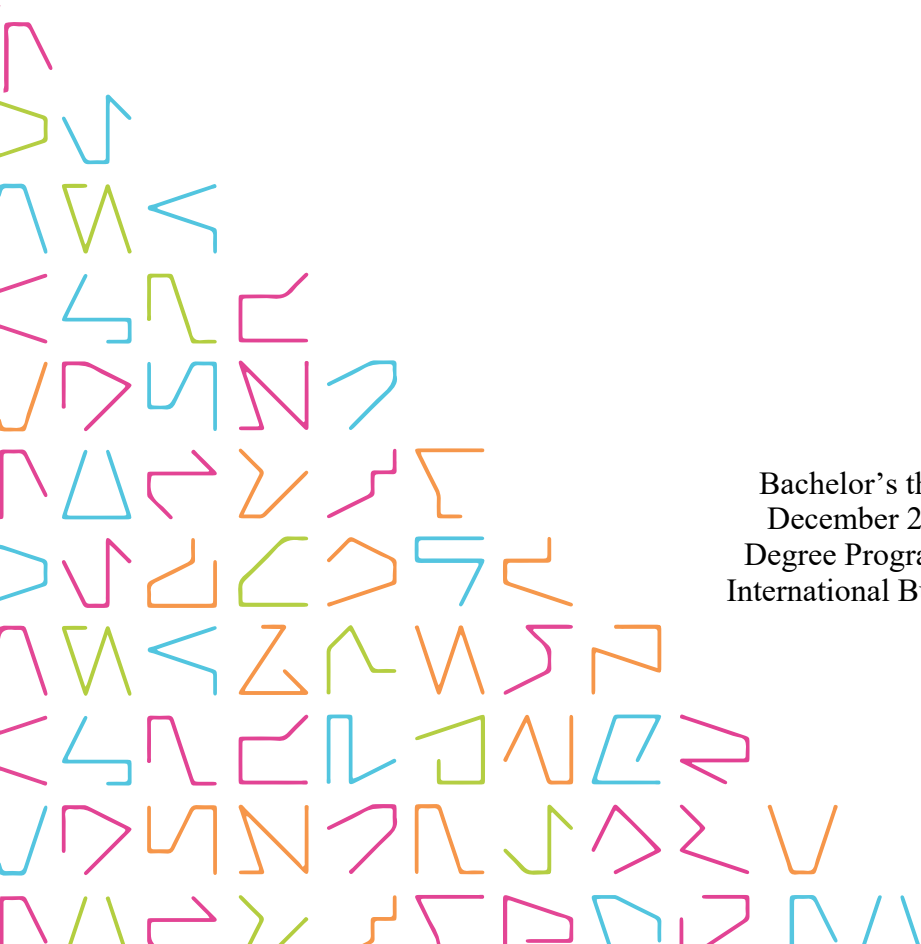


# **POSSIBILITIES AND EFFECTS OF MATERNITY OR PARENTAL LEAVE IN THE CORPORATE WORLD**

The case of DHL Express

Gaël White Njeukam



Bachelor's thesis  
December 2018  
Degree Programme  
International Business

## **ABSTRACT**

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu  
Tampere University of Applied Sciences  
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Possibilities and effects of maternity or parental leave in the corporate world

Bachelor's thesis 34 pages, appendices 7 pages

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This thesis was commissioned by DHL – Express for the research of possibilities and effect of maternity or parental leave in the corporate world. The company is based in southern Finland, in Vantaa and managing mainly Import and Export. There are 4 department areas: Marketing, HR, Sales and Finance.

It is important that companies support workers more when returning to working life after nine months of maternity leave. According to the study, workers have challenges to combine working life and career. The aim of the Semi-structured interview and research have showed the challenges for employees to combine working life and their career. What kind of opportunities do companies have to provide and support their workers? What are the effects? The results have showed that employees lack support from company's side. They miss solutions such as job-sharing, Nanny support or flexible working time.

Through the research of a Semi – structured interview, academic literature, and the main topic issued by the commissioners, a framework was created based on a comparison of two European countries, Germany and Finland.

The finding suggests that in order to support the maternity leave system, the company DHL – Express should give employees several opportunities to support their economic situation during their parental leave, such as Job-sharing, Nanny support or flexible working hours. The proofreading of the document is highly recommended to be able to measure the satisfaction of the employees.

Key words: maternity leave, effects, support, career, interviews, DHL - Express

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In order to consider different economic cultures, regard to maternity leave, I have selected the European countries Germany and Finland as comparison partners. It made sense for me to take two states that apparently differ in their care systems and family conceptions. I chose these two countries because I lived almost all my life in Germany and secondly, I chose Finland as a comparative state because my wife and children live here. The topic of my thesis is the research of the economic life situation of a working mother, before, during and after her maternity leave.

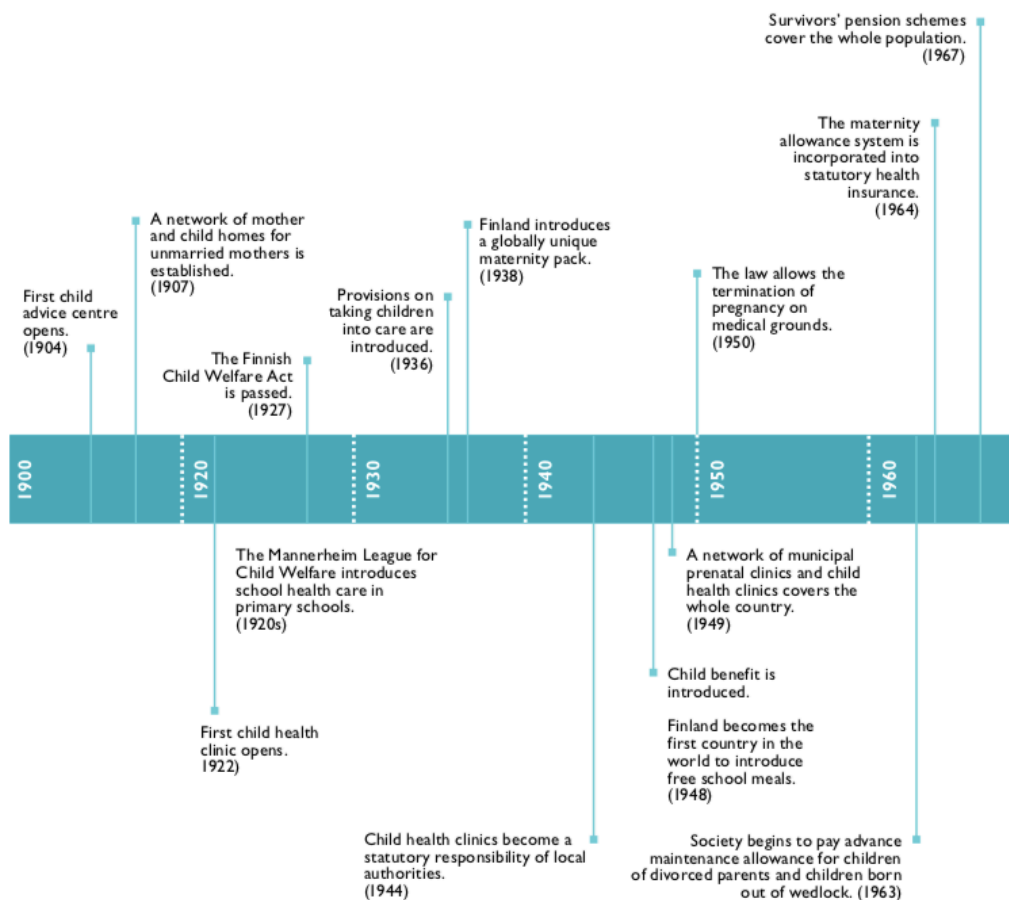
From a global perspective, Finland has been ranged as the best place in the world to be a mother (Business Insider. 2018). Providing a safe environment for children and supporting parents with the right material, are the important key points for the Finnish government and Finland is also known for its good maternity and parental leave system (Ministry of social Affairs and Health. 2013). In our present time, the issues of parental leave, in the context of professional equality between men and women in Finland, are becoming increasingly important for the labour market. The policies of family policy in Finland are changing rapidly. Due to the increased importance of both parents spending more time with their own family and particularly with their children. Parental leave or maternity leave system faced different pros and cons arguments (Expatica 2018).

Reviewers have the opinion that the long absence period of a becoming mother impairs the position of the woman in the job market (vgl. Schönberg and Ludsteck 2007). By the Finnish family regulation, mothers can be sure not to lose their jobs because of protection against dismissal, but these requirements are partly associated with losses on the part of the employer. The most current topics for discussion at the European market are for example the topics “Work Family Balance” and the increase of both parents in maternity and parental leave for discussion (vgl. Jane Lewis, 2009).

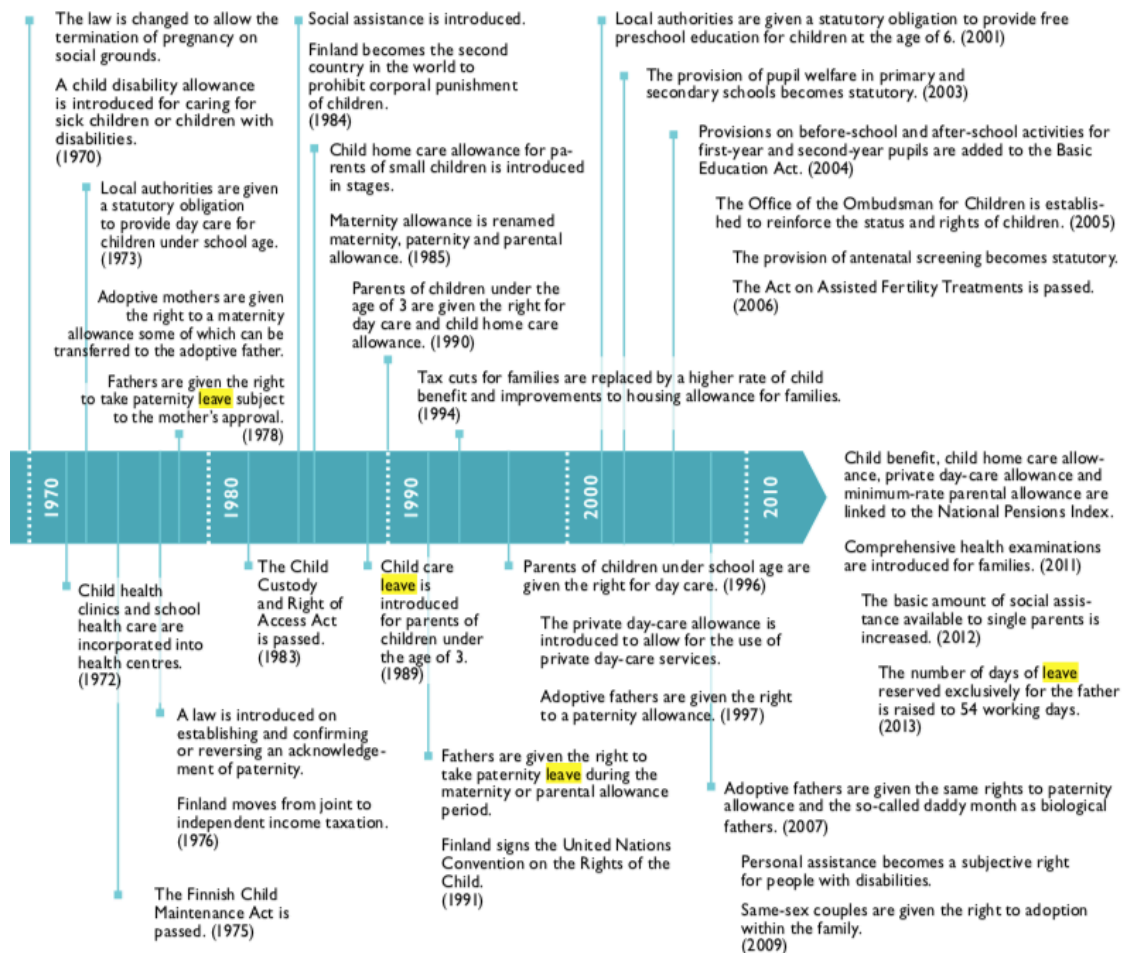
## 1.2 Background Finland

Finland adopted an international maternity protection agreement 38 years ago and the first maternity protection regulations had already been in place in Finland before, but for economic reasons unacceptable for women from the poorer sections of the population (Ministry of social Affairs and Health. 2010).

The Maternity Protection Act applies to all pregnant women who are employed (including domestic workers and homeworkers) or vocational training. Regardless of nationality and family status, every woman has claims under the Maternity Protection Act is she is employed in Finland (Ministry of social Affairs and Health. 2013). In 1917, the first Finnish national 4 weeks maternity leave was introducing, only for women who worked in factories after giving birth and from 1919 until 2009 the maternity leave law changed several times (OECD Family database 2014, 64).



PICTURE 1. Family leave system (Ministry of social Affairs and Health)



### 1.3 Background Germany

The amendment to the Industrial Code of 1878 marks the beginning of maternity protection. There it is written that women cannot be employed until the expiration of three weeks after the birth of a child.

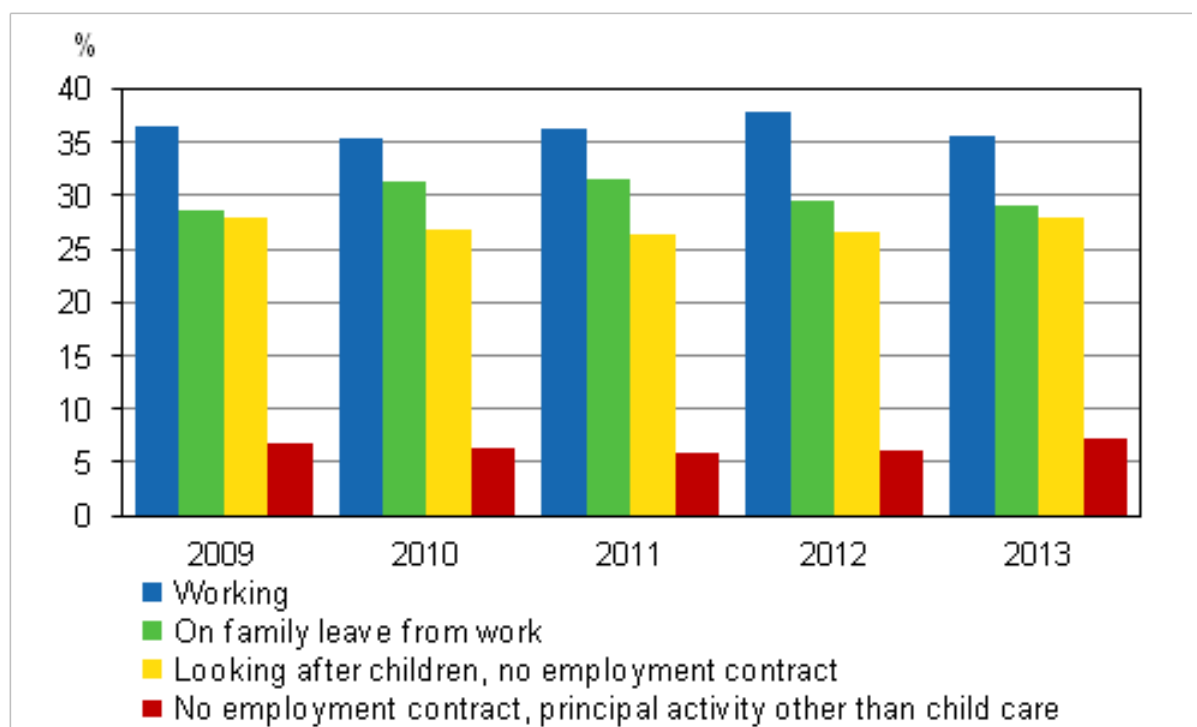
At the same time, in the course of the health insurance reform of 1883, a maternity allowance was paid during this first "maternity leave period". In 1891, the three-week period was extended by one week. A four-week weekly allowance was paid from 1903. In the meantime, mothers had to stay away from work for a week without pay after childbirth. In 1952, maternity protection became part of the Basic Law, which guarantees protection and care in Article 6 of each mother. The "Law for the Protection of the Working Mother" came into force. Since then expectant mothers have to be released from work six weeks before and at least eight weeks after delivery, whereby the pregnant woman can expressly declare herself ready for work before the delivery. During the entire pregnancy, no heavy physical work needs to be done. Breastfeeding periods are also to be granted by the employer. Night and Sunday work are generally prohibited by law, with a few exceptions

(Regional council of Darmstadt. 2018. History of the maternity leave and protection in Germany)

#### 1.4 Objectives and purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to present a suitable solution for the economic life for mothers on maternity leave. The objectivity is connecting to real life situation. Good and competent employees are an essential factor in the success of any company. But wages, salaries and other personnel costs are often the largest cost block in most companies.

Employees with families have been forced to wait for several weeks or even months to find admission into day care centers or nannies for their kids. Becoming parents should not feel like they are outdated for their work tasks. Unfortunately, such acts happen too often. One of the causes has been the lack of effective and good cooperation between the government and companies for years (Statistics Finland, 2014). Companies have to replace vacancies to remain competitive in the labour market.



PICTURE 3. Family and children statistics (Statistics Finland)

Vacant jobs are mostly filled for short periods until the employee returns and employees often face challenges to be back at work. Therefore, the aim of the thesis is to find out an

acceptable compound on an academic level, for employees and employers concerning the possibilities and effects of maternity or parental leave in the corporate world. Additionally, it should be also an opportunity to improve access to talent with this restraint of finding care for their kids. A result should be to set up a tool for the future or to create several opportunities to get an advantage for both sides, company and employee.

## **1.5 Research question**

The main research question of the thesis is:

- What are the economic possibilities and effects of maternity or parental leave in the corporate world, Finland and Germany?

Two sub-questions have been formulated to allow a close examination:

- Which solution or innovation tools can be created to support the financial situation from commissioner perspective, concerning the daily working day?
- What change can be done for the employees and employer at DHL – Express?



## **2 FRAMEWORK – CASE Germany and Finland**

### **2.1 Economic maternity leave**

The commissioner company, DHL Express, is one of the four separate legal entities in Germany and Finland. The company is based in southern Finland, in Vantaa or Bremen and managing mainly Import and Export. There are 4 department areas: Marketing, HR, Sales and Finance.

### **2.2 Germany**

The maternity leave is illuminated by the related influencing factors. The main focuses are: The actual and updated family policy, the family picture and the care facilities for children from 0-6 years. The family policy section identifies the main rules that support reconciliation of family and work. The section on the family image should clarify how family is seen in Germany and what role women's employment plays. Finally, it describes how the financing structure looks like.

Nowadays family policy and Maternity leave

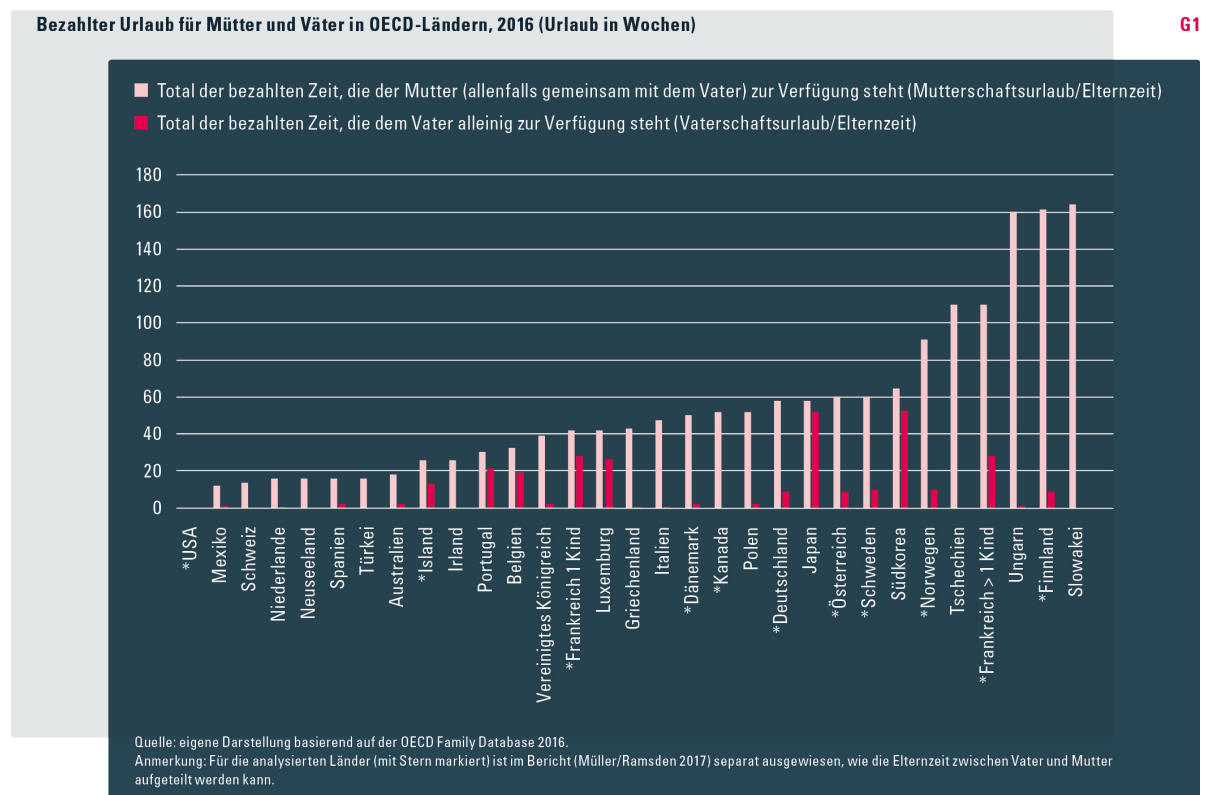
The German Federal Parental Allowance Act has been in force since January 1, 2007 and has replaced the federal drafting law.

The parental allowance can be claimed by mothers and fathers "who look after and educate their children after birth themselves, who do not spend more than 30 hours a week (...) working with their child living in a household and having their place of residence (...) in Germany "(Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth 2008a: p. 11). Furthermore, one of the parents can apply for parental allowance for a child, even if it is not their own (for example adoptions) or if they are third-degree relatives and the parents are seriously ill, severely disabled or have died (see Federal Ministry for Health Family, seniors, women and youth 2008a: pp. 11-12).

The amount of the parental allowance is 67% of the average monthly net income of the last twelve months prior to the birth of the child. The maximum rate is currently € 1800,

and the minimum amount is € 300. The parental allowance can be applied for independently of the appeal. Everyone is entitled, regardless of whether the parents are workers, civil servants, self-employed, unemployed or housewives and men.

When calculating the parental allowance, mini-jobs are also taken into account. Apprentices and students are also entitled to this without having to interrupt their education. Similarly, low-income earners have an exemption. If the net income for mothers or fathers is less than € 1000, then the replacement rate is increased in small steps from 67% to 100%. This means that the lower the income before birth, the higher the retrospective compensation. In figures, this means that the replacement rate for each € 2 under the € 1000 threshold increases by 0.1 percentage point (see Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth 2008a: pp. 12-15).



PICTURE 4. Family Database (OECD 2016)

If income has been reduced due to swindle-related illnesses, more recent months will instead be included in the calculation. On the other hand, short-time work, sickness benefits, pensions, scholarships, BAföG2 (similar to Kela in Finland) or unemployment benefit II are not counted as income and therefore not included in the parental allowance. Unemployment benefits or pension payments that are paid during the parental allowance

reduce the parental allowance claim. If the salary rates are lower than the parental allowance, the difference will be paid for parental benefit, but in any case, 300 €. (see Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth 2008a: pp. 21-27).

Parents can claim parental allowance for the first 14 months of the child's life. However, it should be noted that one parent can take a maximum of twelve months and the other partner then only two months, the so-called partner months. However, entitlement to these partner months only exists if earned income actually decreases in these two months. How the parents ultimately split the payment of monthly amounts is up to them. You can have the parental allowance paid off in succession as well as simultaneously. If both parents receive the parental allowance at the same time, that means they receive two monthly amounts each month. In practice, this means that the parental allowance would have been used up for 14 months already after seven months (the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth 2008a: pp. 17-18).

### **2.3 Finland**

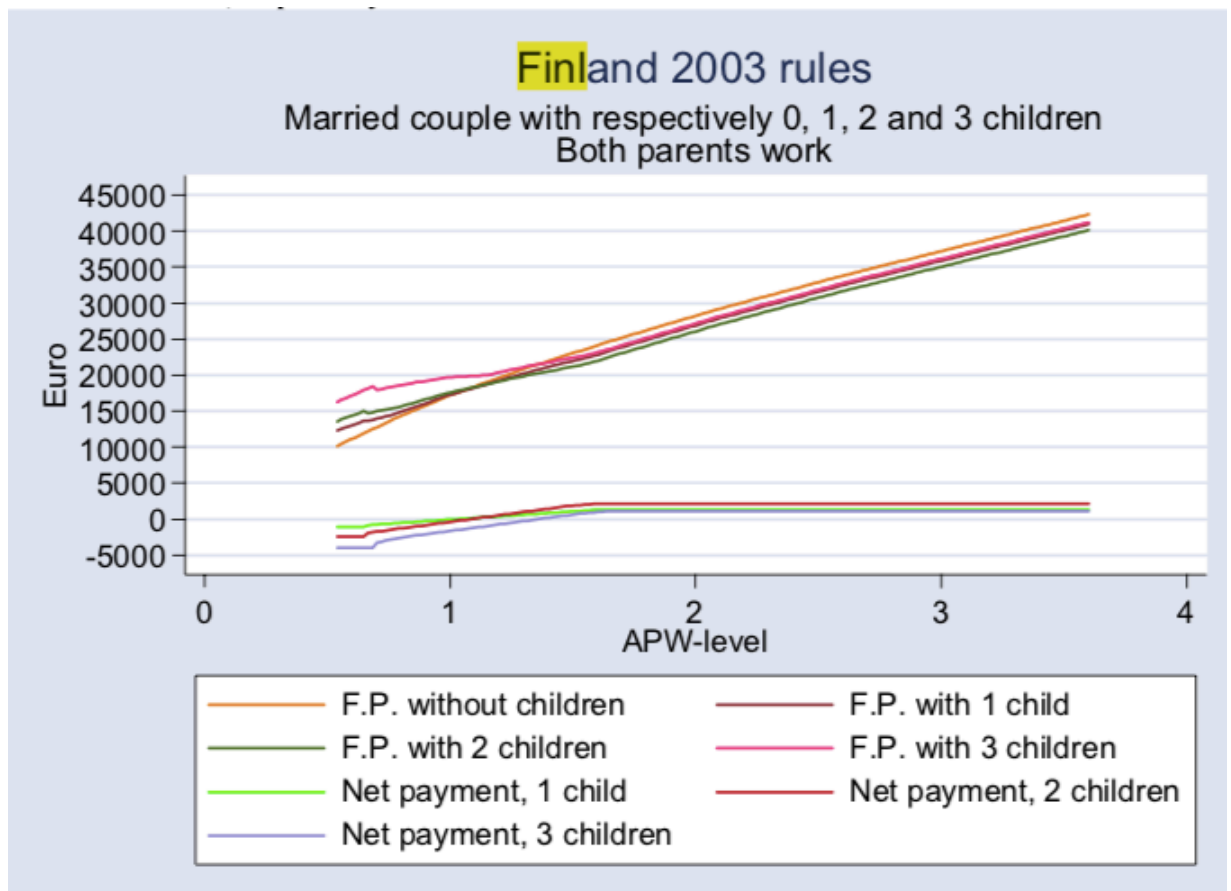
This section aims to provide an overview of the most important theoretical foundations relevant to this work from the areas of the Finnish family law. Maternity or Parental leave are the main focus, based on the use, possibilities, effects and importance for company and employee's knowledge acquisition.

#### **Maternity leave**

Kela gives women several good opportunities for giving birth in Finland. One of those good opportunities is that Kela encourages and supports becoming mothers by combining work and family obligations. The impressive maternity leave system, also known as Vanhenpainvapaa, offered by Kela, support expecting mothers to start their maternity leave approximately seven weeks and not later than 30 working days before their estimated delivery date.

From the first day of a woman's pregnancy, Kela supports the family financially. Parents have the possibilities to apply for maternity & special maternity allowance, paternity allowance, parental allowance or partial parental allowance.

The length of maternity allowance is 105 working days during the maternity leave in Finland. Expecting parents receive maternity care box, which is offered by Kela. Every parent has the opportunity to apply for a maternity care box (worth of 140 Euro).



PICTURE 5. Married couple with children and not (Social forskninks institute)

### Child care

According to the law, after parental leave each parent (father or mother) has the right, to take unpaid childcare leave to look after their child until it reaches the age of three. To be able to take the advantage of this possibility one of the parents must have been working in the same company at least for 6 months during the last year. Regarding to Kela policies, the parental home care allowance will continue to be paid during the child care leave. Parents need to pay a part for the child care. For the firstborn, parents need to pay 264 Euro monthly and for the youngest a total of 238 Euro monthly (KELA 2014b).

The care box contains baby products such as clothes and care items. The idea of the care box is to support the infant during their first year (KELA 2014b).

# Kela<sup>®</sup>



PICTURE 6. Family baby Box (Kela)

### 3 PROCESSING

All my data contains interviewees from the company DHL who have their branch in Vantaa. DHL is an international logistics company. The interviewees are from sales service department. The role of the employee is to support them and their existing insurance policies. No further information about the company is sent due to anonymity issues.

The choice for the method (semi structured interview) was the most beneficial for this study case, since several assumptions should be considered on a given topic. As part of this interview, questions were formulated, and a sequence was determined in which it was openly decided to spontaneously change the order in suitable situations.

The thesis writer has chosen a very simple form of transcription, for an easier readability and comprehension. In the interview with the employees, it was essential to see a clear vision of their thoughts and attitudes concerning the possibilities and especially the effects on maternity or parental leave in DHL Express.

#### 3.1 The Interviewees

The interviews were conducted with five DHL Express employees, four regular employees and one supervisor. This group was chosen because they are all parents who have at least one child. Their working days catch each day with the fight against the time. The day starts with the time game. Dressing up their children and get them on time to school or to kindergarten, all this without being late at work. To be late for work means to have a longer working day and at the same time they need to inform the school or kindergarten that the child will be picked up later.

The reactions of the interviewees were all the same. They wish to have more flexibility regarding their working time (flexible working hours), or alternatively to get support from their employer for employees with children. In addition to flexible working time, there is also the possibility of cooperating with day-cares or receiving financial support for hiring nannies.

### 3.1.1 Evaluation of the interview

The questions to the employees:

1. Age?
2. Background Information (Job title, responsibilities at DHL Express)?
3. Marital status?
4. How many children?
5. Work commute (from home to work)?
6. How long employed?
7. Employed and being parents, how does it affect at your workplace?
8. What possibilities do you have?
9. What do you think about flexible working times, Job-sharing, nanny app?
10. If you would have opportunities to get financial support, from your employer for ordering a nanny, how often would you order one?

In conducting the interviews, the questions were sometimes slightly altered in language or supplemented in others. At this point, it is briefly attempted to briefly summarize the answers and views of the employees and in a text part to gain insights, which should then be merged with the theory. All interviewees were keeping anonym.

When asked what kind of changes or systems employees wish to have, they replied that implementing flexible working time or assisting with hiring a nanny, would properly and positively change their work results. The work climate is the reason why many enjoy working for DHL Express. They also mentioned that the whole hecticness of family stress is one of the factors why they often feel tired to work. Similarly, it was tried in the conclusion section to make it clear how urgently a support, from the employer for the employees, would do well. The most important change which the employees wish to have is to get support for hiring nannies:

*>> (...) the Finnish law gives us parents the right and possibilities to stay together 3 weeks at home. Since it is our first child, I divided my 3 weeks parental leave into two parts and I have already used 1 week, for supporting my wife at home. DHL support me by paying that one week and the Finnish government will pay me the other 2 weeks. The DHL benefits is a bit more compare to the government's benefits. My spouse maternity leave ends in*

*January and she will go back to her full-time job, from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon. I am working in shifts. And often in the night shifts, which is from two in the afternoon until ten in the evening. That means, we have only to option: One of us have to stop working full-time and start working part-time, or we would need a nanny, from one in the afternoon, just <<*

Briefly summarized, the first interviewee (anonym) wishes a change regarding the working hours flexibility at DHL express and perhaps getting support by hiring a nanny to assist them in their daily working life. Flexibility means working from home or elsewhere, which would help reduce employee burnout due to work overload. Employees can set up their breaks whenever they want without incurring the anger of their supervisor. In addition to that, every worker has their own way of fulfilling their tasks (e.g. morning person or night person). That would allow employees to focus on their personal obligations and to spend more time with their families. As we can see, there are positive aspects concerning flexible working hours for employees. Also, employers are in a good position by offering flexible working hours. A change would lead to fewer absences and daily delays in the company.

It is important to mention that in relation to the topic of Nanny- Support, that the next employee is a single parent to whom combining job and family life is extremely challenging. His aim and intention are not to get compassion or the like. He just tries to make clear how a life with a support would be more pleasant. Such a great innovation would help him and other workmates:

*“As a single parent or single father, I can say in advance that it is difficult to bring both, work and family life, under the same roof. It required some good scheduling to fit things together. I have been working more than five years here at DHL Express and since years the time (clock) has always been the issue. (...) We use this punch clock and you cannot play with that too much because you have to control and find a balance with your working minus and plus hours. Since we are doing clearances, we always have to work the day before the workday. We take terms among three people. The reason for that is: When the airplane lands in the morning, all the papers work for everything inside the airplane, have to be done. And we do that the day before. Through the terms we take, that give me the opportunity to catch*



*up with my minus hours. Usually, if you do not have negative balance time, you can take those days and make some over hours. (...) My children start their schools after 8:30am and obviously I cannot start my work, before they go to school. And after school they need to wait for me until 5pm at the afternoon-day-care (in Finnish, "Iltapäiväkerho") before I come and pick them up. As you can see, my days are really long and that is why I finish my work with minus hours.*

The second interviewee focusses on having as few minus hours as possible at the end of each day. In addition to that, his days are very long, and he continues to deliver good results daily.

*My neighbour and I, support each other's. She is also a single parent and has the same life situation as me. Sometimes she needs to pick up my kids, because I work a bit longer than 5pm. An important change such as flexible hours would help my working life. (...) Since there are workdays which I need to be present for manually paper work, I would not profit from it in long term. In the hand, I could benefit from a nanny service support. Couple weeks ago, I had a situation where my daughter was sick on the weekend and at the beginning of the week, my son became sick for next 4 days. So, four working days were gone.*

He involves his children into the daily routine. Unfortunately, he has no other choice. To enjoy work means to be not under internal pressure or in a bad mood. An implication of flexible time and an option for nanny support would certainly not hurt the company. In contrast, it would greatly help all parents with the same problems and issues. Like many other employees, parents value getting as few negative hours each week as possible. Everyone I interviewed at DHL Express, have never heard of the concept of a nanny mobile application. Under line, all are interested in trying such a service. A nanny innovation would support employees in their daily's days but also give employers the opportunities and possibilities during employee's maternity and parental leave and it will help reduce annual costs regarding absences.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Innovation – Nanny Mobile Application - Muxuni

Child care (Lastenhoitopalvelu) services is care for a child during the day offered by a person which most often is someone outside the child's immediate family other than the child's legal guardians.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the mobile application innovation called Muxuni™. The product offered by the start-up company Muxuni™ is a service application available on mobile devices. By using this platform parents who have a need for a babysitter can find nannies offering their service. The company Muxuni™ started officially operating in the summer 2017. As it is, this paper discusses the aim and operations at a high level, since the actual daily business has been running for more than a year.



PICTURE 7: Muxuni Logo

### 4.1.1 Organization

Muxuni™ is a cloud-based customer relationship management (CRM) platform. It is a mobile phone application (App) and a P2P based platform where parents have needs or where people offer helps.

The entrepreneur is Gaël White Njeukam, a 28-year-old German student attending to the course International Business at Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Finland. The student has developed his knowledge and interest about babysitting due to having 2 small children himself and he's well aware of the local culture and of the business etiquette followed. Gaël White decided to tackle the underdeveloped babysitter – service in Tampere, based on the knowledge acquired of over 4 months' research. He built up a team of 3 engineer students who are from the same University. Together they started to develop a mobile application for parents and babysitters. The team focused on identifying the most suitable solutions for such issue within the niche targeted to be able to play a part into the development of these babysitter services for the local community, as the Muxuni™ team's goal is to successfully set up and run their own business, while offering reliable and essential service.

After the founder and project manager of Muxuni™ came up with the business idea, a three-month marketing research was conducted before proceeding, in order to find out if there was a need for this kind of service in the local market. The results of the research suggested that there was a need for babysitters and that mobile applications were the preferred option over more traditional ways of ordering a nanny (such as calling), which implies that this application could be worth proceeding with.

In the summer of 2016 the development work was started by the team consisting of the founder and a group of engineers. The engineers created a prototype of the application including the following features: nanny profile, google maps, messenger and payment method.

This App was designed by Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK) – students, in Tampere, Finland, to increase the level of support, trust, connection of people, reputation and availability and engagement with the company amongst all key stakeholders, including sales agents, management teams, referral partners and even existing and new customers.

The project manager of Muxuni™ has collaborated with the company lawyer to create the company policies and organizational structure. The project manager is responsible for planning the company strategy and adapting the strategy according to changes in business environment. The innovation Team of TAMK is helping the project manager in handling the business-related bureaucracy.

#### 4.1.2 Sales

There is a business model according to which the money from sales will be addressed. A 20 % share of the whole sum paid by parents to the nanny goes to the company in order to cover operating costs and to make profit. Companies such as Valio Oy have managed to support their employees by paying a certain percentage or sum, which needs to be paid to the nanny. To obey the tax law, a share of remaining money from sales will automatically go to the tax administration. As is the custom in Finland, the tax rate depends on the individual tax percentage of each person. After deducting the 20 % share going to the start-up company and individual tax rate, the rest of the money goes to the nanny.

## 4.2 JOBSHARING

One application, two resumes. A new model of maternity leave is already in progress in central Europe. To escape the mother trap, some women, on maternity leave, apply for a job in pairs. The labour market is not up to date yet and there are still different views and opinions coming from the employers. Such a new idea would need every European country. Job-sharing is in general a generic term than can involve various aspects:

1. **Job-Splitting** is the most common form of job-sharing. Regarding to this various full-time job are literally split into two or more units and given to multiple employees. In this case the employees are completely independent of each other, they receive individual employment contracts and normally do very similar work at different times.
2. The cooperation in **job-pairing** is much closer. Here the job-sharers do not work independently, but with each other. In the working life it looks like common tasks

and projects are being worked on, important decisions are made together because in the end both are responsible for their final decisions.

3. **Top-Sharing** is an upper level of the hierarchy of job-sharing. But it can also be operated here. Management positions can also be split up and filled by several supervisors.

The new idea supports maternity or parental leave not to give up their old workplaces. It is quite possible to have time for the family but also share full – time position.

### 4.3 Maternity leave shares a job

Companies who are not aware of the new job-sharing opportunities often do not know how to respond to such applications. Job-sharing is a working time model in which two or more employees share a job place. Workers share the tasks and responsibilities during their work period. The foundations are regulated by the part-time and fixed-term act. Parents find it difficult to accept a job with forty hours per week. For many, new parents, it is impossible to take the old job position as full time. For such a responsible job position you need to be able to be present full-time. Young mothers or fathers feel demoted because they cannot cope with it.

A work plan or work schedule may look like this:

- On Mondays and Wednesdays Mother1 would be sitting at the office desk from 9 to 13 o'clock, and Mother2 from 12 to 16 o'clock. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, one of each would be there on full-day, on Fridays both in the morning.

What speaks for it: Both mothers maintain contact with the workplace and still have time to look after their child. Each parent has other reasons to start a part-time job.

- There are parents who want compatibility between career and family. The new workforce model offers a good opportunity, especially for working parents, to combine a successful career with the desire for a family life.
- There is the possibility of further education. Parents still aspire to study beside their work, but often suffer from lack of time. Job-sharing could provide the necessary freedom for parents to devote to further study or education.

- Another good aspect would be that free time for new parents would increase. Particularly in very stressful workplaces, job-sharing can be a good solution to prevent burnout or other damages to health caused by overloading and overwork.

Parents should think clearly and find good reasons before making the step into job-sharing. Their employer will probably be interested in listening to reasons, why a new mother or father would wish like to apply for a job-sharing position.



PICTURE 8: Two mothers sharing a workplace (google)

## 5 DISCUSSION

This and the next chapter discuss the research findings and conclusions of the thesis, that have been analysed from data collected in interviews. Additionally, the findings include a new innovation that the thesis writer has invented for giving the company possibilities to increase the satisfaction of their employees. It can be summarized that the interviewed employees of DHL Express had a generally positive picture of the proposed solution.

### 5.1 Flexible working hours, job-sharing and nanny app Muxuni™

The thesis and research object were to investigate and to answer the problem definition:

- What are the possibilities and effects of maternity or parental leave in the corporate world?

The task was very extensive. Only employees who are already parents were interviewed. Some employees were single parents with two or more children while some have only a single child. Most of the employees have been working for more than five years in DHL Express. After reviewing the data collection in interviews, it was clear that the flexible working hours and a nanny support service were the biggest wishes of change. Employees are generally satisfied with their employer.

The employer, DHL – Express, has confidence in his workers, lets them decide and is interested in the well-being of the employee and gives them the latitude when it comes to short-term absences. Employees of DHL – Express have a sympathetic supervisor who is able to correctly assess the family situation of his employees. One of the conditions is that employees should give a notification to their supervisor in advance as soon as they realize that they will not appear to work or if they have to leave early, for picking up their child from the afternoon-school.

Nonetheless, a change into flexible working hours, job-sharing opportunity for maternity or parental leave and supporting by hiring nanny services would give them another reason to remain loyal to the company.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

I went to the bottom in my bachelor thesis to find positive effects and possibilities for maternity or parental leaves for the company DHL Express. The world view of parents in the workplace has become a very important challenge in our society nowadays. As already highlighted in the previous findings, some changes would do both parties good. The research has shown that certain assumptions have been confirmed by theory. The interview analysis reveals there are more than only 1 solution. Through some interviews with the employees, it has been found that the employees self-image is influenced by the employer. Besides, I was able to look at some assumptions from different perspectives. There are several possibilities that can lead to positive or negative effects, for employees or employers. But then it depends on, whether and in what way the results explored here will be implemented. Some employees which to have flexible working hours, while others are for getting support by hiring a nanny.

Maternity and parental leaves are very sensitive and complex topic in the corporate world. According to the author Thomas A. Potterfield (The business of employee empowerment), learning to listen to the employee is an important development step for the employer. It is important for employees to be in their being, as they are to be accepted, to give them space and specially to take as much pressure away as possible. That prevents unhappy employees but also depression and burnout. The way of dealing with other people is an important key for a good work atmosphere. Only in case of superior power of the employer and a constant unreflecting abuse of power, it can have disastrous consequences for the personality development of the employees.

This thesis has also shown that it does not matter if we talk about parents or single parents. The topic offers possible interesting suggestions for further investigation. For example, it would be interesting to discuss the topic through observation and how flexible working hours, job-sharing or Nanny service-app are actually needed. It would be interesting to find out what solution could be achieved through those results option. However, it cannot be said at this point how the work results would look like after the research solutions have been implemented. This would require a study to be conducted over several years.



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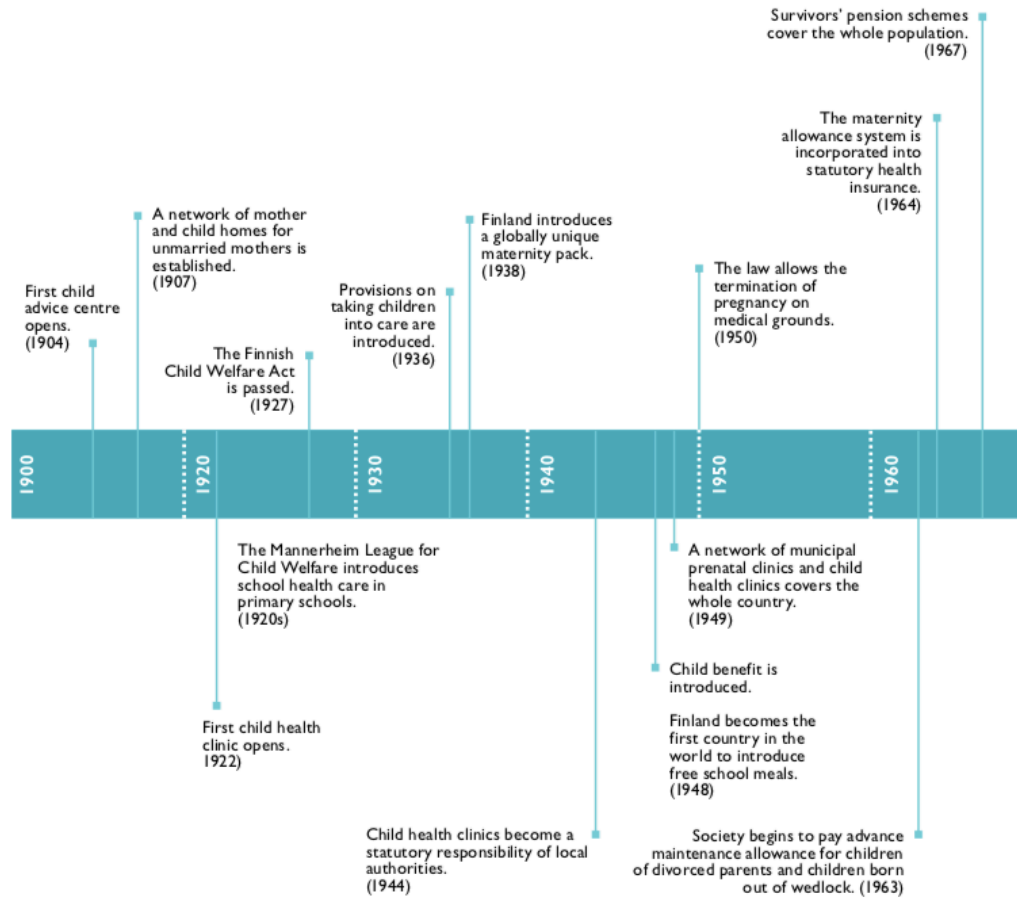
Social Forsknings Instituttet. 2006.[Online] Available at: [https://pure.sfi.dk/ws/files/236700/WP\\_08\\_2006.pdf](https://pure.sfi.dk/ws/files/236700/WP_08_2006.pdf)

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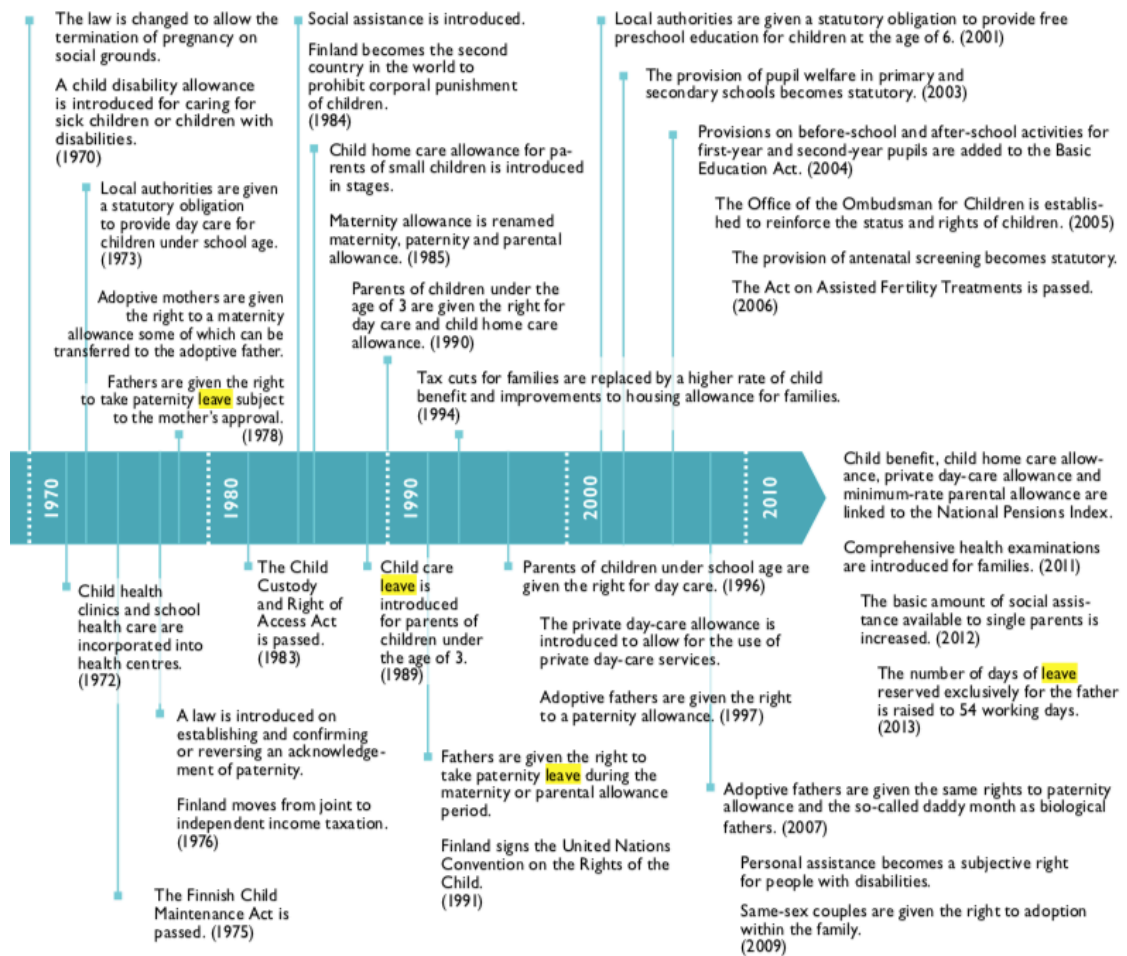
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APPENDICES

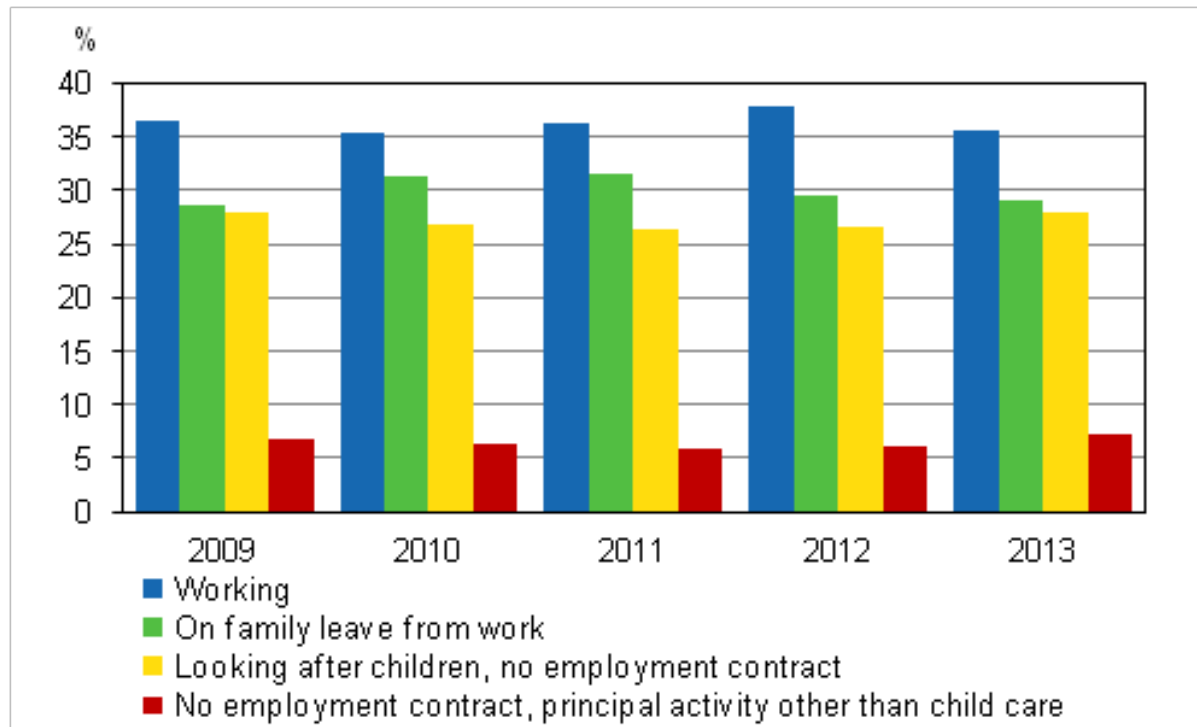
Appendix 1. Family leave system (Ministry of social Affairs and Health)



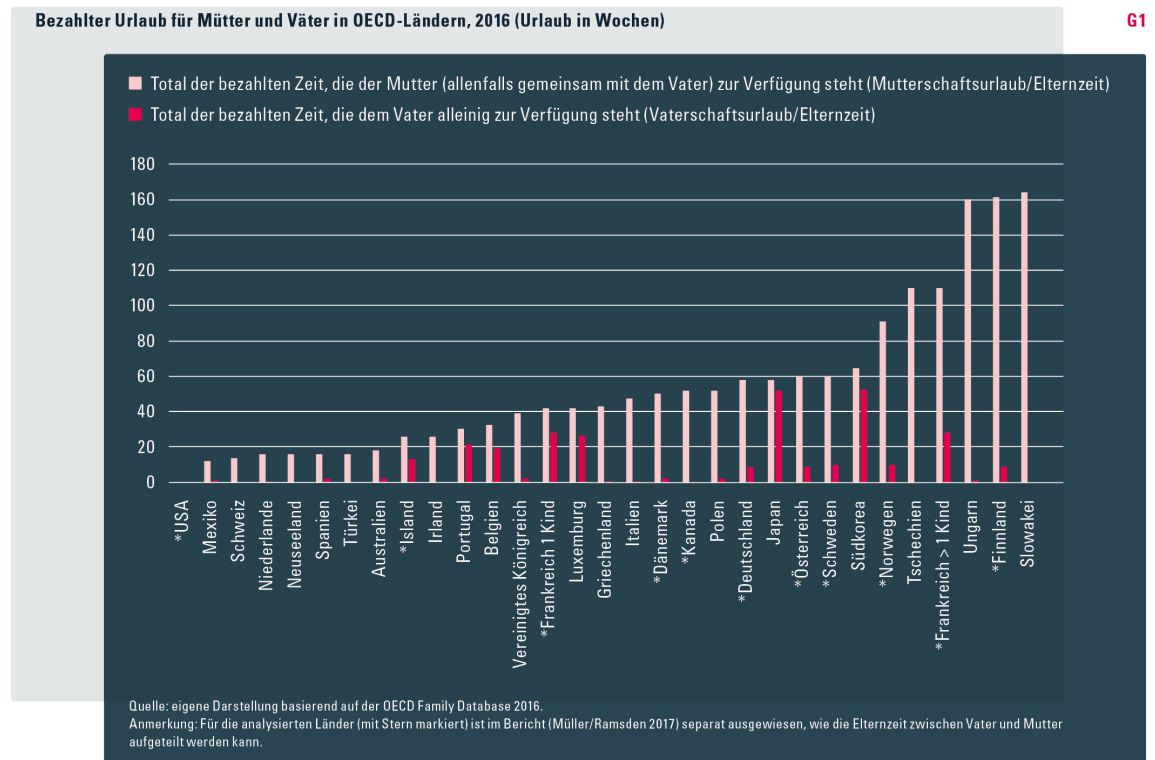
## Appendix 2. Family leave system (Ministry of social Affairs and Health)



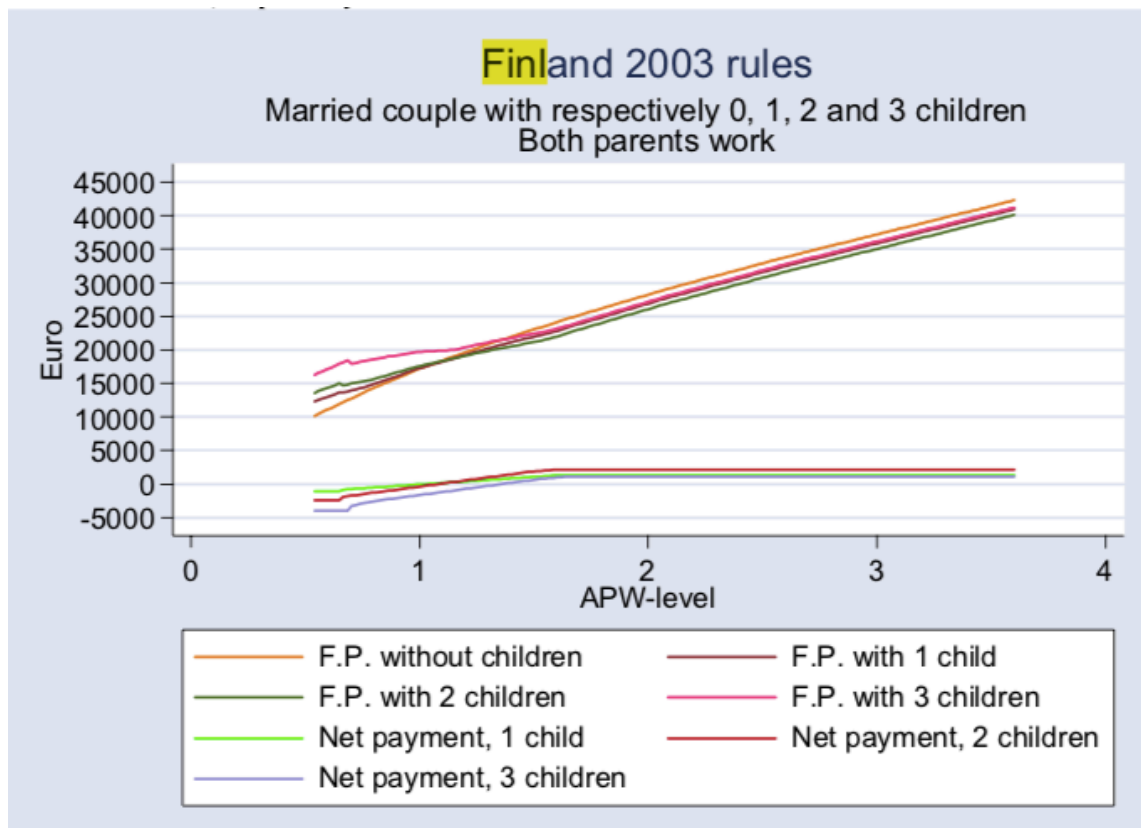
## Appendix 3. Family and children statistics (Statistics Finland)



## Appendix 4. Family Database (OECD 2016)



## Appendix 5. Married couple with children and not (Social forsknings institute)





## Appendix 6. Family baby Box (Kela)

# Kela



Appendix 7. Interview questions for employees of DHL – Express

1. Age?
2. Background Information (Job title, responsibilities at DHL Express)?
3. Marital status?
4. How many children?
5. Work commute (from home to work)?
6. How long employed?
7. Employed and being parents, how does it affect at your workplace?
8. What possibilities do you have?
9. What do you think about flexible working times, Job-sharing, nanny app?
10. If you would have opportunities to get financial support, from your employer for ordering a nanny, how often would you order one?