3/2009, 2009.

([http://www.stat.fi/til/perh/kuv\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/perh/kuv_en.html)).

This website provides general facts and figures about Finland. It includes information about the make up of families and number of children from 2007. The site also provides tables and very detailed demographic information so that the viewer can easily access and understand important information.

"Virtual Finland". 2008. Finland: Virtual Finland, Retrieved 02/15/2009, 2009. (<http://finland.fi>).

This website offers extensive up-to-date information on Finland and its people economy, government, etc. It also contains various articles and statistics that deal specifically with national policies and practices on childcare, parental leave and work-family issues. In the article "Family-Friendly Finland" it is discussed how Finnish family policies are designed to take good care of their citizens, especially those with children. It is reported here that

Finland has had for years the lowest infant mortality rates and mothers have a significantly higher chance of being active in the workforce than those in many other EU countries. In addition the article offers information about perks and benefits that the Finnish government provides for parents in order to better reconcile work-family conflict. Despite much praise, the website also offers articles on the faults in Finnish social policies, such as the concentration on families with babies and very young children and perhaps the lack of policies for other stages of life.

Crompton, Rosemary and Clare Lyonette. 2006. "Work-Life 'Balance' in Europe." *Acta Sociologica* 49(4):379-393.

This study draws from the 2002 Family module International Social Survey Programme surveys for Britain, France, Finland, Norway and Portugal and examines the national variations in the reported levels of work and life conflicts. Crompton and Lyonette found significantly lower levels of work-life conflict in Finland and Norway and attribute higher levels of work-life conflict in countries with a more traditional domestic division of labor, as seen in France. They explore this by looking at women's involvement in the work force in each of these countries and the types of "parent" policies, as opposed to "maternity" policies that are being implemented in the Nordic countries but not the rest. Giving a detailed historical background of government policies and the influence of the second wave of feminism, Crompton and Lyonette offer a general overview of the factors affecting the work-life conflict including the impact of the domestic division of labor, attitudes and behavior, and workforce involvement. They conclude that despite the fact that the increase in women's participation in the workforce is a global trend, the consequences of this trend for work-life conflict are determined by individual state policies and residual gendered norms.

Francis, Joe, Andrew Kendrick and Tarja Poso. 2007. "On the Margin? Residential Child Care in Scotland and Finland." *European Journal of Social Work* 10(3):337-352.

This article compares childcare facilities in Finland and Scotland. In Finland, municipalities or independent sectors are in charge of residential childcare. Of all the Nordic countries, Finland families utilize the most residential childcare, though this is used as a last resort because they are viewed as being largely institutionalized. The main focus of both countries is on child's rights and family based care. In Finland, children are 2 ½ times more likely to be placed into residential care than Scottish children, which equals about half of Finnish children being placed in this type of care. This study examines 466 children under the age of three in residential care in Finland and 65 children in the United Kingdom. Recently changes have been implemented in the childcare institutions with an increase in private institutions because larger public institutions have histories of abuse and being poorly staffed. Finland's new type of residential care, "professional residential home", pays their staff well, however, larger establishments can afford better education and accommodate more children.

Gamerman, Ellen. 2008. "What Makes Finnish Kids so Smart?" *Wall Street Journal*, February 29, 2008, pp. W1 ([http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB120425355065601997-7Bp8YFw7Yy1n9bdKtVyP7KBAcJA\\_20080330.html](http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB120425355065601997-7Bp8YFw7Yy1n9bdKtVyP7KBAcJA_20080330.html)).

This article describes the Finnish educational system and explores the policies and practices that have earned Finnish children worldwide recognition in terms of intelligence. While they have no standardized testing, no valedictorians, no school bells, and have an average of 30 minutes of homework per night, Finnish teenagers, when tested against teens from 57 other countries are ranked the smartest. This article analyzes and discusses the possible explanation for the excellent scores and tries to pinpoint what exactly the Finnish school system is doing to create such intelligent students. The author argues that their great success is most likely attributed to freedom and trust in the educational system. Finnish children do not begin obligatory school until the age of seven, and when this happens, they are not hovered over by overbearing teachers, but rather trusted to act as responsible children. The teachers, in turn, are very educated and tailor the curriculum to the needs of the students. Other major reasons that may aid in the advancement of the Finnish education system include the amount of government spending on students, lack of distractions like sports teams and proms, and the largely homogenous population.

Gornick, Janet C. and Marcia K. Meyers. 2003. *Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

This book examines issues and policies for reconciling parenthood and employment from a cross-cultural standpoint. They discuss the changing patterns and trends in family-work relationships from a historical perspective, the implementation and consequences of national policies, and also propose strategies to facilitate the development of "families that work". Gornick and Meyers compare Nordic, Western European, and English speaking countries to give perspective on the similarities and differences of policies, practices and attitudes in each grouping. From this comprehensive comparison, they also provide many useful statistics on gender, work and family issues and policies and show the successes in many Nordic countries like Sweden and the failures of the largely English speaking countries. In doing so, they solidify their argument that it is necessary to improve work-family policies in the United States and model the system after other nations in which certain policies and practices have allowed for greater reconciliation of work-family issues. While Finland is recognized as approaching the ideal "dual earner-dual carer" society with greater reconciliation than the Western European and English speaking countries, it is still somewhat behind its Nordic counterparts.

Haataja, Anita. 2005. "Outcomes of the Two 1990s Family Policy Reforms at the Turn of the 2000s in Finland." *Yearbook of Population Research in Finland* 41:5-27.

This article discusses the recession in the early 1990s that spurred policy changes and welfare cuts that are still in place today and how those changes have affected families in Finland. She provides a great description of different family benefits provided by the Finnish government, such as universal child allowance, parental leave benefits and child homecare and daycare. Within her explanations, she discusses the different policies that

Finland enforces and how each of them affects different types of families. She does this mostly from an economic standpoint and discusses how the welfare cuts have especially affected single parents. Haataja also looks at how effective these policy changes were by running a simulation analysis of how family types would have been affected if there had not been any reforms, only the first wave of reforms, and only the second wave of reforms. She also provides a chart with this information, making it very easy to understand. This article provides a good general overview of the family policy welfare reforms in Finland, and how the changes have affected families throughout the last 15 years.

Hiilamo, Heikki. 2004. "Changing Family Policy in Sweden and Finland During the 1990s." *Social Policy and Administration* 38(1):21-40.

This article describes the Nordic ideal model and analyzes the family policy reforms from the 1990s in Sweden and Finland based upon those ideals. Hiilamo compares Finland and Sweden, which is interesting because it allows one to see how approaching similar reforms in different ways affects the outcomes in dissimilar ways. The article gives great detail about how the reforms affected single parents and how cash child benefits and parental benefits were implemented. Hiilamo provides very clear charts that show how the reforms affected the ideal model. This cross comparison is done with each policy type as it relates to each ideal. The article also provides a description of how the country was doing in early 2000s and compares Finland to Sweden because while Sweden implemented them only as a temporary measure, Finland has kept them thus far.

Joint Report Team. 2003. "Working Time and Time for Care in Europe." *European Journal of Social Quality* 4(1-2):77-93.

By analyzing work time and its social distribution and evolution in various European countries, this article maintains that the greatest conflict between work and quality of life is care. Due to new competitive market demands, industrial and service companies are forced to enhance labor efficiency and organize production and distribution. This change is producing pressure to extend hours of the standard workday and introduce various forms of irregular and flexible work arrangements like overtime, shift work, and night work. Looking at issues around work time, working hours in Europe, flexible work patterns in Europe, adaptability and job security, issues around combining work and care, parental leave, maternity and paternity leave, and childcare, this article analyzes these issues, provides statistics and attempts to explain the necessary reconciliation of all facets pertaining to the work-family conflict. According to the research team, although high on the list as far as parental leave and childcare, Finland still shows a very high level of social insecurity for women, marked by unemployment among women, too few part-time jobs, and too many temporary ones.

Kangas, Olli and Tine Rostgaard. 2007. "Preferences or Institutions? Work-family Life Opportunities in Seven European Countries." *Journal of European Social Policy* 17(3):240-256.

This article explores Catherine Hakim's work-preference theory, stating that in order to succeed, women must choose either work or family. She maintains that education and social status are not as important in female employment because if work and family are combined, the conflict does not allow them to move up in the workforce. She looks at three types of women; work centered women, homemakers, and the large number of adaptive women who balance both. This article challenges Hakim's analysis by exploring work-family relations in families in The Netherlands, England, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The data consisted of questionnaires asking women their position in the workforce and at home, as well as the gender roles in their individual families. The results show that each country has very different opportunities and constraints regarding female employment. Highly educated women and childless women tend to work full-time, as well as those from countries with more forms of leave and affordable day care. Also, work-family choices strongly depend on the husband having a positive view of his wife's employment.

Kinnunen, Ulla and Saija Mauno. 1998. "Antecedents and Outcomes of Work-Family Conflict among Employed Women and Men in Finland." *Human Relations* 51(2):157-177.

This study examines the prevalence and consequences of work-family conflict among employed men and women in Finland. Kinnunen and Mauno distinguish family-work conflict from work-family conflict as the former best explained by family domain variables such as number of children living at home and work domain variables for the latter, differing by gender. Their findings showed that there was no gender difference in experiencing either conflict schema but that work-family conflict was more common overall and had a particularly negative consequence on family well-being and parental satisfaction, strongly suggesting a need for further improvement. While this study is somewhat outdated as far as statistics, it is important for understanding what types of problems arise when there is work-family conflict or family-work conflict.

Klement, Carmen and Brigitte Rudolph. 2004. "Employment Patterns and Economic Independence of Women in Intimate Relationships: A German-Finnish Comparison." *European Societies* 6(3):299-318.

This article discusses women's employment as it affects their relationships whether they are married, single or cohabiting. It examines working patterns, hours worked, part-time work, and full-time work. The article provides a brief historical background on women's rights in the two countries but it does not give in depth descriptions of any topics covered. Instead it focuses more on topics such as socioeconomic identity, socio-cultural norms, and benefits. The article maintains that since Finnish women are so financially independent, they are better off than German women in almost all circumstances. The authors determine that the reason for this is the conversion of unpaid care-work to paid care-work and the fact that often care-work employees are paid by the Finnish government, not a common policy in many other countries. The authors compare the two countries and the relationship status

demographics that are found within each country. The authors then look at these demographics in addition to work patterns and determine independence.

Kröger, Teppo and Minna Zechner. 2001. *SOCCARE: WP2 Care Arrangements in Single Parent Families, National Report: Finland*.

This report provides a thorough examination of childcare issues among single parents in Finland. Contrary to the United States, there is no stigma attached to single parenting or birth out of wedlock in Sweden and single parents in Finland are rarely considered low-income. While employment and scheduling conflicts are the biggest issues for the parents, the main aim of family policy in Finland is to secure equality among children, therefore while the children may benefit from equal educational opportunities, the parents are still in a bind. Kröger and Zechner stress that low-income level does not necessarily cause more difficulties for childcare arrangements in Finland. Accordingly, medium or high incomes do not secure family-work harmony. Also reported is the lack of informal care, the surprising belief that familial dependence for informal care is inappropriate, and the cultural belief that informal care is not a substitute for formal daycare. While Kröger and Zechner discuss the governmental policies that have aided single parents, they also touch on the lack of conditions that would allow for increased informal childcare and the increased flexibility of formal care, two desired and unresolved conflicts for Finnish single parents.

Kuronen, Marjo. 2001. "Motherhood in Family Context -- Comparing Professional Practices in Maternity and Child Health Care in Finland and Scotland." *Yearbook of Population Research in Finland* (37):5-22.

Kuronen focuses on how healthcare providers interact with parents as they relate to maternity and child health care and the article is based upon an ethnographic study of health care providers that includes mainly nurses. While the sample is very limited, the author provides many quotes to support her claims and illustrate her points. The article looks at father's involvement in childcare and how health providers influence this involvement. The author discusses Finnish family ideals and standards. She found that when talking about children, health care providers treat mothers and fathers very differently, but that fathers in Finland are treated in a way that suggests a family model closer to the dual-earner dual-carer model. Kuronen also provides information about single moms and how they are treated in both countries but overall, she found that the biggest difference between the two countries was their treatment of fathers. Throughout this article, she supports her main argument, which is that the way information is provided to fathers and the manner in which they are spoken to, influences the way in which men care for their children.

Lammi-Taskula, Johanna. 2008. "Doing Fatherhood: Understanding the Gendered Use of Parental Leave in Finland." *Fathering* 6(2):133.

"Doing Fatherhood" analyzes the improvement of parental leave policies in recent years and the subsequent increase of "take-up" rates among fathers in Finland. By using survey data from 1371 fathers in Finland with children under the age of 2, Lammi-Taskula analyzed the take-up of parental leave by fathers and found that the likelihood of a father's shared

parental leave with the mother depended on the mother's position in the labor market and/or persistent gender roles relative to care and breadwinning responsibilities. While almost all fathers take up paternity leave when they have a newborn, until 2002 only a very small percentage of fathers in Finland took up parental care, a number that changed when the government began to implement policies that rewarded fathers with extra time off if parental leave was taken up. By examining the conditions and consequences of the take-up in parental leave, "Doing Fatherhood" shows that parental take-up from fathers is strongly influenced by educational level, family economy, division of labor, and the father's workplace influence. From her study Lammi-Taskula found that the key deciding factor for the take-up of parental leave by Finnish fathers is their ideological belief of childcare as a responsibility to be equally shared between parents, consequently rejecting the male breadwinner ideology.

Larsen, Trine P. 2004. "Work and Care Strategies of European Families: Similarities or National Differences?" *Social Policy & Administration* 38(6):654-677.

In this paper, Larsen explores the work and care strategies chosen by full-time working families with children in four European countries. By examining how these families cope with their work-family conflict, it is possible to make a comparative analysis of families in similar situations influenced by a growing global trend. Taking into account various differences among parents including educational background, gender roles, and working schedules Larsen analyzes parents' childcare arrangements taken from interviews with dual-earner parents. She concluded her study with findings that there are many similarities between the countries and stresses due to issues with parenting and employment, and contrary to national poll statistics, the national differences are not quite so marked. Although Finland is usually considered one of the frontrunners for equal parenting, Larsen concludes that when compared to families of other nationalities in similar work and care situations, there is not necessarily a significant difference in the division of care tasks.

Le Bihan, Blanche and Claude Martin. 2004. "Atypical Working Hours: Consequences for Childcare Arrangements." *Social Policy and Administration* 38(6):565-590.

In this paper, Le Bihan and Martin look at atypical working hours of lone parent families and dual-earner couples and how this affects childcare arrangements. Examining data from Finland, France, Portugal and the European Union as a whole, they analyze the conflicts that parents working unpredictable hours face and the strategies they use to cope with the work-family conflict. Their findings show that Finland far surpasses the European average of atypical working hours but that it does not necessarily mean that working conditions are of poorer quality. Rather, municipal childcare services for shift workers in Finland have existed for decades and therefore the work-family conflict is somewhat reduced as far as childcare arrangements. However advanced Finland may be in terms of municipal childcare Le Bihan and Martin still stress that it does not necessarily relieve the work-family conflict. They discuss the possible negative consequences for people working atypical hours and chart the different approaches used to deal with work-family strain from a sample of 13 couples and single parents with children.

Leitner, Andrea and Angela Wroblewski. 2006. "Welfare States and Work-Life Balance." *European Societies* 8(2):295-317

Leitner and Wroblewski compare and analyze the issues of Finland and Denmark, two Nordic countries, to Germany and Austria, two more conservative welfare states. They discuss the relative success of Finland and Denmark in terms of work-family reconciliation due to better policies and practices that support gender equality, satisfactory childcare and adequate parental. This in turn creates a more balanced and positive work-family relationship in comparison to other more conservative welfare states that are still lacking in adequate family-work policies. However, despite the more egalitarian labor policies of Finland and Denmark, Leitner and Wroblewski also discuss the persistent inequality of unpaid and household labor, proposing that although Nordic countries allow for greater reconciliation of work and family life for women, there is still little incentive for men to become more involved in care and family work. Also discussed are the possible difficulties and limitations of transferring practices from countries like Finland to other "less successful" work-life balance countries due to strong cultural influences and basic institutional settings that are well established in each country.

Mauno, Saija, Ulla Kinnunen and Mervi Pyykko. 2005. "Does Work-Family Conflict Mediate the Relationship between Work-Family Culture and Self-Reported Distress? Evidence from Five Finnish Organizations." *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 78(4):509-530.

This article looks at the way in which work-family culture influences the well-being of employees and their use of family benefits. Taking a quantitative look at work-family culture, this article provides a lot of complicated statistics but also important theory about work-family culture. The authors found that people who work in a job with a supportive work-family culture are more likely to use the family benefits provided to them by the government and their workplace, such as parental leave and sick days. The background information given on theory that is presented in this article is very useful and offers a good foundation on which to build ideas and conclusions. This study focused on five different types of organizations and the researchers were able to provide detailed explanations about how workers felt about work and family.

Morgan, Kimberly J. and Kathrin Zippel. 2003. "Paid to Care: The Origins and Effects of Care Leave Policies in Western Europe." *Social Politics* 10(1):49-85.

In this article, Morgan and Zippel discuss the historical context behind many care leave policies in Western Europe. By comparing and contrasting a number of countries, including Finland, they give a general overview of the economic and political origins of various family policies and the consequences they have had in each individual country. While Finland and other Nordic countries continue to lead in terms of work-life balance offering either paid child care leave or high quality public childcare, something that is still lacking in many developed and economically comparable nations. They also argue that even though these advanced policies are still not ideal for the utopian situation created within the context of U.S. policy, it is a realistic version of what paid care could look like in the U.S. and

therefore a system to model. By analyzing the origins and effects of care leave policies in various western European countries, Morgan and Zippel conclude that the major problems with extended care policies developed are not actually part of a feminist project to promote gender equality, but rather they are products of center-right political forces, lacking in the inclusion of policies for fathers.

Oinonen, Eriikka. 2004. "Starting the First Family: Changes in Patterns of Family Formation and Demographic Trends in Finland and Spain." *European Societies* 6(3):319-346.

This article provides a historical perspective on family trends from the early 1960s to the late 1990s. There are many helpful charts in the article that compare Finland, Spain and the European Union as a whole, providing a good amount of useful information including important demographics. The article discusses the influence of contraceptives, the birth control pill and abortion on family trends in each country and also connects the labor market with trends in family formation. Also discussed are cohabitation, work, and birth trends from a historical perspective as well as vital information on more recent trends. Offering explanations as to why some rates in both Spain and Finland are similar and why other trends are extremely different such as marriage rates and birth rates, the author presents this information in a way that is easy for the reader to understand.

Pearson, Mark, Willem Adema and Anais Loizillon. 2005. *Babies and Bosses: Reconciling Work and Family Life: v. 4, Canada, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom*. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Economiques.

*Babies and Bosses* is a comparative collection of the work-family condition in Canada, Finland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, providing data on employment rates, parental leave and childcare policies, family models and other information related to the work-family conflict. Provided is a historical overview of each country, their current situation, and the strategies and solutions that are proposed in order to reconcile work and family life. This report offers comprehensive data offering standard definitions for particular and relevant concepts and provides "family friendly policy recommendations" for the 4 countries in this report. Specific to Finland is the recommendation of labor policy reforms that limit options to either benefit payments and/or duration, which only diminishes female earning profiles and consequently impedes the mission of full gender equality. Furthermore, Pearson, Adema and Loizillon propose that Finland concentrate on improving out-of-school hours care for older children, an issue that a number of Nordic countries face, despite their superior childcare for small children. Lastly, Finland is lagging behind in terms of available part-time work and the encouragement of it, a possible solution for some reconciliation of the work-family conflict.

Plantenga, Janneke and Chantal Remery. 2005. *Reconciliation of work and private life: A comparative review of thirty European countries*. Luxembourg: European Commission.

This report provides an in depth comparison of work-family policies and practices in many European Union nations and how different circumstances can heavily influence numbers.

The report includes statistics, charts, and commentary on current issues. Plantenga and Remery discuss Finland's success with high female employment rates, generous compensations during maternity leave, policies implementing childcare as a social right, and national legislation that gives employed parents the right and opportunity to cut down on working hours in order to reconcile work and family without excessive conflict. Nevertheless, they also touch on Finland's (along with the 3 other focus country's) lack of father-friendly special provisions and part-time employment, and the overwhelming reliance on leave facilities for childcare. Overall however, Plantenga and Remery report that Finland stacks up quite nicely compared to other European nations but maintains that there are still improvements to be made.

Repo, Katja. 2004. "Combining work and family in two welfare state contexts: a discourse analytical perspective." *Social Policy and Administration* 38(6):622-639.

Through a cross-cultural study of Finland and the United Kingdom, Repo examines the relationship between employment and family in dual-carer households. While elaborating on the differences between these two nations, she also stressed the similarities between beliefs and experiences of individual mothers. Through interviews, Repo compared the two different welfare regimes with different breadwinner ideologies. She explains the Finnish childcare system and the "universal" right to municipal childcare, contrasting greatly with the private market provision that is common in the UK. Overall, Finnish women were less likely to see work and care conflicts as a personal issue and less likely to challenge the existing make-up of care from a gendered standpoint. Repo concludes that although Finland and the United Kingdom have very different policies and practices regarding family-work reconciliation, parents, specifically mothers, still had very similar opinions on the matter and that women from both countries expressed belief in shared parenthood in dual-earner families and saw care as a significant undertaking.

Salmi, Minna, Johanna Lammi-Taskula and Pentti Takala. 2008. *International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2008: Finland*. Budapest: Institute for Social Policy and Labour.

This report offers some of the most up-to-date information on Finland regarding leave policies and many related topics like fertility rates, employment, and gender equality issues. The authors discuss current leave programs related to employment for both mothers and fathers as well as parental leave and the eligibility requirements for the take-up of each benefit. They also provide recent developments in leave policies including certain proposals that are still currently in the makings. Although it is stated that there have not been any major changes in family policies since 2005, several minor changes are mentioned including small changes in home care allowances, leave periods for adoptive parents and those of sick children, parental leave for same-sex parents and new legislation for "father's month" parental leave. In addition, Salmi and Lammi-Taskula have proposed certain reforms on leave policies based on research findings that suggest extending parental leave as well as paternity leave is more beneficial for the child. Not only do the authors examine the reforms that are currently taking place but they also discuss the actual rates of take-up of parental leave and the attitudes that parents are expressing towards existing family policies.

Sinko, Päivi. 2008. "The New Child Welfare Act in Finland." *Children Webmag*, July 1, 2008, (<http://www.childrenwebmag.com/articles/child-care-articles/the-new-child-welfare-act-in-finland>)

This article describes the new Child Welfare Act, which, passed by Parliament in 2008, is a more specific and detailed version of a 1983 Act. The new policy stresses children's rights and protection, and the Act highlights early interventions by targeting all children regardless of economic status. Children are no longer believed to be social problems but rather a vital part of society and childcare and social workers are also now working with children individually, without authorization of parents, as a last resort in cases where the child is in need of help. The 2001 Act on Status and Rights of Social Welfare Clients made it possible, though it is rare, for unrelated people to apply to be guardians in order to protect children from abuse. The Finnish model of assessing children now allows social workers seven days to assess children and three months to write their core assessment and the Act stresses the urgency for childcare placement and assessment. Additionally, the decision of substitute care for children now rests on local child protection officials, and does not have to go through numerous court systems.

Sipilä, Jorma and Johanna Korpinen. 1998. "Cash versus Child Care Services in Finland." *Social Policy & Administration* 32(3):263-277.

This article explores the issues within the family leave policies in Finland that are being held responsible for the decline in employment reentry among mothers. While a big step for family-work reconciliation was taken in 1985 when parliament passed a law guaranteeing young children day care, Sipilä and Korpinen explain that soon after the government began giving parents the option of pocketing a childcare allowance and using it for private home care or to stay home themselves. They argue that this legislation significantly influenced the choice of many mothers to opt for a position as temporary homemaker and thus the rate of female employment decreased which was not a favorable consequence. This is an argument that many other researchers have explored and it is certainly a hot topic among Finland's family policies. Sipilä and Korpinen maintain that while Finland is ranked high on family policy in relation to the rest of the world, it is the least well off among Nordic countries and that perhaps cash for care steered Finland in a less than ideal direction.

Torres, Anália, Rita Mendes and Tiago Lapa. 2008. "Families in Europe." *Portuguese Journal of Social Science* 7(1):49-84.

"Families in Europe" offers a general overview of European families. It examines family arrangements, practices and values, and theoretical issues influenced by changing trends in the last forty years and analyzes these differences by individual nations. Torres, Mendes and Lapa also attempt to explain why certain similarities in trends exist in European countries that differ greatly in other areas. They touch on the fact that when examining certain statistics like female employment or youth unemployment Finland resembles countries like Portugal and Spain but various factors affecting these rates can be completely different and therefore significant for individual country distinctions. In their study, they concluded that the overall European situation consisted of very diverse forms of family

living strongly influenced by the processes of individualism, secularization and independence, characteristics mostly seen in the Nordic countries. Furthermore, they found that despite an increasing emphasis of self-fulfillment, personal satisfaction and gender equality, individuals in countries like Finland are able to reconcile these values without having to renounce the idea of having children.

Zechner, Minna. 2004. "Family Commitments under Negotiation: Dual Carers in Finland and Italy." *Social Policy & Administration* 38(6):640-653

This article compares and contrasts national trends for employment, childcare and care for the elderly in Finland and Italy. In Finland, public services assist with childcare, and therefore the author hypothesizes that employment should be more of a priority than family. In contrast, Italy relies on family for assistance in childcare and care of the elderly. Women are faced with the dual responsibility of caring for their children and elderly parent in addition to full-time employment. This study is comprised of interviews with all dual worker-carers, eight from Finland and six from Italy and at the time of the interviews all the participants were trying to balance work with the care of an elderly person and a child. The data is presented through interviews and life stories and the results showed that Finnish citizens utilize public services by placing elderly in institutions and homes and the children in public childcare. Social security benefits and welfare programs also help Finnish employees in a worker-carer position. Overall the care for elderly in Finland was not a reason to change work patterns although participants did change work schedules to spend more time with children.