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The Future of the Finnish Baby Box

Stacey McIntosh & Jhannine Verceles

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Stacey McIntosh &
Jhannine Verceles
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Abstract

Laurea Tikkurila

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Stacey McIntosh & Jhannine Verceles

The Future of the Finnish Baby Box

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The aim of the study was to describe the views of the baby box in North America. The goals of study were to find out what kind of views the baby box had on child health and wellbeing and family wellbeing. Another goal was to find out if the baby box would be accepted into American society.

The research method used for this study was literature review. Qualitative data was collected through Google and GoogleScholar search engines. Only articles written in English and published from 2007 to 2017 were included in the study. A total of fifteen articles were selected and analyzed. Inductive content analysis was used to analyze these articles.

The results revealed that the baby box would not be sustainable in the United States at its current condition. The baby box works towards giving all children an equal start in life and lowering the infant mortality rate in the country. The box also promotes good parenting by providing all parents with the supplies that they need to care for a new baby no matter what socioeconomic background they belong to. Having all the materials given to care for a child helps in lessening the stress of preparing for a baby and makes having a baby into a reality.

The differences between Finland and the United States are far too great. The differences include size, population, weather, traditions, and society. The success of the maternity package in Finland is contributed to the fact that it is a deep-rooted part of their culture and history. The Finnish maternity package is part of Finland's identity. On the other hand, Americans have baby showers, which is part of their history and culture that they are able to identify with.

Keywords: Finnish, American, Maternity package, baby box, Health Impact Assessment, Child Health, Family Health, Wellbeing

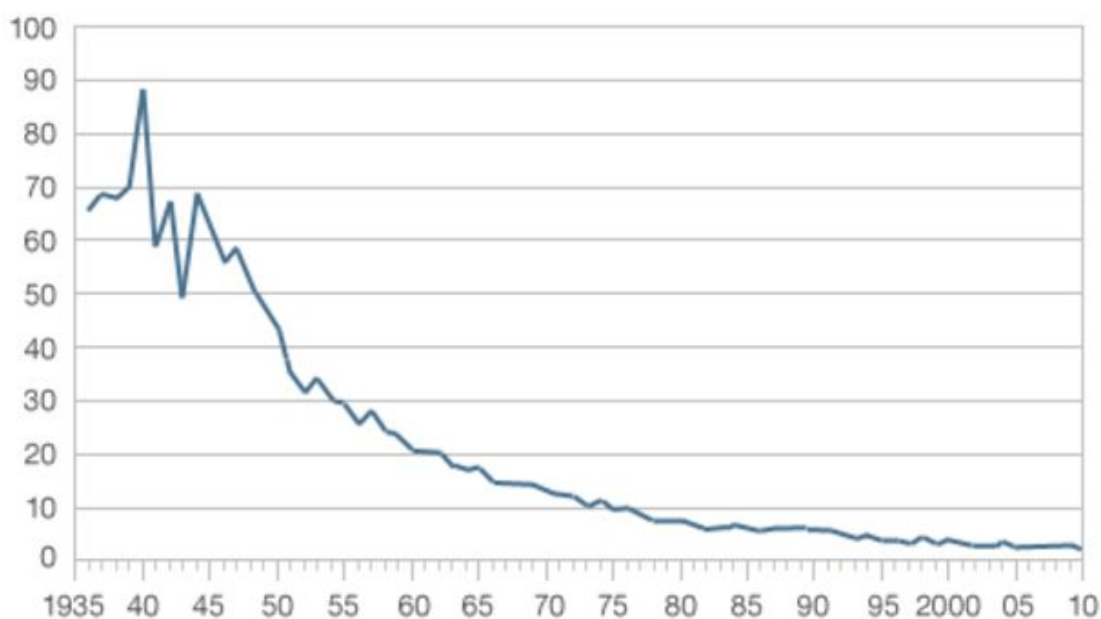
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1. History of the Finnish Baby Box

In 1938, the Finnish Maternity Grants Act was implemented to a then poor Finland. The grant was given by the Finnish government to low-income families as a way to help improve the high infant mortality rate, which existed in Finland and many other parts of the world. During this time, sixty-five out of every thousand children were dying. (Lee, 2013)

Infant mortality in Finland, 1936 to 2010 per 1,000 births



Source: Statistics Finland

FIGURE 1. Bar graph illustrating the slow decrease in the child mortality rate with the implementation of the Finnish Maternity Grant Act over time. (Lee, 2013)

In the first year of implementation, over two-thirds of women giving birth were eligible for the cash grant or the package. The maternity package was either a box that was something of a “starter kit” for the newborn or a cash grant given by the government in place of the package. The maternity package, or baby box, had a mattress on the bottom that could be used as a bed for the baby. This was very helpful since many poor homes during this time did not have a clean or safe place for the baby to sleep. It also included things necessary for the first months of life such as bodysuits, a sleeping bag, bathing products, outdoor gear, and diapers. (Lee, 2013)



FIGURE 2. Photograph of the 1953 Maternity Package displaying its contents. (Lee, 2013)

In 1949, the maternity package was no longer just available for low-income families, but for everyone as long as the mothers went for a prenatal check before the fourth month of pregnancy. The maternity package was a gift from the government that every expectant mother in Finland could receive, which was designed to give all children an equal start in life whether they were rich or poor. This was a way for the Finnish government to provide an incentive to its people while still promoting health and wellbeing. With the introduction of the maternity package to all, rates of infant mortality began to decrease over the decades. (Lee, 2013) (Refer to Figure 1)



FIGURE 3. Contents of the current 2016 Finnish Maternity Package from Kela. (Kela, n.d.)

Through the test of time, the maternity package still looks quite similar in content. The package today includes: winter outerwear, sleeping bag/blanket, lightweight overall, coverall, balaclava, cap, romper suit, wrap around bodysuit x2, bodysuit with extender x2, bodysuit x4, footed leggings x2, trousers x4, tights, socks, mittens, onesie, bedding/linen, bath towel, pocket nappy/ cotton gauze inserts, personal care items (For both baby and parents), feeding bib, drooling bib, cuddly toy, and the baby's first book. Today, expectant mothers still have the choice between the maternity package and the 140 euro cash grant, but over 95% of mothers choose the box because it has much more value than the grant. In the event of multiple births, families will receive additional support from Kela. If a mother were expecting twins, she would receive the normal maternity grant multiplied by two for the second child, meaning she could receive three boxes or mix and match the cash grant and boxes. If she wanted, she could choose two boxes and one cash grant. The same idea applies for triplets. The mother would be eligible for six boxes or any mixture of the boxes and cash grants. (Kela, n.d.)

2. Global Definitions of Baby Boxes

According to KELA, the maternity package is offered by the government and is only available as a benefit provided by the Finnish social security system. Families have the choice of choosing the package or a tax-free cash payment. The package, which is not available for public purchase, contains around fifty different items including clothes, products, and materials for

both the new baby and mother. (Figure 3) The package's contents stay relatively the same but the colors and theme change yearly. (Kela, n.d.)

Babyboxcanada.org offers the baby box to expecting families in Canada by having them register on their website. They define the baby box as a way to help new parents get the things necessary for their babies as well as help in identifying what materials they need to care for a newborn. Their mission is to help newborns get an equal start in life. The baby box is entirely funded through sponsorships, contributors, and corporate partnerships. The website also offers boxes for six month and one year old children once they have outgrown the items from the initial box or missed out on ordering the first one. (Baby Box Canada, 2015)

The Baby Box Co., which is the current distributor of the baby box in the USA, specifically New Jersey defines the box as an “essential first gift or purchase for new parents” that provides infants with a place to sleep. It provides expectant parents with the best start for their babies, reduces the stress, and boosts the confidence for this phase of life. Registering for the baby box includes a membership to the baby box university, an educational service that was made to empower parents and reduce infant mortality. (The Baby Box Co., 2017)

3. Health Impact Assessment

With the use of qualitative, quantitative, and participatory techniques; Health Impact Assessment is used to evaluate the potential effects on health of certain policies, programmes, or projects before they are implemented. This combination of procedures, tools, and methods are used to create recommendations that will be able to help decision makers decide what improvements and alternatives need to be made in order to promote health while preventing any undesirable outcomes within the population. (“About HIA” - WHO, 2017)

Health Impact Assessment technique is a useful tool to look at before implementing the baby box program in different countries. It would be able to show decision makers if the program would be sustainable for that particular place as well as what changes need to be made to the original program in order to promote the health and wellbeing of that population.

Health Impact Assessment has four values on which it is based on. The first of these values is democracy. This allows the population to take part in the development and implementation of certain policies, programs, or projects that could have an effect on them. (“Why Use HIA?” - WHO, n.d.) This gives the people a sense of responsibility and also helps the decision makers see what would best be suited for the people within the target population. With this cross-sectoral working, different people belonging to different sectors within a community are able to come together to consider the impact of proposals in their own sectors as well as others. This makes the views of the community highly valued. Any group that a project or program

could possibly impact can be included in the decision making process and have their opinions be heard. The next value is equity. This value ensures that the impact from a policy is assessed on the whole population, especially the vulnerable ones in terms of age, gender, race, and economic status. This works to improve the health of the community as a whole and reduce inequalities. Sustainable development is the next value on which HIA is based upon. This takes into consideration the impacts both in the short and long term as well as the ones that may be less obvious. This ensures that the policy implemented will be able to help the present population without hurting the needs of the future population. It is also a positive approach towards projects and policies because it looks at the positive impacts too rather than just the negative impacts. (“Why Use HIA?” - WHO, 2017) The last value is ethical use of evidence. This value makes sure that the best quantitative and qualitative evidence has been used for the assessment. A variety of evidence should be collected using the best methods possible. The decision makers also see recommendations before any concrete decisions are made. (“Why Use HIA?” - WHO, 2017) With these values, HIA can be used to improve health and wellbeing across all sectors.

3.1. Health Assessment Values of Baby Box in North America

According to the health assessment values of the Health Impact Assessment tool, a nationwide baby box would not be able to be implemented in the United States. This is due to many differences the U.S. has in comparison to Finland, where the baby boxes have been proven to be successful.

The first difference is in regards to weather. The weather in Finland is similar throughout the country and the whole nation experiences all four seasons. (Finnish Meteorological Institute, 2016) This makes the items in the Finnish maternity package (Figure 3) ideal for the whole population. Every family who receives the package has need for all of the items making it universal for the country. On the other hand, the United States is a huge country where the people, depending on the state a person is living, have very different needs. Equity for the baby box would not be achievable due to the vast diversity in climate and needs of the people from coast to coast. It would not be practical, or fair, for parents living in Arizona to receive a snowsuit, which they would never be able to use, as opposed to parents living in New York, where they experience all four seasons. If the box were to survive in the United States, it would have to be distributed regionally or even be a state-by-state affair in order to fit the needs of the families living in that specific part of the country. (Leahy, 2016)

The United States has a much larger population than Finland. The country of Finland has over 5.5 million people as of 2017 while the United States has almost 326 million. (Worldometers, 2017) The Finnish government per year distributes around 40,000 maternity packages across

the country. (Embassy of Finland, 2017) In the United States, an estimated four million packages would have to be shipped out in order for every family to receive a box. Though this would aid some sectors financially, the U.S. post office for example, the expense of shipping all these boxes would cause the box to be turned over to corporations in order to offset the costs. (Holler, 2013) The country's debt is already at a "survival-level threat" according to Governor Mitch Daniels of Indiana so investing money into a nationwide baby box is just not practical for the country at this point. (Tierney, 2011)

Another reason why the baby box would not be able to flourish in the United States is due to the already deep-rooted traditions the country has. The baby box is to Finland as the baby shower is to the U.S. In America, baby showers are where friends and family get together and have a party celebrating the upcoming birth and "shower" the expecting mother with gifts. The shower provides all the necessities for a newborn and a new mother. These gifts from friends and family are unique and personalized for the mother and baby. It seems that there would be no purpose for a baby box if an expecting mother has already had a baby shower. The idea of having friends and family picking out the gifts as opposed to the standard government issued box that is one size fits all may be more appealing to a society who prides itself on diversity and individuality. Americans are already very distrusting of the government, therefore a government issued box may not be the most ideal. Expecting families in the United States will seem to stick to the traditional route set up by families before them by throwing a baby shower and being surrounded by their family and friends. (Leahy, 2016)

One of the biggest reasons a government run baby box similar to the Finnish maternity package would not be successful in the United States is because of the American society in general. The American ideology is based on diversity and individualism. Anyone from anywhere no matter who they are can live in the U.S. This makes it harder for a one size fits all box to accommodate such a diverse and demanding population. While the families in Finland appreciate seeing their children wearing the same clothes as someone else's kids to show that they were born around the same time, American's may not feel the same way. Having children across the country wear the same outfits seems too conformist and people may see it as a sort of "state uniform." (Tierney, 2011) It would be the epitome of a nanny state, or a government that is too involved in how people should live their lives by giving too much advice or making too many laws. (Cambridge University Press, n.d.) The United States doesn't have the programs and rankings that the Finnish do for families and expecting families. These include generous parental leave policies, free and accessible health care systems, well-funded child-care centers, and top scoring preschool and primary schools. Americans believe that if you can't raise your own children, don't have them. It shouldn't be someone else's problem to help you become a parent and take care of your children. Having the government tell families how to raise their kids will also not sit well in American society. The families who believe in

bottle feeding and disposable diapers would be upset with a baby box full of items promoting breast-feeding and cloth diapers. The same concept would occur if it were vice versa. The nation is just too diverse and too individualistic for a one size fits all box to accommodate. (Holler, 2013)

4. Aim and the Goals of the Thesis

The aim of our study is to describe the views of the baby box in North America.

The following research questions were applied to the information found:

What kind of view does the baby box have on child health and wellbeing?

What kind of view does the baby box have on family wellbeing?

Would the baby box be accepted in American society?

5. Research Methods

Research can be completed either qualitatively or quantitatively. Qualitative research involves understanding relationships between publications, analyzing a small group of articles as a whole, and identifying patterns, features, and themes within the data. Quantitative research is used to test a hypothesis from a large and random group in order to study specific variables and identify the statistical relationships. (Johnson & Christensen, 2008) Qualitative research method was used during this study.

5.1. Data Collection by Literature Review

A literature review utilizes already available material on a certain subject or topic and synthesizes and analyzes the information in order for it to be presented in a different, more conceptual way. (Royal Literary Fund, n.d.) The purpose of this review is to identify what information is already known about a certain subject which could lead to identifying questions not answered through the research and possibly further studying the topic using cases and experiments. (Garson & Lillvik, 2016) Literature review was used as the data collection method for this study.

The data for this study was collected from Google and Laurea Finna database through article searches. Initially, a general Google search using the words “maternity package” was used to obtain general information on the topic itself. Almost twenty million results were found but almost all were not useful. Most of the articles used the words “maternity package” in a different context than the one being researched. Two relevant articles were found using this search. Next, a GoogleScholar search using the same search words was attempted resulting in

almost 70,000 articles. The same issue was faced as the previous search attempt with no relevant results. Another problem faced when using the search word “maternity package” was receiving results from Finnish websites that seemed to have relevant information but with no English version of the information available. The same search was then used on the Laurea Finna database resulting in over 20,000 articles using the article search. No relevant results were found again and different definitions of the maternity package were being used. Information about the implementation of the box in the different countries being researched (USA, Canada, and Finland) was also sparse when using the words “maternity package”. Since no results were being obtained, a change in the phrasing of the search was deemed necessary. On some social media sites, it has been noticed that the term “baby box” was being used in place of “maternity package” depending on the country.

Then the words “baby box” were used as the search word and more relevant articles were found. Over 200 million results came up after a general search on Google and almost 800,000 results on GoogleScholar. An article search on Laurea Finna resulted in around 180,000 articles, most of which were not relevant to the topic or have been found through the Google search already. Combinations of the search words were used to find more specific information on the countries being researched (i.e. Canada baby box or baby box Canada). This resulted in relevant articles and useful information.

The criteria used to narrow down the search results were:

- Articles in published English
- Articles published within the last ten years (2007-2017)
- Articles that included information on the impact of the baby box in the country being researched
- Articles with opinions of the baby box from actual users in the country being researched
- Articles that referred back to / compared the new box to the Finnish maternity package

All other articles that did not meet this criterion were excluded in this study.

The results were narrowed down to relevant articles that met the criteria and seventeen were chosen and analyzed.

5.2. Method of Analyzing the Data

Content analysis was used to analyze the chosen articles. This method is used to describe and quantify a certain topic and condense it into certain categories and themes in order to synthesize different articles. The data can either be qualitative or quantitative depending on the

purpose of the study. (Elo & Kyngas, 2007) This analysis can either be inductive or deductive. Deductive content analysis is used when there is a lot of previous research already completed and a theory is going to be tested based on that information. The process starts with the development of a categorization matrix. This matrix can either be structured or unconstrained depending on the aim of the study. After this matrix has been developed, the content is reviewed and coded and placed into categories. These categories could be testing categories, concepts, models, or hypotheses that can be used for further testing and research. Inductive content analysis is used when there is a lack of previous knowledge and research of a certain topic and a general statement about the topic is desired. This type of analysis uses open coding where content from articles are collected and names/categories are used to name them. The categories that are similar and mention the same ideas are then grouped together under a generic category. This generic category is then grouped together with other generic categories into one main category, which addresses the aim and goals of the study. Both content analyses use a preparation stage before any of the above steps are completed. This involves selecting a certain word or theme that is going to be analyzed in the material. In basic terms, deductive content analysis brings information from general to specific, while inductive content analysis goes from specific to general. (Elo & Kyngas, 2007)

Inductive content analysis was used for this thesis because there have been few research studies completed in some of the countries that are being analyzed. This is because the implementation of the baby box is very new to these places and not a lot of information is available yet. The study is working towards describing the future of the baby box. In order to do this, the history of the baby box must be collected along with the concrete evidence found in different countries making inductive content analysis ideal.

The seventy selected articles were read and important information was highlighted in green. Two articles seemed to be lacking in information and were not relevant to the study so they were excluded in the next steps. The remaining articles were then analyzed more closely with the research questions in mind. A pink highlighter was used to highlight the parts focused on child health and wellbeing. A blue highlighter was used to highlight the content that was more focused on the wellbeing of the family. A yellow highlighter was used on the content that concentrated on the thoughts of the baby box in American society. The highlighted important sentences were then written down and paraphrased into a sub categorical name. (See Appendix 1) These subcategories were then grouped together and placed into general categories. Then, these general categories were grouped even further into a main category that helped answer the research questions of this study. (See Appendix 2) In the end, a total of fifteen articles were selected, analyzed, and coded for this study.

6. Results

6.1. Child Health and Wellbeing

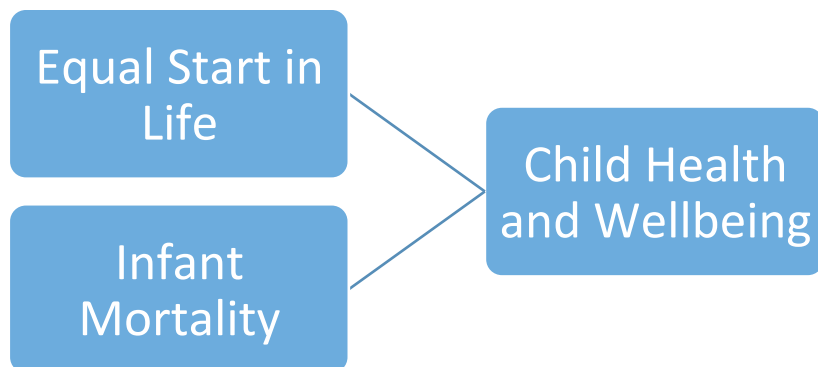


FIGURE 4. Common themes found in chosen articles relating to child health and wellbeing. (Appendix 2)

Child health and wellbeing is defined as a positive start in life in order for children to reach their full potential and decrease the chances of unwanted outcomes. In the Child Health, Development, and Wellbeing framework, there are indicators that provide a picture of health of a child. These indicators include mortality, chronic conditions, breastfeeding, immunizations, and family function for example. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017) The baby box views child health and wellbeing as giving all children an equal start in life no matter what background the family may have. According to Olga Tarsalainen, a spokesperson for Kela, the box symbolizes that every child is equal and deserving of an equal start in life. (Pells, 2016) It also works to lower the infant mortality rates in the country, one of the millennium development goals. Early parenting education has been linked to lowering infant mortality rate, which is one of the purposes of the box. (Mulford, 2017) Finland has achieved one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the world proving the success of the baby box. (Barford, 2016)

6.2. Family Wellbeing

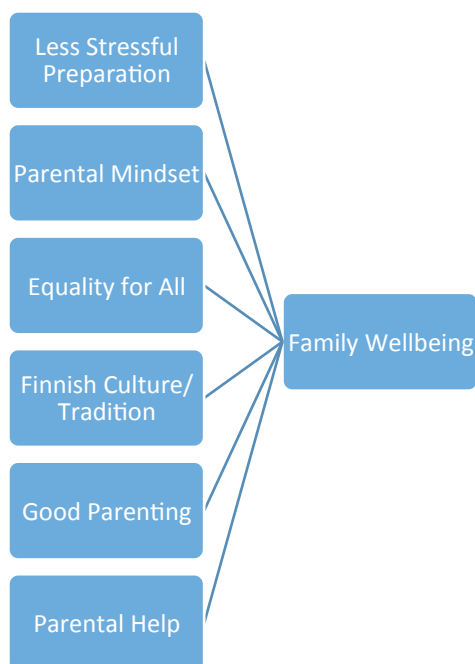


FIGURE 5. Common themes found in chosen articles relating to family wellbeing. (Appendix 2)

The baby box prepares families for their new step in life by making the preparations for the baby easier and less stressful. It ensures the family has all the tools needed to become parents. The items in the box turn the thought of having a baby into reality and shift the mindset into a parental one. (Noack, 2015) The box doesn't just serve as a fun gift to get from the government for new parents, but a way to promote healthy habits. (Mohney, 2013) The box itself and all the items included are clues for good parenting. After seeing the items, many parents begin to wonder how to use an item, how often, or what it even is. (Trachtman, 2017) It does not only give children an equal start in life, it also gives parents an equal start in parenthood. The box is a big part of Finnish culture and no one ever questions the value of it. It is outside any class or wealth and inclusive of every family in the country. (Pells, 2016) It gives families a sense of community with people that care about them and their child. For the Finnish, the box is more than just a box. It is a representation that they as a parent care for their family and want to care for them the best that they can. (Leahy, 2016)

6.3. Acceptance in American Society

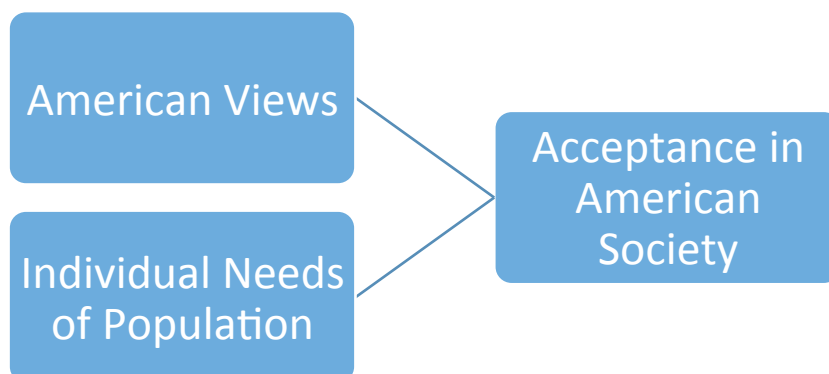


FIGURE 6. Common themes found in chosen articles relating to acceptance of baby box in American society. (Appendix 2)

When thinking of the baby box’s acceptance into American society, the way people view the box and if it addresses the needs of that specific population would play a big part on whether or not implementation would be successful. Karima Ladhani, a Harvard University doctoral student who founded an organization to create a box for South Asian mothers, believes the box could help save lives in other countries. She says, “I don’t think there are geographic boundaries to the impact. But design is incredibly crucial to ensure that it addresses the needs and wants of different populations.” (Noack, 2015) While this is the view of some Americans, others don’t see it the same way. A one-size fits all box would not accommodate the American people’s demands. (Tierney, 2011) Many Americans view the baby box, and other similar handouts as antithetical to the values of freedom. For some people living in America, even the idea of dressing their child in the same clothes as some other child seems too much like a state uniform. (Leahy, 2016) America already has its own baby box in the form of a baby shower, which is a tradition practiced by many families in the past, much like the maternity package in Finland. (Tierney, 2011)

7. Ethics and Reliability

Reliability of research is when the same results can be replicated using the same methods or instruments of a certain study more than once. Validity of research is when the requirements of the scientific research method have been followed throughout the study in order to obtain the most accurate results. These requirements include appropriate time scale, appropriate methodology, appropriate sample, consent, and no biases. (Dudovskiy, 2016) A successful study would have evidence of both reliability and validity of research.

During this study, the process of data collection was completed to the best of the ability of the authors and with the limited resources available. During the initial stages of the study, the search for articles was difficult due to the large amount of irrelevant results. With the persistent efforts of the authors and the change of the search words from maternity package to baby box, the study was able to move forward and relevant articles for the study were found.

Data collection through literature review was followed closely and the process was described thoroughly in the study. Inductive content analysis of the fifteen articles and the process of coding was completed meticulously and documented well. All articles selected for the study were published on the Internet, placing them at risk of being biased either through the publishing website or the authors themselves. The publishers of the website may only put out content that they personally believe is true and authors could add a lot of their personal opinions in the articles that they have written. The inclusion criteria of only articles written in English risked leaving out relevant articles that were only available in Finnish; especially ones containing information about the Finnish maternity package. The inclusion of just one language in the criteria raises the possibility of the study being directed towards a certain result; as all other criterion run the risk for. Articles containing information on the implementation of the baby box in North America were too new to obtain statistical results that could contribute concrete data to the study.

All three research questions were answered in the results section indicating success in the research and analyzation of the selected articles. All references and work of other researchers were credited and documented according to American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines. This style of citation is commonly used in citing sources within the social sciences. (Paiz et al., 2014)

The study was the first academic paper and thesis both authors have written. The traditional process of researching and writing the results were not followed exactly and some scientific research methods may have been left out or overlooked. Errors during any parts of the research process can occur but can increase with authors with little experience. The inexperience of the authors may have an affect on the reliability of the study.

8. Conclusion

We believe the baby box would not be able to be implemented in the United States in its current condition. After evaluation with the Health Impact Assessment tool (WHO, 2017), it is clear the baby box would need to be changed and re-evaluated in order to be sustainable in a country like the United States. Because the United States is such a large country with each state having its own individual needs, it would not be possible, or fair for that matter, to

have a nationwide baby box. In changing the box, it no longer remains 'the Finnish baby box' and therefore loses the symbolism and reputation it holds in its home country. The meaning of every child being equal no matter where they come from would be false because, depending on the region in the United States, each family would be receiving different things in their box.

Another issue of implementation in the United States is the democratic aspect. Would it pass popular vote? It would be quite controversial and many people would question why a government hand out is needed when we already have our own baby boxes in which we receive many more gifts from friends and family, along with a party, in the form of a baby shower. Some Americans may even feel threatened by the government oversight into new parent's lives. They may wonder why the government is taking interest and feel as though the government is trying to steer new parents into raising their children a certain way through the contents included in the box. A box that only included cloth diapers and instructions on breastfeeding may be taken the wrong way by some who feel differently.

Sustainability is another issue as to why the box would not be reasonable in the United States. The government is already trillions of dollars in debt. In theory, a government funded baby box program sounds amazing, but economically, it is impossible. A program such as this would cost way too much to fund and support since there are so many new parents every year. The program may be successful for a year, or two, but the impact it would have on future generations would be detrimental to our society. The current population may benefit from the program, but the future populations may be hurt in the process. Debt would continue to climb and economic growth would continue to decline.

In the future, we believe the Finnish maternity package will cease to exist within Finland and the rest of the globe. Instead, we predict a shift in the name will occur. The maternity package will be no more, and the package name will become something more general such as 'family box or family package.' We believe this is so since the boxes are not just geared towards helping the mother or the baby, but the family as a whole. Also, with the legalization of same sex marriage in many nations around the world, there are increasing numbers of same sex male families who want children, therefore the name maternity package wouldn't be relatable and may even be offensive.

Implementation of the baby box will most likely continue to occur in the United States statewide as a way to reduce the high infant mortality level. We agree this is most likely the only way implementation is possible for the baby box in the United States, but at the same time the baby box loses its value. It does not unite the country, and it doesn't allow people to feel a sense of community the way the Finnish baby box does. With the box being distrib-

uted statewide as opposed to nationwide, it just becomes another health promotion box given to new parents as a way to combat high infant mortality.

8.1. Plans For Further Study

To continue this study, researchers could continue the literature review method as more information and academic articles become available on the results of the baby box in Canada, New Jersey, and other states that begin to implement the box. Another way to continue this study would be to perform quantitative data collection method and quantify the results found. This data collection method could be done a few years after implementation so a large sample could participate and a lot of data could be obtained and analyzed to draw conclusions from. The researcher could analyze statistics during this time to see if the box has helped to reduce the infant mortality rate within the region the box was distributed in. The researcher could also draw conclusions through the use of questionnaires or surveys. The questionnaire or survey could be given to new parents who have received the baby box and ask questions such as whether they found box to be successful, what kind of rating they would give it, what could be improved, etc. Lastly, researchers could use observation if the box was being distributed in regions near them. They could study how new parents react when obtaining the box and the stress levels they seem to have. This method would require a lot of interpretation and may not be very accurate without a consenting interview with the parent as well.

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Appendix 1

Article Coding:

Article 1:

“I don’t think there are geographic boundaries to the impact. But design is incredibly crucial to ensure that it addresses the needs and wants of different populations.” - **Individual Needs**”

“The idea of getting a starter kit including many things that need to be taken care of before the baby is born is something people seem to be interested in.” - **Non Stressful Preparations**

“The box is more than just a package of items; it captures something intangible about motherhood and the aspirations that come with the birth of a new baby.” - **Parental Mindset**

“It might be fun for aunts and uncles to choose between which kind of cute animal to have on baby socks, but if you’re a new parent, it’s a relief to have someone else just say, ‘here’s a bunch of stuff you’ll probably need’ so you can move onto more important decisions.” - **Different Priorities**

Article 2:

“What the box symbolizes is that every child is equal and deserves an equal start in life.” - **Equal Start**

“It really helped us as first-time parents to prepare for the baby both mentally and materially as we knew most of the essentials were already waiting for the baby,” explains Tiitanen. “I’m not ashamed to say it was a relief to know we were that little bit more ready.” - **Parentally Equipped**

“What we’ve learned is that new parents have very similar fears, hopes and needs all around the world.” **Global Necessities**

“The box is outside class or wealth.” - **All Inclusive**

“Finland remains the only country to provide the package regardless of income, location, or background” - **National Incorporation**

Article 3:

“It has been credited with helping Finland achieve one of the world’s lowest infant mortality rates.” - **Low Infant Mortality**

“Alleviating poverty, stopping parents smoking, and improving education and antenatal care - all these things are more fundamental, he argues, in tackling the problem of infant mortality.” - **Millennium Development Goals**

Article 4:

“So the box provided mothers with what they needed to look after their baby, but it also helped steer pregnant women into the arms of the doctors and nurses of Finland’s nascent welfare state.” - **Essentials with Incentives**

“At 75 years old, the box is now an established part of the Finnish rite of passage towards motherhood, uniting generations of women.” - **Social Custom**

“It’s easy to know what year babies were born in, because the clothing in the box changes a little every year. Its nice to compare and think, ‘Ah that kid was born in the same year as mine’,” says Titta Vayrynen, a 35-year-old mother with two young boys.” - **Sense of Community**

“And in addition to all this, Pulma says, the box is a symbol. A symbol of the idea of equality, and of the importance of children.” - **Symbol of Equality**

“She was working long hours when pregnant with her first child, and was glad to be spared the effort of comparing prices and going out shopping.” - **Different Priorities**

“Encouraging good parenting has been part of the maternity box policy all along.” - **Good Parenting**

Article 5:

“Even the wealthy Finnish mothers typically choose the baby box in part because it isn’t about the box. It is what the box represents, that you and your new child are part of a community that cares about you and investing in your child’s future.” - **Sense of Community**

“Finns don’t quite see it this way but many Americans view the baby box, and other similar handouts, as antithetical to the values of freedom.” - **Opposing Views**

“It does seem a bit odd, if you think about it, that all the babies born in the same year receive the same outfits, And that parents are steered toward certain behaviors, such as breastfeeding, by a “benevolent” government entity when they might want to make other choices.” - **Sense of Conformity**

“Finns feel that society as a whole ultimately shares responsibility for, and therefore investment in, its children. In the United States, our paradoxical character makes the answer more mixed.” - **Collectivism vs. Individualism**

Article 6:

“The maternity package wasn't designed just to be a fun gift, it started as a way to help promote healthy habits for new parents.” - **Health Promotion**

“Expectant parents often get plenty of presents from friends and family members, but in Finland even the government sends a gift.” - **Community Support**

Article 7:

“Founders Romi and Edward Walker of Toronto said they found themselves a little overwhelmed with the sheer volume of baby products available on the market when they were preparing for the birth of their own son.” - **Baby Product Overload**

“A lot of new parents think about what their babies are going to need, but there are also the parents themselves who have needs, and we want to consider them, she said.” - **Parental needs**

Article 8:

DISREGARDED

Article 9:

“Although the Walkers also had the option of making Baby Box Canada a charity instead of a non-profit, the couple decided against it. “We want to provide our Baby Boxes to all expectant parents in Ontario, not just to those who would qualify for charity,” they said.” - **Charity vs. Non-profit**

Article 10:

“Early parenting education is linked to infant mortality reduction. That’s what we focus on.”

- **Importance of Education**

“”The program, at its core, is about getting education out to parents in a form that younger parents really love,” McCans said ” - **Up-to-date Education**

Article 11:

“Think about it: Americans demand options that a one-size fits all box could never accommodate.” - **One Size Fits Some**

“We Americans are picky gift-getters; we want what we want.” - **Picky Americans**

“That flimsy cardboard wouldn't stand a chance (and in that Florida humidity!) in a country as uncollective and ruggedly individualistic as the U.S.” - **Uncollective and Individualistic**

“The cloth diaper people would rage about the wasteful disposable diapers. The disposable diaper parents would feel cornered by the oppressive cloth diaper mafia. Should cans of formula and a bottle brush be included? What about those nipple-confusing pacifiers?” - **Us vs. Them**

“These things just don’t stand a chance in a country where it’s OK to tell women who hire babysitters, ‘if you don’t want to raise your kids, don’t have them.’” - **Individual Responsibilities**

Article 12:

“Decades later, baby boxes continue to be distributed and are seen as a “symbol of investing in children,” Klemetti wrote in an email.” - **Baby Box Symbol**

“And while the Baby Box Co. has created an educational component to its product, there are no guarantees that parents will get the message or get the prenatal care they need - especially those who who are most vulnerable to poor health outcomes, such as indigenous women or those living in low-income or remote areas,” - **Insufficient Education**

Article 13:

“When the baby has outgrown its first set of clothes, why doesn't the state provide a second baby box, followed by a child box, and then an adult box?” - **Insatiable Society**

“And doesn't America already have its own baby box in the form of a baby shower? If friends, work colleagues, or religious groups provide gifts, isn't this more individualized - more an expression of American freedom?” - **Baby Box vs. Baby Shower**

“The baby box might strike some Americans as the epitome of the nanny state.” - **Nanny State**

“For some people, the mere idea of dressing your child in the same outfit as other kids seems too conformist, too much like a state uniform.” - **Sense of Conformity**

“But in Finland the baby box is completely uncontroversial. From the Finnish perspective, the program provides the basics, lessening the stress for new parents and giving all kids a fair start in life.” - **Societal Norm**

“Finns believe that you can't rely on baby showers for something as important as early parenting, because too many poor families get left behind.” - **No Family Left Behind**

Article 14:

“Affluent and impoverish families alike receive the same box.” - **Equal Opportunity**

“They also send a symbolic message: In the eyes of a community, all babies matter.” - **All Babies Matter**

“It says that all babies start at the same spot and that the community cares about you, “ she says. - **Same Start**

Article 15:

Statistics

Article 16:

“Safe sleep is actually quite simple. Thats what is so freaking frustrating,” said neonatologist Dr. Sanjuanita Garza-Cox, chief of staff of Children's Hospital of San Antonio. “I think it only

takes one [success] for other people to follow, especially if we have the ability to document the change.” - **Right Initiative, Easy Fix**

Article 17:

“The products inside as well as the box itself are clues to good parenting,” she said. “Once you see the tiny baby nail scissors, you start wondering how often will you need to use them, or the bath thermometer. So even if you could afford to purchase all the stuff, it’s emotionally very comforting to have all the essentials ready at hand and delivered to you.” - **Tips to Parenting**

Appendix 2

Coding chart:

Equal Start	Equal Start in Life	Child Health and Wellbeing
Same Start		
Low Infant Mortality	Infant Mortality	
Millennium Development Goals		
Importance of Education		
Non Stressful Preparations	Less Stressful Preparation	Family Wellbeing
Different Priorities		
Parentally Equipped		
Different Priorities	Parental Mindset	
Parental Mindset		
Global Necessities	Equality for All	
All Inclusive		
National Incorporation		
Symbol of Equality		
Charity vs. Non-profit		
Equal Opportunity		
All Babies Matter		
Essentials with Incentives	Finnish Culture/Tradition	
Social Custom		
Sense of Community		

Sense of Community		
Community Support		
Societal Norm		
No Family Left Behind		
Good Parenting	Good Parenting	
Health Promotion		
Baby Box Symbol		
Right Initiative, Easy Fix		
Tips to Parenting		
Up-to-date Education	Parental Help	
Parental Needs		
Baby Product Overload		
Insufficient Education		
Opposing Views	American Views	Acceptance in American Society
Sense of Conformity		
Collectivism vs. Individualism		
One Size Fits Some		
Picky Americans		
Uncollective and Individualistic		
Us vs. Them		
Individual Responsibilities		

Insatiable Society		
Baby Box vs. Baby Shower		
Nanny State		
Sense of Conformity		
Individual Needs	Needs of the Population	

Appendix 3

Table of Articles Used in the Study:

Article #	Author, Year, Country	Title	Focus(Research Questions)	Key Findings
1	Rick Noack, 2015, USA (Author based in Europe)	“Why babies should sleep in cardboard boxes, explained in 2 charts.”	-Family Welling -Acceptance in American Society	The baby box takes the stress off of having a family in the sense that all the essentials arrive to your doorstep. It helps to put moms and dads in the mindset to be parents, but it is essential that the box fit the needs and wants of the populations it is being distributed to.
2	Rachael Pells, 2016, United Kingdom	“Every Child is Equal: How Finland’s baby boxes changed childhood”	-Child Health and Wellbeing -Family Wellbeing	Founders of The Finnish Baby Box reveal that every parent has similar needs and fears globally. The baby box provides every child with an equal start in life while taking some stress off parents because all the starter tools are already provided.
3	Vanessa Barford, 2016, United Kingdom	“Why babies all over the world are now sleeping in boxes”	-Child Health and Wellbeing	The baby box has helped Finland achieve one of the world’s lowest infant mortality rates, but Colin Pritchard, a professor at Bournemouth University who has studied child and infant mortality, feels there are other issues more important than the box in tackling the issue of infant mortality.
4	Helena Lee, 2013, United Kingdom	“Why Finnish babies sleep in cardboard boxes”	-Family Wellbeing	The baby box is a part of the Finnish rite of passage so to speak and has been a way to unite the community and promote equality. The box gives children an equal start in life and encourages parents to take initiative without the stress associ-

				ated with preparing for a baby.
5	Mary Kate Leahy, 2016, USA	“Thinking Inside the Box: How Finland Makes Parents and Babies Happy and Healthy”	-Family Wellbeing -Acceptance in American Society	To the Finnish, receiving the baby box lets them know that they are part of a bigger community that cares about them, but to an American, it may seem like the government wants control over them and are trying to take away their freedom. Americans struggle with the collective feeling that it is society’s job to invest in it’s children.
6	Gillian Mohney, 2013, USA	“Finnish Moms Get Supply Box for Newborns”	-Family Wellbeing	The Finnish government provides the baby box to all expectant mothers as a way to promote healthy habits to new parents. Parents still often receive gifts from friends and family, but also receive a gift from the government.
7	Christina Commisso, 2016, Canada	“New baby box to deliver free goodies to expecting Canadian parents”	-Family Wellbeing	People forget how stressful it can be to become a parent, and that parents themselves still have needs that need to be met. It can be overwhelming preparing for a baby and looking at all the baby products available. The baby box helps to take a bit of the stress of preparation away.
8	Isabelle Khoo, 2016, Canada	“Baby Box Canada: Many Are Wondering If This Organization Is Legit	-Family Wellbeing	Baby Box Canada founders wanted to make sure their baby boxes were distributed to all expectant parents and not just parents who qualify for charity, so they decided to become a non-profit organization.
9	Kim Mulford, 2017, USA	“Why New Jersey is encouraging moms to put	-Child Health and Wellbeing -Family Wellbeing	The Baby Box Co., the distributor in New Jersey, is really focusing on parental education in order help

		their newborns in a box”	ing	reduce infant mortality rates as it seems education is linked to infant mortality rate reduction.
10	Madeline Holler, 2013, USA	“Why Americans Will Never Get the Finnish Baby Box	-Acceptance in American Society	It would be very hard to implement a nationwide baby box in a society as individualistic as the United States. No matter what, someone would be unhappy or would be offended by the products offered inside.
11	Carly Weeks, 2016, Canada	“North American ‘baby box’ initiatives are a far cry from Finland’s universal program”	-Family Wellbeing	While the box is still seen as a symbol of investment in children, added components of education by companies such as Baby Box Co. may not be the most efficient since it is possible that the message is not understood, or low income families are not receiving the education at all.
12	Dominic Tierney, 2011, USA	“Finland’s ‘Baby Box’: Gift from Santa Claus or Socialist Hell?”	-Family Wellbeing -Acceptance in American Society	The baby box is a deep-rooted Finnish tradition showing Finns that no family gets left behind, but in America we already have the tradition of the baby shower. Also, for many Americans the idea of the baby box would not satisfy them. It would be too much like a nanny state and some would feel like they are being forced to conform to a certain societal standard.
13	Marcus Harrison Green, 2016, USA	“Baby Boxes Cut Infant Mortality in Finland--- U.S. Cities Give Them a Try	-Child Health and Wellbeing -Family Wellbeing	The baby box gives rich and poor children alike to have the opportunity to have an equal start in life. It sends the message that every life matters and that the community cares about your family.

14	Meghan Holohan, 2017, USA	“Thinking outside the box: Finnish baby boxes could save infant lives”	-Family Wellbeing	New Jersey will give free baby boxes to families after they complete a short parenting education course online in order to combat the high infant mortality rate. The aim is to promote safe sleep in order to reduce the number of infants dying from SIDS.
15	Tal Trachtman Alroy, 2017, USA	“New Jersey gives out free baby boxes in move to lower infant mortality rates”	-Family Wellbeing	Expectant parents in New Jersey will receive baby boxes in hopes to reduce infant mortality. The baby box helps introduce families to parenthood and the items inside the box are clues to good parenting. It's comforting for families to have the essentials at their fingertips even if the family could afford all the things inside.