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PERCEPTION OF FAMILY SUPPORT BY ADULT CHILDREN
IN FINLAND AND RUSSIA

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ABSTRACT

While the population of Europe is ageing, and social welfare system is struggling to provide the support for elderly and to make up strategies for keeping up the social security on a satisfying level, on the micro level the family is experiencing structural and functional changes. The actual research lies on the crossroads of these social issues.

The vital problem of how to provide ageing individuals with the care and support they need is approached from the perspective of the potential supporters: adult children. In particular, I was interested in how they perceive the family support duties that may occur in their future, how they regard them and plan to cope with them.

In order to answer the research question I interviewed 12 informants, half of them Russian and the other Finnish whose parents are in the pre-retirement age. The comparative approach allowed me to compare the support arrangements in Russia and Finland and to perceive the sharper differences across the family discourses in these two countries.

Having completed the discourse analysis of the data, I have learnt that regardless of the social welfare regime individuals belong to, they have varying perceptions of family support and reciprocation acts inside the family network. For instance, it is believed that pensions in Russia are small, yet many elderly parents still support the families of their adult children. In Finland with its well-established formal care institutions, there were discourses confirming and denying the chances for ageing parents to go to the elderly houses. Despite the general trend of individualized society, Finnish adult children are still involved in reciprocation and mutual transaction of help and support with their parents, with few contrary examples.

My thesis provides a better understanding of the family support phenomenon and adds a scientific value via the study of support perception by the adult children and offers a conceptual framework exploited as the analytical outcome of the research. Individuals build up perceptions of support on their assumptions of moral family obligations, established patterns of reciprocity and dependency. The result of the study is that family support may be seen as a burden - however, many individuals do not reject to undertake it, and perceive this obligation as granted, and in fact family support activities are still relevant and imperative. The conceptual framework developed in this Master's Thesis may be used in any other Social Policy study of family support and care.

Keywords: *Family support, moral obligation, reciprocity, dependency*

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1 Introduction

Against the background of the inevitable process of ageing of the European population, the year 2012 was announced the 'European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations' (European Commission Informational Bulletin, 2010). Such initiatives show that EU policymakers are aware of the problem and are accordingly trying to highlight and attract public attention to the issue. In addition, the mass media keep repeatedly announce that Europe is 'greying' and some radical measures should be taken in order to slow down the process and to prevent economies and the social sector from collapsing. Academics and governmental advisors are spending funds on in-depth research and forming statistical outlines of the process. In trying to provide a clear response to the question of whether Europe can afford to grow old, Carone and Costello (2006) propose that the issue is quite threatening - yet manageable - with well-timed intermediation of policymakers and European governments. It is the general view amongst social researchers that it is important to study the institutions that support individuals in their old age, financially as well as socially and symbolically. The institutions I assume here are the state and the social institution of family, which are the main agents responsible for the implementation of care and support for ageing individuals.

On one hand, there is the process of ageing taking place, and on the other, there is the transformation of family structures and functions. As a lay person would speculate, the family in its traditional understanding is experiencing a change or, to put it in crude terms, disintegration. It is no longer the powerful cell of society it used to be, but more diffuse, having various forms and an amorphous structure. The impact of this transformation may be apparent in different dimensions, and what I will examine in this study is how family support arrangements are perceived by the adult children whose parents are entering pension age.

In addition to the structural change of the family institution, there is another aspect that influences its functioning, namely the welfare regime which shapes social environment families are embodied into. Finland and Russia lie on the different welfare regime vectors, as Finland is considered to be a strong Nordic model (Esping-Andersen 1990) with a very well established formal care system and state support, whilst Russia falls into the category of Continental regime with poor social security mechanisms and an individual responsibility of to take care of one's own welfare. Living in these different states and the different conditions of living may also affect people's perception of family support and shed light on different patterns of its provision on the micro level.

One of the socially accustomed functions of the family is to prevent oblique situations and provide support to the members. A range of responsibilities are assigned to the family as a social institute, however, they experience changes due to societal transformation and the impact of social policy. The gender division of roles is specific to every society and may be a factor in influencing support arrangements in the family. In addition, the pervasion of economic guidelines into social relations shapes new forms of interrelations, including the democratic division of roles and the concept of children as their parents' investments (Featherstone 2004).

In the current research I will also be interested in how kinship interaction patterns are shaped and how the support functions are derived from them. The question of kinship patterns reopens the understanding of how support and dependency are interrelated. Indeed, it has been examined that ageing kin with a wider network of relatives have more chances to get the amount of support they are in need of (Wolf 1986).

With the application of a comparative approach I plan to depict the roles of women and men as supporters of the family. In this regard, the arguments of altruism and reciprocation as accompanying elements of gender relations within the family take their turn. Taken as the supportive references to my argument, Folbre (2001) has investigated the moral foundations of care and support; Watson and Mears (1999) have contributed to the family support research from the perspective of stress for the supporter and understanding of care duties as a burden, which adds to the knowledge of how to relieve the tension amongst family circles. As the thesis covers the family support relations, I assume that a new situation where one of the family members has to take on the support responsibilities may change the relations quite significantly. In this respect, I will address the study of Kane and Penrod (1993) who have explored family support practices from different aspects including power and control relations between individuals giving and receiving help.

The Russian family change is basically identical to the European tendency, with less established family units and disintegration of generations. In terms of hardships, the tradition to support family kin is still strong in post-Soviet territories, despite the differentialization and consolidation of generations in Russian families, the division of roles and the changes that the family institution has experienced throughout the last twenty year (Semenova 2001). At the same time, I consider family to be the body one first addresses to get help, credit or moral support. From the perspective of family network support, Barsukova (2003) discovers the acts of reciprocation and most intensive exchange of goods, emotions and information on the kinship level rather than on any other levels of social interaction.

As it is generally acknowledged the change that the modern family is experiencing, and the support function of the family is recomposed. In this thesis I will study perceptions of family support arrangements and duties amongst adult children with ageing parents. I do it by analyzing discourses from personal interviews, and as the research question I ask:

‘How do adult children perceive family support duties and anticipate the potential for themselves to become supporters of their ageing parents in the future?’

I attempt to answer this question and throw light on the topic of perception of family support arrangements by adult children in modern Finnish and Russian societies from a comparative perspective.

The problem of family support nowadays stands quite prominently at the crossroads of the topics of ageing, transformation of the family structure and its functions. On the micro level such aspects as family resources, the range of social networks and ties contribute to the shaping of the family support establishment. Additionally, the state and the social security system play an important role here. What interests me in this phenomenon is how a new generation of potential supporters sees the problem, and as a supplementary to the main research question, I would like to find out what kind of new arrangements family support forms, what the choices for different families are, and whether it is possible to talk about some tendencies (multiple trends) in the modern scope of family relations. Therefore, the subject of the research is family support, which will be thoroughly discussed in the chapter ‘Family care and support: conceptual understanding’. With regard to the comparative approach, I plan to investigate the perception of family support in light of care and support provision between older and younger generations of a family. More specifically, the research area is that the older generations’ representatives are now undergoing the trajectory from working life to retirement. As the retirement ages in Finland and Russia differ (flexible retirement at 63-68 years of age in the former case and 60 years for the latter) the main informants, the adult children of pre-retiring parents, are from 22 to 35 years old. The two countries have two different welfare systems (Nordic and Post-Soviet corporatist, respectively) and societies in which different cultural patterns are reproduced. Thus, the institutional environment may also have effects on support perceptions.

The presumptions of the research are derived from the formal division of three welfare regimes, where Finland is considered one of the strong welfare states and equally supports different social groups, while Russian social security is quite weak and still meets only the minimum of the citizens’ demands. Considering this, I assume that in Finland there is not much

support between generations, and the role of the carer is taken by the state in most cases. In contrast, in Russian society the family takes over the responsibility for the support to ageing members. Therefore, as my prior research goal is to find out a lot of discursive patterns on family support and care practices in the Russian discourses, whilst in the Finnish discourses the main themes are the regard to the formal institutions as support agents for ageing parents and independency from family support duties. Additionally, I anticipate to detect the perceptions of Russian informants towards support and care to be burdening, due to the assumption of a bad state of public social security system.

As the informants are also divided on the basis of gender, it is significant to retrace the differences in attitudes between males and females towards care and chances to be a potential carer. Consequently, as the data design I obtain four sub-groups of informants according to their demographic characteristics: two different social backgrounds (Russia and Finland) and two genders (male and female).

The operational terms that will be in active use throughout this Master's Thesis are worth considering here. First of all, there is family support mentioned before. Other two important matters that are going to be investigated are support arrangements and family obligations; moreover, I will also reconstruct the concepts of reciprocity and dependency aspects of family support, based on the Russian and Finnish family support discourses.

The method of collecting data employed in the actual research was interviewing: in-depth unstructured indirect interviews of 12 adult children whose parents are approaching pension age and retirement. For the purpose of comparison, there were six informants from Russia and Finland respectively, three of them male and three female in both groups.

The informants were selected on the basis of a snowball method with an attempt to select informants with as varying social and economic backgrounds as possible to provide representative data. The techniques for transcribing and translating the interviews were carried out according to the rules of research ethics and accuracy so that the reliability of data was assured. As the tool for analysis, the method of discourse analysis will be used on the text of the interviews and the results presented in the empirical part of the research.

The introduction is followed by the literature review which includes the grounding of the theoretical framework and previous empirical studies implemented in this field. The third chapter addresses the methodological basics and tools that I employed to collect and analyze the data.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the data analysis with references to the interviews and the discourse analysis outcome. The thesis ends with the chapter 'Conclusion'.

2 Family care and support: conceptual understanding

As the research question prescribes to rediscover the perceptions of family support and care, firstly I examine the cultural background of family relations between generations in Finland and Russia and, secondly, take a closer look at the investigations already made in the field of research, and correspondingly apply ideas and concepts for my own findings, and therefore enhance them. Hence in this chapter the story will go from more general arguments and descriptive outlays to more specific categories, applicable as theoretical concepts to work with empirical data.

2.1 Cultural background of family relations in Finland and Russia

With the general assumption of a common tendency to establish officially less recognized families, more divorces to be proceeded and to live as a single parent all across the globe, it still varies from country to country. Given two of them, Finland and Russia, it is worth remembering the division Esping-Andersen provided in his famous book: two countries so close geographically are vastly different institutionally and culturally!

The Nordic welfare regime typology (Esping-Andersen 1990) classifies Finland as a country of individualists, independent citizens who believe in the power of the state and do live according to the rules set up by society. Hence, there are low criminality levels, order obedience, high solidarity, social equality, a huge and well-developed middle class and gender equality. Fairly young democratic traditions are perfectly adopted and are working for the society and welfare.

To address the official statistics, it is indicated that the number of registered families has grown by 6,100 since the end of the year 2009 and now form 76 percent of the whole population of Finland (Population and Cause of Death Statistics 2010). However, in those 76 percent of people who have formed a family, great changes have taken place. If in 1950s there were only four categories of family - married couples with children, those without children, single mothers or fathers with a child, starting from the 1980s onwards more variety appeared and the concept of cohabitation was introduced. The number of cohabiting couples without children and families without children has increased greatly in the past two decades, which is considered by many

experts to be an alarming tendency: the family loses the function of reproducing new members of society, which would further lead to economical and pension budgeting problems. (Population and Cause of Death Statistics 2010.)

At the same time, as Pfau-Effinger described in her book on informal work, the system of dual breadwinners best characterizes Finland from the social policy perspective, in which the state plays a major role as a support provider, and family a minor one. Further on, the small scale of informal care is typical of Finland, whereas support given by relatives and the practices of exchange of small favours are minimal. (Pfau-Effinger 2009.) The author does not go into detail about the reason why it happens, but the factual strong welfare state provision presuppose no need for the next kin to indulge in informal care, and therefore the state takes care of those who are in need. The tradition was developed in the post WWII period when the welfare state came to blossom and continues to do so till now, influencing social sphere positively and, certainly, enrooting the tradition of an individualistic approach to caregiving, and finally, to the insignificant role of the family in care and support provision.

After the breakup of the USSR Russia had a feeble social security system, which is still underdeveloped. Due to the barter economy of the 90s and the lack of real money and investments in the economy the society experienced a transition to the so-called model of survival (Tikhonova, Shkaratan 2001). In today's Russia the social stability is based on the state support of minimal life necessities of the citizens and the blossom of "communal survival" (Tikhonova, Shkaratan 2001, p. 27), which supposes supporting practices, help with money, food, borrowings or favours amongst the networks of kin and friends. Judging by the ridiculous amount of pension benefits new retired citizens receive, the disintegrating social assistance and care system, the lack of attention paid by the government to social policy matters, it can be stated that the duty of social care and support in Russia lies on the shoulders of individuals themselves and on their families. Therefore, a residual form of social provision falls to the category of liberal welfare regime (Cerami 2009) which Russia has become through the last twenty years of economic and social change.

The soviet heritage for Russia is this 'communal society', typical for the USSR and still persisting in modern life. It is still quite typical that more than two generations of the extended family live in one household. This phenomenon might be explained and interpreted from different perspectives. First of all, it is not a voluntary choice of individuals to live all together but it is due to a socially created situation where any other way cannot be afforded. Secondly, the tradition of tight bonds inside the family is still powerful and individuals live the way they do through inertia.

By all means, it is a fact of Russian reality that kin relations are an important part of social reality and work as the sources and tools for overcoming economic and social difficulties.

As to the structural changes in the family institution in the case of Russia, a change in the functional outline of the family was initially mentioned by Pitirim Sorokin already in year 1916: “Family is experiencing sharp break, old and partially modern forms of it disappear, and new vaguely recognizable forms take place” (Sorokin 1916, p. 174). Researchers of the modern Russian family, Svetlana Burova and Anastasia Demidova point out that the variability and plurality of family forms have washed out the standard traditional family structure, especially in the aspect of family role division, behavioral norms and family values. They portrayed such problems as the reproductive (dys)function of families, single-child families’ dominance, social disadaptation of families, decrease in registered marriages, and decrease in social security of families and increase in the number of low-income families (Burova, Demidova 2008, pp. 101-102).

Hence, such different prerequisites and cultural backgrounds for families in Finland and Russia outdraw the scope of interaction within family as social group and with other social agents and interest groups such as official institutions and the state in the whole. As the family institution is now experiencing some changes, it is always worthy to measure what the state of things in this area of study is.

2.2 Theoretical paradigms and approaches to family support studies

To address family support arrangements at the micro level, I shall first make the overview the theoretical knowledge of the phenomenon, what relations and concepts it covers, and hereby I can build my own findings on a trustworthy theoretical paradigm. Literature on family relations and support across generations has a different origin, from psychology and anthropology to the macroeconomic schemes. My range of interest is inclined to the former ones. In this overview, the theoretical paradigms will be regarded, and thereupon, the concepts in accordance to family support practices will be introduced to the reader. I will start with an overview of theoretical paradigms applied in the family support field of studies, move to common arguments on family roles and functions, and finish by providing the concepts I plan to concentrate upon in the actual paper and use within the research framework.

An impressive overview of the most crucial findings made in the field of family support and care was implemented by a constellation of researchers Eva and Boaz Kahana, J. Randall Johnson, Ronald J. Hammond and Kyle Kercher, who produced a paper on “Developmental challenges and family caregiving” (1994). From the text two main paradigms could have been drawn for family support research design: the life-course and developmental, which from the particular perspective sees caregiving as a process (Kahana et al. in Kahana 1994).

The life-course perspective, if taken as a research framework, allows taking into account continuity and changing matters throughout the life of an individual. (Kahana et al. in Kahana 1994, p. 12.) However, in the case of this thesis, the aim is not to consider ageing and correspondent caring measures as an inevitable life stage, but to be more focused on the transition from work to pension, assuming the ageing process *de facto*, and its relation to the potential support provision duties of the younger family members. Therefore, in the case of this Thesis, the developmental approach suits best to be the theoretical framework to regard the phenomenon of family support. It allows to perceive adult children’s potential chances to become supporters, the inheritance of caring duties in the family; it provides contextual information about families and is at the end most appropriate to fit the research goals.

The article of Kahana et al. regards developmental framework from the psychological perspective of “individuals who make up the personal caregiving context” (Kahana et al. in Kahana 1994, p. 15), and I will employ a more sociological one with consideration of the whole family as a unity, especially potential support providers who are my primary informants, and their ageing parents who are secondary ones. Hence, I consider family tradition in relation to support and care, additionally to the moral development as social group which produces support ‘services’ and establishes caring practices for the members.

Employing the developmental paradigm means that family life is seen divided into stages and roles in them (Kahana et al. in Kahana 1994). Therefore, I address the most interesting stage of old age which requires support provision. According to Kahana et al., support receivers in their ageing years can be divided into two categories: those who have been cared for a long period and those who have recently started to be cared for due to some newly broken out disease or disability. Nevertheless, for both groups two crucial issues of despair and integrity are set up sharply, even though there are different ways to solve these problems, more or less complicated (Kahana et al. in Kahana 1994, p. 21). Integrity and despair are considered converse feelings: for instance, unexpected dependency may put an individual in a situation of despair and depression, while the feeling of contentment and safety inside the family circle may support the integrity, as

personal as social. It is important to keep in mind the role of a young carer when it comes to the social context, since ageing and younger adults treat care and support duties from different angles. Young adults experience the entrance to a real life where they can reach “a differentiation of self in relation to the family” (Kahana et al. in Kahana 1994, p. 23) and therefore, achieve some self-support. The general trend is that the provision of support and realization responsibility for ageing parents are treated as a challenge amongst younger adults, and the understanding of the importance and recipience of this new role comes with time. At the same time, the support can be stressful for a recipient too, and here we arrive at the topic of (in)dependency which some individuals may strongly oppose. “Challenges of caregiving or care receiving may thus represent cumulative stresses for older members of the family” (Kahana et al. in Kahana 1994, p. 26), and so it is for the provider of the support.

At the very same time, there is a valid assumption that elderly people have reached better financial stability than younger adults and have some savings to secure their lives, which should on the one hand add to their feeling of being economically protected, and on the other, allow to buy care services if needed.

Elderly couples are increasingly in sound financial and health circumstances to enjoy their declining years. They are able to remain independent and to assist their descendants longer prior to reaching the final period when frail health may make them turn to other family members for care. (Aldous in Kahana et al. 1994, p. 61.)

Indeed many times it might be the case that younger adults still receive material help from their ageing parents, so the addressees of the support may vary, as may the directions and the content of it.

There is also an idea that could be used as an argument of value of the actual undertaken research, and in particular: “Emphasis generally has been placed on burdens or outcomes of caregiving with relatively little research attention directed at the process” (Kahana et al. 1994, p. 7). Correspondingly, this Master’s Thesis will indeed concentrate on the understanding of support and care as processes and adds to the understanding of modern support and ageing consequences. What also votes pro the finding are the gaps in researches mentioned by Aldous, in particular, the research gap in paying attention to the role of younger generations amongst preretirement or aging families (Aldous in Kahana et al. 1993, p.64). Indeed, the research concerns the support for pre-retired parents provided by their children, and regarded as a potential duty in the future, and it

has not been well investigated before, so it certainly will add value to the general understanding of this phenomenon in the scope of social policy.

In the connection to the issue of the welfare regime, there were scientific debates going on and mostly about integration of three components of state, market and family with the concept of care and support. Since I have an argument dedicated to the connection between Finnish and Russian welfare regimes to the family support on the micro level, I should mention a powerful argument of O'Connor about possible impact of care and support provision phenomenon on the general welfare state researches: "It has demonstrated the crucial importance of informal care-giving work even within relatively well-developed welfare states and has highlighted the contradictions associated with the partial socialization of care-giving activities (O'Connor 1996, p. 26). Therefore, it is also a challenge for this Thesis to argue whether citizens for a strong welfare state (as Finland is believed to be) call for the informal care and support inside the family network or it is not the case.

2.3 Family as a network of kinship support

To approach the subject of family support across generations I would direct the reader from general assumptions to more specific concepts related to the phenomenon of family support. What do we know about obligations, responsibilities, and duties in the family? How is support understood by individuals? Many analysts provide answers acquired with the help of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. I shall start with the correspondent logic, and first address kinship patterns and interconnections between dependency and family support together with Douglas Wolf.

In the year 1986 Douglas Wolf carried out a quantitative survey on kinship in ageing populations, with an emphasis on patterns of kinship relations and an aspect of "dependency burden" solved in different ways in the families. Even though the survey was carried out almost three decades ago and covered the US and some European countries including now non-existent Czechoslovakia and the USSR, it is still intriguing to see the results and their applicability in modern society.

Wolf was generally concerned with kinship patterns and the factors influencing their variety. In the model, the researcher included many variables of different kinds of kinship: living

children/spouses/parents, their type of occupation etc. What is important for the research is how the author operationalized the concept of 'support':

Support for the elderly can take many forms, including the provision of direct financial support, the provision of informal health-care services, and shared living arrangements [...] even given the existence of such family members, patterns of support show considerable variation according to the number, sexes, ages, and other demographic characteristics of individual members of the kin network. (Wolf 1986, p.2.)

This implies the simple idea that it is not the quantity of kin that guarantees support but its quality, although an individual without any network of close relatives may end up in problems finding the needed support, and will have to seek out some other sources.

As the result of the finding, Douglas Wolf notes a "lack of overlap of the aged and working-age populations" (Wolf 1986, p. 23) already in the 1980s. Put simply, it means that there is a fewer amount of potential support providers for ageing individuals amongst their kin. Furthermore, the increase of mortality age and decrease of fertility, known as the trends of the modern society, will sharpen the problem. On the practical grounds, the results can be interpreted so that those who have no aged kin seen as support burden, as well as citizens of welfare states with well provided social benefits and services for the elderly, are in the best position. On the other end of this continuum are the ageing with no kin, they are in the worst possible life situation in terms of support necessity. At the same time, a peculiar fact, also mentioned by Wolf (1986) is that the amount of children does not respectively increase the welfare of the aged, as the children divide the responsibility of moral and financial support between themselves, in other words, share the burden.

In the tradition of network analysis, approaching family and a network of kin in this perspective has its advantages, as performed by Russian researcher Barsukova. It offers a fruitful outcome asserting that all families are involved in resource exchange within the social networks. What is crucial is that the emotional and informational support may influence the direction of the next transactions and the level of equivalency. Barsukova interprets the social network of the family as the materialization of the kinship institution, and argues that this approach allows to see the cultural codes of family functioning. Interaction in the network depends not only on the welfare of the agents, but also their right to be a part of it. Therefore, she claims, ageing parents still support the young families, even if they are poorer in comparison. (Barsukova 2003.)

Another important argument that is brought up in the study is that with all the talks about the weakening of ties between family members, they are still prevailing over other types of connections, and the exchange of material and immaterial items between kin are higher than between non-kin (Barsukova 2003, p. 119).

2.4 Family responsibilities and generational differences

The voice of qualitative researchers of family care and support is mostly represented by authors writing in the Anglo-American and European tradition. Since the former has different cultural and social background of scientific knowledge, the family support is regarded from the perspective of the American context; therefore its application in Finnish-Russian context should be discerning and discreet. The concept of family support is based on the example of parents taking care of minors from the critical feminist perspective (Featherstone 2004). Even though the book touches upon parent-child relations, it is important for the actual research from theoretical and conceptual point of view. The author provides a thick description of what family support is like and how it has changed in modern understanding, how both parents are involved in parenting and caregiving, and how the welfare state and working conditions interfere with the traditional system of support and division of roles.

As Featherstone states in her book, the new system of labour market influences the family support patterns and responsibilities a great deal. She highlights that engaging with gender has the utmost importance when it comes to family support, in what form it is shaped and how it is organized with different social factors taken into account. Welfare policy is also an important agent when providing institutional support for the family to manage its functions, the author uses the term “democratic families” (Featherstone 2004, p. 14) to describe the modern form of family relations where both parents are working and deciding to share family responsibilities in a certain way.

The components that add up to the general understanding of family as an aggregated social institution are neatly represented in four categories, developed by the author, which are family responsibilities, perception of kids as investment, prevention and support. Let us review all three one after another.

Family as social construct has certain functions and one of them is responsibility in front of its members.

This legitimate services being directed at those defined as problematic, although the boundaries of what is considered problematic have varied. That also meant that notions of *family responsibility* have assumed and in practice reinforced women's responsibility and interventions have been focused upon women as mothers. (Featherstone 2004, p. 3).

It is important to find the representation of this theoretical concept in practice, how adult children understand their family responsibilities and how they build the discourse about them. The topic of the caring role of a female is allocated as a special field in social policy studies; in the actual paper I mostly regard supporting functions between two adult generations in the family, to avoid confusion with the massive theme of family support matters.

Family practices define what the function of family is, and as it gets shifted in meaning, it is hard to define them as they nowadays take many different forms. They are fluid and flexible. "Range of possibilities is open if not always equally available for the 'doing' of family life". (Featherstone 2004, p. 10.) That is what the author says about the "democratization" (Featherstone 2004, p. 10) process in families: where the demands of children are taken into the decision making process inside the family, women and men are treated with equal respect, and a compromise is achieved with hearing all the opinions on the issues at hand. From the feminist approach it is crucial to emphasize the change in male's authority rule inside modern families, and as the research on English families shows, it has changed. Featherstone raises the question of recognition of family support duties and also valuation of it properly as a part of everyday activity, particular type of work and duty.

Silva and Smart (1999) argue that what family *is* appears intrinsically related to that family (Featherstone 2004, p 23). The authors talk about subjective appreciation established between individuals which binds them stronger together than any formal bond. Being a family means sharing responsibilities and obligations, including care and division of resources. In other words, "family refers to what is done rather than what it is" (Featherstone 2004 p. 24).

In the empirical part I find informants using this term in their trivial discourses. The economic term of investment is integrated so close to our everyday life that is used far and wide. In many cases children are regarded as *investments* and parents are those who are carrying a number of responsibilities (Featherstone 2004, p. 88). Adult children perceive themselves as investments in connection with the discussion of parents' responsibility: whether or not they met the child's expectations as they are seen now, as an outcome, either "successful" or failed investment. The term "investment" will be borrowed for the analytical part of the research and

address to the Featherstone paper as very supportive for the research assumptions in the next chapter.

Featherstone describes the transformation of the family care system from preventive to *supportive*. The change from the former to the latter happens when the state has changed the policy of services from post-factum help (or, when some negative events have already happened) to the supportive policies with material benefits and service for families with the members in need of support. Once it was only a family concern, now responsibility is shared with formal institutions (care workers, or elderly houses, for example).

All the constructs listed above are significant in grasping the essence of family support and intergenerational relations, and even though the author bases her analysis on parent-minor interconnection, it is still theoretically and methodologically substantial for the actual research. Arnaug Leira offers his readers the wide retrospective of what change the family has experienced and what kind of new forms it takes in regard with the new role division. He claims that in the new conditions help and support, traditionally taken as a safety instrument for its members in case of need and different disabilities, no longer are taken for granted. He draws conclusions that the state should pay more attention to policy building in these circumstances of weakening family ties, since there will be no social institutions left to support its needy members after all. Referring to the findings of Beck, Leira (2002) writes that there are globalization and individualization processes in the modern society that are to blame for erosion of family structures and functions.

From the European perspective the family is immersed in the process of disintegration, while from the side of Russian social policy researchers the phenomenon is not clear-cut. With numerous amounts of statistical findings in Russian academic tradition of social policy research on one side, there are several peculiar studies made in the fields of generation relations and typical patterns of behavior and attitudes. As being included in the family circle implies the range of responsibilities, the studies on what responsible parenting is, based on the quantitative data from Russia. With the help of factor analysis such aspects of good parenting as provision of good nutrition, provision of pocket money, education and free-time expenses, together with immaterial moral and psychological support were allocated (Gordeeva 2009). However, as one of the conclusions, the process of blurring of the parents responsibilities takes place (Gordeeva 2009).

Many young Russian families prefer not to live with their ageing parents in the same household, but express their wish to live somewhere near, to keep the contact and communication as tight as possible. When talking about family support in Russian surveys there are always two

accompanying themes of mutual support directed from ageing parent to adult children and vice versa. Researchers often use such categories as intensity of support and its factors. For instance, there might be different factors influencing the intensity of cross-generational support, such as families' well-being, age, quantity of members, family life cycle etc. (Gorshkov 2010, p. 82). Furthermore, the help itself may be of different quality and stretches, from a grandmother taking care of a new born baby to the purchasing of products for the parents in the young adult's turn.

2.5 Development of concepts of reciprocity within the framework of support

We learn about the interconnection of moral values and family support roles from Nancy Folbre's book (2001) that has all in it, scientific approach, and beautiful language of a literature written piece. The author develops the ideas and presents a deeper understanding of moral base of support, connecting the concepts of reciprocity and risks.

Individualism and communitarianism are often opposed each other, and it will also be crucial for the research to discuss this dichotomy. Ideally-typical paradigms are hard to meet in real life, and it is certain that for an individual to live in a society and to be interconnected in the networks of other humans, some altruism is inevitable. (Folbre 2001, pp. 20-21.)

Similar study based on the investigation of two generations in accordance with individualistic or communitarian choices were made in the same year 2001 in Russia. It reveals that depending on the era individuals were born and what cultural conditions they were raised up in there is a theorized division into a traditional and a pioneer generational pattern (Semenova 2001). The two types basically represent two generations of modern Russia: ageing adults born in the 1950s, in the Soviet times, and their adult children who have absorbed the ideas of change, new type of economic and cultural aspects of life. With this division come different family values: for the first group a collectivistic, "good for everyone in the family" principle stands at the helm, for the second one's personal qualities and potentials, independence and success are the basics they build their interaction with other people and kin on (Semenova 2001). Therefore, representatives of different generations may display unequal shares of altruistic behavior, but when it comes to exchange; every person is involved in many kinds of social interactions. In fact, the act of giving, of any kind - giving support, money, advice, concern - in terms of altruism is never regarded as something to be expected a transaction of same value. Yet, when one talks

about *reciprocity*, he or she assumes that there is a give-and-take action based on mutual agreement (Folbre 2001, p. 26).

As Folbre mentions, in some other dispositions reciprocity stipulates some risks of not receiving the contraction, especially when two acts are remote in time or subjectively evaluated as non-equal. Thus, the factors of time and subjective judgements of equal amount of support, in our case, are the risky ones to prevent individuals in need from getting their reciprocal piece of goods and services.

Personal relationships do not guarantee reciprocity. [...] Some services - especially those that have personal and emotional content - simply cannot be bought and sold. Contracts of these services often take an implicit rather than explicit form, making them difficult to enforce. Therefore, the provision of these services is inherently risky. (Folbre 2001, p.27.)

Even though Nancy Folbre writes that “a long-term personal relationship improves the efficiency of the short-term transactions” (Folbre 2001, p. 27), which is in almost all cases true, the rule “treat your kids right, it will pay off in future” does not completely work. There is always the risk that reciprocity stops functioning for some interior or exterior problems in the family, and individuals should not forget that. A good relationship and tight bonds between family members do not guarantee taking up the caring responsibilities in the long run; consequently even in the trustworthy family environment each member should think of back-up solutions for the future, since the future after all is individual for all of us. As Folbre’s text continues, “affection can encourage reciprocity, and vice versa. Both, however, remain vulnerable to the temptation of defection” (Folbre 2001, p. 28).

The first assumption why reciprocity does not always work is the heavy burden of responsibility that falls on the shoulders of the potential family supporters, and certainly not every human can endure and carry it. So called costs of support are quite high, starting from the physical time spent in caring procedures ending with the moral and emotional affections, often contradictory, towards the duty. At the same time, as Folbre points out, the expectation of support provision is not the crucial factor here, but the extent of love, obligation and reciprocity are. (Folbre 2001, p. 36.)

The bright and shouting title of the next chapter of the book, “The prisoners of Love” speaks for itself: the overwhelming feeling of responsibility and commitment to take the caring duty sometimes ‘imprison’ providers into this new role and never let go, since the sense of duty is higher than some individualistic needs. (Folbre 2001, p. 38.)

In the discussion of reciprocity and altruism I should draw a clear line between these two concepts, since they are interconnected but usually are not interchangeable and still have their own particularities. Talking about the family support I assume both material help with goods and money from the one side, and on the other, immaterial side of it emotional and informational exchange, moral and spiritual support and communication between family members. When it comes to the material exchange, one of its perspectives was described by abovementioned author Barsukova with her reference to Elster. In their opinion, gift and favors exchange form the net of reciprocity between the members of horizontal social group, which in other words mean the mutuality of exchange (Barsukova 2003, pp. 81-82) – however, it does not imply the altruistic readiness just to give but not get something back in exchange. It might be a prolonged act of reciprocation, but in any case the returning act should take place and the participants should understand these mutual rules. It would be hard to apply the same principle to the informal services, help about the house or a favor to complete some duties or tasks, since it is hard to estimate the equality of the services provided. Hence, there is a slight difference between reciprocity with the following expectations for a returning action of a payback, and altruism which supposes the action of support to be gratuitous.

In the intersecting level of social expectations and personal principles, one need not forget that the family support is implemented by humans, and occupies a significant part of their lives, changing it and bringing in additional light and outlook in it. It is quite important to learn and study what an actual supporter thinks about these kinds of conditions and duties: in the case of Watson and Mears, they investigate people who have experienced caring responsibilities, and in the case, those who have potential to become one.

Important point is taken in the accordance with linkage between time and moral aspects of the support. It is fair enough that caring responsibilities occupy a lot of time that an individual might have alternatively spent for some other activities. So, the satisfaction from a caring role plays an important part here, when the time spent for providing support to a relative is paid off, perhaps not with material but moral benefits of self-realization and satisfaction of what good has been done for the other and the family in general. As it has been written in other papers, family support is quite often underestimated (Folbre 2001) so personal attitude, persistence and realization and acceptance of one's own importance in the caring role are crucial in this respect. For individuals who are engaged in both paid work and informal support for the elderly, it is certainly a situation of pressure, when they have to implement many duties in a limited time

(Watson, Mears 1999, p.95). Hence, time has moral value: it is of no small importance to make a carer role of the same value.

Drawing links in between the two abovementioned findings, Folbre on one side and Watson and Mears on the other, it is peculiar to discover how they supplement each other, and add value to each other's assumptions, especially for the research concept.

First of all, the general impression on these two books is that they are much more than research papers - they are moral discourse themselves. They combine both social policy and the ethnographic approach, yet with a clear declination to the former one.

Watson and Mears dedicate a number of pages to the emotional experience of the supporter, and how stressful the duty can be, while Folbre conceptualizes support as a moral duty derived and raised from interior and exterior social factors. Therefore, what brings them together is the development of the "moral dilemma" of dedicating all one's time to care or buying caring services from outside agents while continuing one's own professional paid career. "The world of paid work was depicted as more manageable, orderly and predictable than the world of unpaid caring work" (Watson, Mears 1999, p. 171), yet again "who else than me?" is the question often asked by women from themselves and binds them with the pressure of moral obligations towards the second option, making Folbre's concept of "prisoners of love" real. Both authors agree that the reaction and choices vary and are very individual; however, Folbre assumes that in the market conditions, care can be bought and it will not disbalance family relations (Folbre 2001), while Watson and Mears notice that in some cases not everyone can afford to pay for care services, and it dumps initially less wealthy families and single mothers with elderly parents to a deeper poverty (Watson, Mears 1999).

"Choice is constrained by the real options available for the care of an elderly person who has become increasingly dependent" (Watson, Mears 1999, p. 170), - however it is not that we often have a choice, and moral obligations dictated by the society bring us to the only option available. Folbre's ideas about altruism are therefore consonant to the previous argument, even though in the book she describes both altruism and individualism, yet encouraging the altruistic behaviour as a human, not a researcher.

As it was already mentioned in the book overview, Watson and Mears refer to time as one of the moral factors for support. Certainly it takes time and plenty of mental force to be implemented. In addition, to the moral power of time, one might also see the economical side of this idea: supporters spend time on the moral duty whilst they alternatively might be working and

getting paid. Therefore, time, morale and choice are interconnected. At Folbre's turn, the author says that support duty can be treated as a commodity, in some cultures more, in some less; hence we should always take the system of values, coming along with the culture of the society, where obligations and reciprocity are treated accordingly.

As the reader may see, many scholars are consonant again in the conclusion that support work is underestimated in the society and not highly regarded on the market (paid poorly in the case of a service) - though the reactions of researchers are different, and so are the conclusions they derive in the books. First of all, for Nancy Folbre as a feminist researcher, family support is a females' doom, which they cannot avoid due to exceeding altruism as their social feature as women. For Watson and Mears the personal experience of a carer stands as a cornerstone of the investigation. As they consider caring a responsibility for every individual, they also look forward to recognition of family support as true work and a respectful occupation, which is in a way a new and promising approach, since personal care is getting more and more common and widely spread amongst social groups, yet it is not that everyone would like to be involved in it. Therefore, researchers try to change the attitude and vision of caring as equally important self-satisfying activity on the same level with any other job. I truly believe that the societal transformation will also contribute to the better recognition of family caring duties and benefit all those selfless encouraging experiences in this matter.

Altruism and reciprocity walk hand in hand with family support issues, which prove existence of this concept in many research papers, including Folbre, Watson and Mears and also Elizabeth Midlarsky. In her article (Midlarsky in Kahana et al. 1994) the author describes altruism as a continuous companion of an individual throughout all stages of life. She determines altruism as 'a form of behavior in which the actor is oriented to the needs of the other rather than to selfish needs (Midlarsky in Kahana et al. 1994, p. 71).

As the flows goes both ways, circulating between ageing parents and adult children, at times even prevailing from the side of the ageing parents. (Midlarsky in Kahana et al. 1994, p. 85.) Taking as a belief that an attitude forms the abovementioned perception, I can assume that an altruistic family supporter experiences a better condition and regains positive feedback from what he or she is doing. "For an altruistic caregiver [...] this sense of burden actually may be reduced". (Midlarsky in Kahana et al. 1994, p. 89.)

On the contrary, perceiving support provision as a burden, influences the general emotional degree of a carer, and therefore, an individual without a strong feeling of altruism may

be reluctant to provide support, and bear negative emotions towards the situation and a person in need. (Midlarsky in Kahana et al., 1994: 89.) Therefore, the balance of power again signifies the sanity of relationship between two individuals, and a share when a certain amount of altruism from the supporting side relieves possible tension and brings stability and satisfaction for both participants of the exchange would be beneficial.

It is important to mention that in many cases family support is seen as a female duty, on the one hand, supporting the argument that it is quite typical for a woman to be a supporter, and on the other hand, opening up new tendencies in transformations made in this aspect and, consequently, appearance of many other agents of support (Kane, Penrod 1993). As the defining concepts to describe what is going on in the field of family support, the authors point out diversity, change and continuity (Kane, Penrod 1993, p.18). There is not only a female carer on the scene, there are carers of many social origins and characteristics, which set up new directions of caregiving to flow, and new factors to enter the arena of social importance. They certainly cause some changes in the whole support provision pattern, but yet, as all social conditions are not restricted to the inheritance from the previous experience and schemes. The key point to be paid most attention to here is the variety of support forms and influential factors, which would be surprisingly similar or different for different individuals. I will regard the cross generational relations and those not inside the aging group.

Moral obligations as a one of the bases the family support is built on, are outlined by Kane and Penrod in the connection between morale and obligations on practice, saying that “the well-being of older people is adversely affected if they believe they are burden to their children” (Kane, Penrod 1993, p. 4). Moral obligations and support as burden are described by many theorists and are still a vivid phenomenon of social reality, that can be traced on the data, too.

To provide the lively examples of change and continuity in family support, the authors derive particular trends in this sphere, which are very much comparable to the findings. Multiple caregiving involves new actors of support provision entering the field, such as daughters-in-law, nieces and other female kin. (Kane, Penrod 1993, p. 22.) The idea of correlation between more possible support provision and the amount of relatives was already described by Douglas Wolf (Wolf 1986), which makes a connection between these two books, even though the latter one provides the broadened argument of support providers’ network and source, which can be a civil relationship, not a blood one.

Grandfilial caregiving assumes the caregiving received from grandchildren. Here the demographic factor comes into play, which is followed by the conclusion that the number of grandchildren who are responsible for helping one or even two generations undoubtedly is increasing. The early data from Kane's study shows that only 3% of the caregivers in the study are grandchildren. This may happen more frequently in the future, as the population ages and the very old are more likely to lose their aging children through death (Kane, Penrod 1993, p. 22). This Thesis also corresponds to the findings of Wolf, described by us earlier, which in its mathematical representation basically says that the widening network of grandchildren also increases chances for support provision for the elderly (Wolf 1986). In the empirical part of the research I will ask informants about family tradition in caregiving, and how it is or was provided for their grandparents, as to see the continuity of the phenomenon and these factors' involvement in support relations with grandparents.

In the subchapter dedicated to subjective experiences I have come across many peculiar cases that are interrelated to my own findings. Apart from the self-evident role of a woman as a support provider (Kane, Penrod 1993, p. 25) three aspects stand out from the common pattern. They are: "Making everyone happy", "It's my turn" and "Control and Power" (Kane, Penrod 1993, p.26). The first argument comes hand in hand with the general assumption of the role of a woman in a family as a family supporter and domestic goddess, who supports life and the functioning of the family by satisfying the needs of its members.

Second pointer is quite crucial for this Master's Thesis. The power and control relation is interconnected with (in)dependency of the elderly and the emotional pressure and consequences for both parties. Regardless of how good the bonds between generations are, quite often the dependency causes much discomfort, moral and physical to the supporter and the elderly. Therefore, the person who used to have power in the family turns into the subject of support, and someone else regains the right for decision making and so forth, hence the power relations experience a painful change. (Kane, Penrod 1993, p. 26).

"It's my turn" is a common leitmotif of a caring daughter, which can be found amongst the informants of the actual research. But as Kane and Penrod wisely mention, "it's one thing to lift rosy, 12-month-old baby and another to lift and turn a person of 87" (Kane, Penrod 1993, p. 26). Therefore, the attitudes and consequences of this work may vary, from acceptance of this duty to the negative rejection and emotional downturn.

As the possible outcome of caring experiences, authors are being quite optimistic and have manifested that it has got some positive effects. For some individuals, activities generally regarded as burdensome, brought instead “more dour satisfaction of doing one’s duty” (Kane, Penrod 1993, p. 155). Here I can draw a parallel to the previously overviewed book of Nancy Folbre, which also mentions - and in statistical form - that there were both negative and positive outcomes of the caring experience, and regarding the latter one she emphasized that “70 percent said that they had found inner strength they didn’t know they had” (Folbre 2001, p. 37). Truly a heartening finding!

To sum up, I went through the findings that have been made to discover the theme of family support and the contributory subtopics accompanying the main one. However, I would like to outline the concepts important for the actual paper once again in order to add precision and clarity to the research process. Since I will study family relations around the provision of *support* between generations, it will become the cornerstone concept, I would draw the main conclusions and investigate important characteristics, lively examples and associated phenomenon in practice. Moreover, to provide in-depth description and analysis I need moreover ‘supportive’ keywords in addition to the concept of support and the previously mentioned reciprocity, moral obligation and dependency. The following illustration best shows how those three are interconnected in order to present an integrated picture of how family support is planned to be arranged in Russian and Finnish families, which is impossible to do without mentioning the power relations between individuals who provide support and who get support, nor without the moral, habitual and cultural motives for participation in support duties.

The concept of moral obligation concept requires additional clarification since I have put such supportive keywords as “burden” next to it. The latter concept has been used by theorists in two different contexts: dependency burden, which the elderly feel themselves for their adult children who support them (Wolf 1986; Kane, Penrod 1993), and the burden of responsibility, typically experienced by adult children in charge of elderly support (Folbre 2001; Watson, Mears 1999). I headlined the operational concept I will work with as the moral obligation which embrace these two components. Since moral obligation might be approached from different angles by the informants, and not only as a “burden”, I have entitled it to be the main concept to apply in the analysis, and left some freedom for further interpretations.

Sure enough, dealing with examples from real life, these concepts may have different interpretations and take various turns in other social contexts, as well as reveal supplementary sub-dimensions. However they are strong theoretical concepts for defining and analyzing the

family support phenomenon, so I will use them in the empirical chapter of the thesis as the main components of the conceptual framework.

I have included the overview of these studies and tried to highlight the theoretical grounds interrelated to family support in order to integrate them further on the empirical level in the data analysis. From the literature I have brought up the deeper understanding how multifaceted this particular social phenomenon can be and how many different levels of interpretations it may have on the theoretical level.

Family support may be handled from socio-cultural, economical and moral perspectives; however I will attempt to concentrate on the three components, or dimensions of reciprocity principle, moral obligation and dependency, that are most of all clearly reflected in the data. There are no family relations without interaction and exchange of physical items, goods, information and emotions. In everyday language one calls it mutual care and help, I characterize it as reciprocity. The basic rules of family functioning certainly have enrooted the social norms and patterns, and imply the shared responsibilities and understanding of its importance across the family members. Hence, the concept of moral obligation is adjoined here. Finally, there is dependency: imagining for a moment that all individuals are totally independent from one another shows us that without it there would not be integrity of family as a social group. The balance between dependency and independency may shift, bringing up new roles and new obligations between family members, and I am interested in detecting many forms of its representation. Hence, the three concepts are three sides of the phenomenon, embodying it in an integral and compound way.

The reader will find out a practical demonstration of those three elements in the empirical chapter of the Thesis, where the analysis of the discourses of the perception of family support through the prism of these three dimensions (and its multiplication in many more) will be presented in the form of fruitful yet entertaining research results.

3 Designing a family support study

As the research question was set, the objective was to investigate the adult children's perception of family support provision for their ageing parents. Assuming that support is quite a significant and intimate part of family relations, it is important to see the specifics and subjective attitudes towards this issue. Additionally, as the comparative approach prescribes, taking few but detailed and, to our great expectation, socially various cases is the way to provide better examination of Russian and Finnish family support patterns in potential perspective and therefore, investigate the phenomenon of family support between ageing parents and adult children in two socio-cultural environments.

Studying a social phenomenon in depth requires dealing with primary data and handling it as separate cases, each unique, yet constituting some common trend or similarity, depending on the cultural or social context. This sort of inductive reasoning is applicable here: going from particular cases of support arrangements, practices and future care feasibility in Russian and Finnish families in order to establish some common conclusions, employing the familiar methodology of qualitative research known as in-depth interviews with forthcoming discourse analysis of data.

3.1 Personal interview as a method of data collection

To meet the goals of the actual research I chose the method of personal interviewing in order to collect the data and learn about the matter of family support from the perspective of adult children. Since I was interested in the perception of support and care in the family, it was the easiest and at the same time the most advantageous method to apply: going and asking about the issue. By employing the interview method, I assumed that, firstly, "the interview data collected is seen as (more or less) reflecting the interviews reality outside interview" (Rapley in Seale et al. 2004, p. 16). Secondly, the interview as a kind of communication and performance has a subjective tone and way of presentation. Hence, it should be never forgotten that the information a researcher gets from his informant is subjective. Interviewing is a process of producing discourses in a collaboration of two or more participants (Rapley in Seale et al. 2004, p.15). These are the combined strength and weakness of the interview as a research method: they are

subjective since the informant reproduce his/her social reality in presenting a discourse to an interviewer (realizing that he/she is been 'investigated' at the moment), and at the same time, the reconstruction of life experience, plans or attitudes in similar way give the researcher room for analysis and building up a higher theory on what the social reality essentially is for individuals.

Developing the idea of interview as a social encounter, it is suggested that talk can be qualified as interview in case when it literally 'makes sense': the idle talk about nothing, so called small talk does not fall in this category. Talk should produce some meanings relevant for the interviewee. In other words, the implementation of an interview method of data gathering supposes "meaning-making work" (Holstein and Gubrium in Silverman 1997).

The important function of the researcher during interview conduction is his perseverance to control, that this meaning-making is done within the limits of validity, and does not go too far. The fantasies of some informants could cause a distortion of data and bring the talk upside down, from reliable to absolute lies. There is no such thing as a true or correct answer in a personal interview, but reliable one, which allows researchers to talk about validity (Kirk and Miller, 1986), when an individual represents his or her reality without inclination to fairy-telling. Therefore, to save reliability on the high level, it is crucial to keep focus on how verbalized meanings are constructed simply assuming that if they are being spoken, they make sense to the informant and are indeed important. Here, contextual and background information adds value to the interpretation: how described facts are connected, what is a true story for the given individual. We need to highlight here that truth is different for everyone, and one can deeply believe in what he/she says even if it does not represent the reality - but subjective reality is what social scientists are interested in. The point relegates us to the very basic assumption in sociology made by William Isaac Thomas: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas 1928, p. 571).

Far and by, the truth that represents social reality can be different and vary within the limits of reliability and inaccuracy. The latter is something for the researcher to avoid, and further on in the subchapter dedicated to the validity of data I will try to draw out the main objectives of it.

Generally speaking, the purpose of interviews is to generate insights and concepts about the subject, to expand the researcher's knowledge on the subject, to search for the exhaustive (as far as it is possible) varieties of practices inside a family of individuals in pre-pension age and their kin, to find out differences and similarities across the data. What is important about

interviews is that the outcomes of the interview analysis can be validated with other interviews as proof (Stokrocki, 2004), if the conditions of equivalence are satisfying.

Having studied literature on the interview as a method, I have put our hands on the issue of active interviewing as the ideal type for carrying out the research. The format of such type of interview is quite easy and reasonable. As Tim Rapley has put it, “mundane” (Rapley in Seale et al. 2004, p.25) interview involves asking questions on a certain topic, listening to answers, offering supportive questions, asking for clarifications if needed; this was implemented many times in our case. Supporting the answers with nodding, giving approving sounds like, ‘yes’, ‘uhu’ et cetera, smiling, keeping eye contact was also important part of the job.

Although the main role of the interviewer is to create data by ‘retrieving’ it from informants, it does not mean it should be done by any expense and by any means. The interviewer keeps his own face and ethics of the research process, yet is authorized to rule the conversational situation and set focus on the interview talk (Lofland, 2006).

An interview is always a collaboration since the researcher has some target to reach and he cannot do it without the help of the informant. So, being collaborative and supportive in a friendly way, keeping good rapport is crucial to get valid quality data. This is a practical aspect of active interviewing. However, some internal essential aspect of active interviewing is that it is an interpretative tool for a respondent and interviewer to outline “interpretative structures, resources and orientations” (Holstein and Gubrium in Silvermann 1997, p. 121). This view on active interviewing involves some theoretical assumptions on interpretation and subjective presentation of reality by an individual, which should be also taken into account when dealing with ready data.

The indirect method of conducting an interview supposes the indirect way the questions are asked and the information is obtained (Kvale 1996). For instance, I ask the adult children about the parents’ attitudes to entering pension age, and therefore I get the answer about their parents from their perspective. This method was chosen because it responds to the research goals better when implementing it and not another way round. Since the younger generation of those who are 22-35 represents potential supporters and carers in the future, I chose them as the group to become the informants: they express their perception of family support experience and possibilities, care practices, family role division and exchange of material and immaterial goods inside their family. So, as for many of them support is only a potential or eventual posteriority, they are the first to be asked, if there is a chance for them to become a supporter, if they are ready of it or not and how it is arranged in their families. It was the first point in our logic to choose

between research methods. Secondly, they display a more or less adjusted opinion of their parents to family support arrangements and what parent expect from them as they discuss it (or do not) inside the family. So, they work for us as mediators, representing the perceptions and expectations of the third party (their parents) together with their own. Finally, the pragmatic reason for that was, as the comparative approach, not all Finnish individuals over 55-60 speak English, and the data collection will be complicated for us. However, I tried to find different families with different economic and social backgrounds in both countries, and thanks to the English speaking 'children' it was achievable.

3.2 Selection of informants for interviews

To make the selection of informants representative, they were selected on the basis of snowball: via the social network of the author but on the condition that they were still representing different social groups of the society, as much it is achievable, and that the informants are accessible. Thus, Russian informants were selected via relatives' and friends of friends' network and indeed belong to quite different social backgrounds: higher and lower educated, small and bigger extended families, different sorts of occupation, from low physical work to managerial and academic positions. It was also found important to have an equal amount of representatives of both genders. Finnish informants were also selected via university network, but their social background was also highly regarded: poorer or richer families within the middle class of Finnish society, as the extremes are really hard to find. Therefore, within the limits of snowball methods of the selection, it was considered best to get the variability of informants according to their backgrounds and family setups, hence possibly different perceptions on the subject of support.

In general, 12 informants were interviewed, the interview time varied from 20 minutes to several hours, depending on talkativeness and ability to cover the interest for the research topic. Correspondingly, there were 6 Russian and 6 Finnish informants, 3 male and 3 female representatives in both groups. The age limits were set between 22 and 35 years old, due to the relation to the parent's age: the other condition was that their parents were entering pension age and now experienced some sort of liminal transition from work to retirement. Thus, their parents' age was around 55-65 years old at the time of the interviews. Keeping this kind of age balance is important since one of the goals is to see what kind of change the ageing parent experiences, and to examine it through the eyes of their children as potential supporters or carers.

3.3 The plot of interview

The goal to reach in interviews was to get information that corresponds with the main research question. Hence, the key topic of the conversation was family relations, care duties, supporters and the supported, experiences from previous inter-generational relations (parents and their parents), family tradition in care, gender functional division et cetera. Here are the blocks of topics presented. However, not all of them were touched during actual interviews since question setting is contextual and if the interviewer sees the need to avoid some themes or, on the contrary, to put more effort in getting an informant to talk about something in particular, the actual result may vary, based on common sense and, certainly, the further need of research. The flexible structure of interview is sufficient here since I try to avoid excess information, and also, exhausting informants with questions (and their answers) that are not used in the analysis chapter. Therefore, some points in the blocks of questions could be missed, or they are simply mentioned by the informant without even asking.

As the list follows, the general outlines are provided here:

1. Biographical facts, social position of the respondent
2. Family Background
3. Parents attitude to work
4. Parents attitude to pension
5. Financial situation in the family
6. Health situation in the family
7. Social circles of the family
8. Division of roles
9. Attitude parents to own parents
10. Situations of emergency
11. Extending questions of family

As for the coding of data, the first letter in the informant code stands for the country of origin (R for Russia, F for Finland), the second letter for the gender (M - male or F - female) and the number stands for the age of the informant.

3.4 Validity of data

Under the title of ‘Validity of data’ I embrace important aspects of reliability, validity and representativeness of research, that at the end add to the value of the research outcome and the feasibility to discuss the existence of certain social trends. Only when all three parts are achieved they can address opportunities to generalize and extrapolate the results of the bigger scale of society.

Reliability is a substantial constituent that is mentioned by many theorists and is usually defined as “the degree to which the finding is independent of accidental circumstances of the research” (Kirk and Miller 1986, p. 20). That I ensured during the interview conduction, translation and transcription: even though I am not a qualified English-Russian interpreter, a lot of effort and time was put into proper and correct translation proofread by an English native speaker. The same goes for the transcribing: none of the interview parts were missed or lost, or neglected during the technical process of transcribing and further inclusion in empirical part of the research. I am aware that technical mistakes and small shortcomings could influence the research outcomes and therefore I made through the stages of research with the highest precision and accuracy.

Once reliability is more connected to the technical and procedural aspects of the data handling, validity concerns correct interpretation of the findings, also known as the principle where “the researcher is calling what is measured by the right name” (Silverman 1993, p.149). Hence, relevant research question, clear goals and methods on the whole are keys to success here. Over- or under-interpretation of data will lead to a wrong output. Consequently, it is useful to come back to the research plan and question whenever in confusion or uncertainty about further direction of analysis. Valid data and results are achievable with an objective approach of interpretation, and only with the implication of this principle the results will represent ‘real’ social reality.

Third and crucial part is sample representativeness. Giampietro Gobo wrote a useful tutorial on sampling in practice, where he mentioned that a representative sample withdrawn by the probability method (Gobo in Seale 2007, p. 405) is more flexible in qualitative research.

As already mentioned in the ‘Selection’ subchapter, I employed informant selection via snowball sampling. Even though I used social circles to address informants, it is possible to reach probability in this method: I did not involve close friends but 12 individuals at random

choice out of a larger list of available people. The list itself was based on common sense knowledge or guesses about their family arrangement, and social and economic background, hence the sample would meet the requirement of social variety.

Talking about generalization, a social scientist could face some obstacles here, as the application of statistics in social sciences could be misleading (Gobo in Seale 2007, p. 421). However, as Strauss and Corbin once stated, “in terms of making generalization to a larger population, I do not attempt to generalize as such but to specify” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, p. 191). This allows us to talk about some sort of inside generalization and the nature of phenomenon or social process (transformation, in our case) on the sample given and further on, on similar social groups of individuals who possess the same qualities and characteristics.

That is why this Master’s Thesis does not try to embody the ambitious goal to cover all the population under our results, but set the limitations that the research results are applicable to similar samples since it is only a fair way to describe specifics of social reality.

3.5 Moderation and conduction of interview

There are many problems that an interviewer may face during the process of data collecting. First of all, there is a preparation phase, when the questions do not correspond with the research goal. In the previous subchapter I had the opportunity to witness that our blocks of questions suppose flexible and in-depth interviewing, which still leaves some freedom for an interviewer to vary the flow of discourse of an informant, and at the same time, does not oppress or force the informant. It resembles a friendly constructive talk or discussion, where an informant shares some opinions or experiences about his family, parents and their interrelation. Second of all, there is the problem of security. Not all informants feel safe and secure about leaking the data or, for instance, they might worry that their name will be mentioned and their intimate opinion will be on public. In this case, the role of the interviewer is clear: to make the informant assured that all the research and further analysis is anonymous and their reputation will not be hurt and opinions will not be published in connection with their names.

The aspect of privacy and how its absence affects the research results are discussed in many documents dedicated to the ethics of social research. I would like to address some controversy that is peculiar here: it is a choice between anonymity and confidentiality. When it is claimed that the gathered information is confidential, one mostly addresses the statement to

those who are interested in getting it, but to the inner participants it is crucial to be assured that all that they say will stay between them and the researcher, and their names will never be mentioned. This is a higher level of security, namely anonymity, and it is important to make sure both parties share this understanding of terms (Mack et al. 2010). Keeping the arrangement of anonymity and trust standing in opposition to neutrality is by many researchers qualified as a bad practice. “When interviewer is neutral they create a hierarchical, asymmetrical (and patriarchal) relationship in which the interviewee is treated as research object” (Oakley 1981, Douglas 1985). Certainly, it influences the whole atmosphere of the interviewing and may make the informant close up and avoid sharing detailed fruitful data the researcher is striving for.

Another set of problems that quite often occurs to a researcher is different personal characteristics of respondents that either hinder or distract from getting required information. For instance, a too talkative informant will be easily talking on any topic, and might get carried away to the themes that are not interesting to the researcher, nevertheless hard to prevent it from happening. On the other hand, a more reserved informant will be hard to entice to talk about topics that are even simple but seem to be too private or too abstract to be expatiated upon. It was surprising to witness that there were plenty of talkative individuals amongst Finnish informants and quite many introverted Russian interviewees, which might have been expected to be vice versa.

However, apart from the abovementioned topics, the most blatant one that was encountered during data gathering in our case was the unexpected *sensitivity* of the topics that arose during interviews, which was not predicted whilst interview planning.

The assumption that it is easier to establish a better contact with outgoing people is based on common sense. For a researcher it means that the goal of better rapport should be set for any type of respondent. “Rapport is something that should be worked at/up. [...] Interviewer must communicate trust, reassurance and, even, likeableness” (Ackroyd and Hughes 1992, p. 108). When dealing with informants, I tried to establish a trusting relaxed connection with them by asking questions without pressure, without any investigative or submissive intonation, avoiding imperatives and strong statements. For instance, sometimes it was difficult to redirect an informant to the required topic; that is where some linkages (‘What if we talk... Do you mind coming to what we have already touched upon...’ etc.) would work. Additionally, family relations were quite a delicate topic for many informants, and as one cannot really expect how good or bad the situation inside the family at the moment is for them, it is always more appropriate to start from neighbouring topics and then approach the gist, to the hardcore essential themes. Therefore,

it was important to cover and involve some theoretical knowledge of sensitive interview undertaking, and whilst interviewing focus on establishing trusting and easygoing relations with the informant.

Emotionally sensitive topics are more difficult to discuss in the interview, and in addition, involving vulnerable social groups may put participants in certain negative conditions (Melville 2012). Sensitive interviews are closely connected to the emotions, mostly negative, arising from the topics or questions asked. They might bring up bad memories, and possible hostility or inadequate reactions from the informant. It may also have some effect on an interviewer: feelings of uneasiness and condolence, and make an impact on the interview results (Beale et al 2004), perhaps, in the form of mistakenly interpreted data in favour of the disadvantaged informant.

Apart from unfavourable aftereffects on the field, where a researcher was working, interviews unsuccessful due to their sensitivity may lead to false interpretations and badly damage the whole research concept in general. Therefore, the interviewer should also act as some sort of a psychologist: to feel the mood and declinations of the informant, sense his/her resistance to some topics and smoothen the process of communication for the sake of keeping both the field and results in balance.

3.6 Exemplary analysis of problematic interview flow

The following interview is an example of difficult flow of discourse and facing hostility and aggression to the questions put up by the researcher. At the same time, it is important to underline ethic problems a researcher may face in the interviewing process in the analysis.

It is important to mention in advance that throughout the interview there were lots of giggles and ironic statements, especially in reaction to intimate questions about grandparents' health and financial situation in the family. On later stages of interviews the informants got less verbous than in the beginning. It was obviously easy to them to find definitions to their relations rather than describe what they are like. Playing with the words 'normal-abnormal', 'steadily-systematically' does not really add any value to the statement, and does not provide us with any background information even though the interviewer was trying to ask some additional directive questions. The following example is from a situation when the informant refuses to answer some questions and displays annoyance:

I: Do your parents care about them?
R: Well of course, otherwise it cannot be!
I: Were they sick lately?
R: Like all old men, (getting annoyed by the question)
I: If they did, who from the relatives cared for them?
R:(No answer, refuse)

The refusal to answer is always an awkward moment since the researcher may only guess what stands behind it. The health of grandparents is apparently a sensitive topic for the informant since there were precedents before that perhaps put their life under threat (They were sick lately, 'like all old men'). So, it might be a fear for the close kin that the respondent does not want to display in front of an unfamiliar person and perhaps show his weakness and inability to change the situation of his grandparents ageing. In any case, the hidden aggression regarding family issues and especially care related questions was represented at the end of the interview.

When dealing with this kind of turns in interview, a researcher cannot force the informant to talk, nor include the refusal to answer in the analysis and try to interpret it somehow. Again, it is the ethics of research which should be kept in mind: giving the informant the right to answer or not to answer, regardless his or her motives. At this point, the analysis cannot say anything particular, except that the topics of care are negatively welcomed and the informant seems to be unprepared to react to them adequately.

Apart from the content problems and difficulties to analyze and find out what stand behind these kind of answers, this example of radical reaction to sensitive interviewing raises up the issue of power relations between the interviewer and the interviewee: originally the former has been the one who sets the agenda and controls the flow and talk directions. However, in the case of reluctance and even, in our example, aggressive resistance to keep the talk within the frames of common sense and faithful representation, the blatant rebellious interviewee takes advantage of the situation and puts the power relations upside down, manipulating the data, the talk logics and, at the end, the data validity. Methodological reflections on power sharing and *shifts of power* in various interview situations are best described in the empirical research of Alex and Hammarström. They found out that power relations are created within an interview situation and therefore it is important to be aware of dominant perspectives, and as a practicing interviewer it is important to be reflexive while conducting the interview and analyzing the collected results afterwards (Alex and Hammarström 2008).

Certainly, this power shift happens not due to the interviewee's premeditated intention to destroy the research results, but due to a specific reaction to the topic, which is still worth

analysis and is important to mention in the empirical part of the paper. Therefore, once again, freedom of ‘speech’ is a given right of an informant, as well as the right not to answer, which I respect and obey. Furthermore, the negative result lies only on the responsibility of the interviewer, which I completely accept as my shortcoming in this case. Nonetheless, I reserve the right to use those parts of the interviews with full and expanded answers to questions, which were provided at the beginning of the conversation.

3.7 Discourse as analytical tool

Discourse analysis is one of the methods for studying social reality since it deals with social experience and the perceptions of individuals and the meanings that they impose into it. The researcher just has to initiate this mechanism by putting up directing questions; all the rest is basically done by respondents. When simply asking people, one will learn a great deal of new things and even find out something that had never been expected to be found before. When a person talks about facts from their life experience, their attitudes or opinions are not usually clearly displayed, which gives the researcher a plenty of room for analysis and interpretations, so to speak ‘jungling with data’, to produce general ideas about what the phenomena are like. Discourse analysis “is the medium for interpretation; analysis of discourse becomes, then, analysis of what people do” (Potter in Silverman 1997, p. 146).

Additionally, I suppose that through being ‘spoken out’, social reality becomes more than it was in discourse: it gets a deeper meaning. When one says something aloud, it has meaning and represents our attitudes and the researcher task when applying the discourse analysis is to answer the research question using relevant pieces of texts.

Discourse analysis is much more than just analyzing content; it is not only about extracting keywords (even though at the first stage it will be done, too) from the text and checking the statistics. An analyst tries to detect common expressions, repeated linguistic forms, that the further shaped into a topic, or direction of ideas from which the researcher could see if it is important for the informant or not, and what kind of emotions he or she feels towards it. Any kind of reference to an event or fact, repetitive expressions, precise descriptions of phenomena is a crucial component in discourse analysis. With its help the researcher reads through the text and singles out parts that have a common idea or function to discover the answer to the research question. Therefore, the interpretation of these ‘meaning saturated’ parts of discourse come first,

and then the attempt to connect them amongst each other into some general concept of support and care concepts.

As soon as I deal with data, which is gathered by some other researchers, I should approach and deal with it very carefully. In the case of interview, the interviewer is the one who controls and corrects the discourse of the interviewee, in order to get the information needed. At the same time the former should not force the informant to say one thing and omit another; the talk should be balanced and floating naturally. In our case I noticed several times that due to the poor English of some informants, the interviewer had to retell the facts in her own words to clarify them.

Discourse is not simply a neutral device for imparting meaning. People seek to accomplish things when they talk or when they write; discourse analysis is concerned with the strategies people employ in trying to create different kinds of effect. This version of discourse analysis is therefore action-oriented - that is, a way of getting things done (Bryman 2008, p. 500). With the help of this aspect, I can find out the meaning of an action, and the whole system of values of a particular individual.

In applying the method of discourse analysis four tips should be kept in mind:

1. "Discourse is a topic" (Bryman 2008, p. 501). This means that the content of discourse draws the main ideas why the talk takes place, and why it all is told. We need to allocate topics in a discourse in order to find common lines amongst all our informants (in case of a bigger research, not as small as actual). This will at the end conclude into a better generalisation of findings. (Bryman 2008, p. 501.)

2. "Language is constructive" (Bryman 2008, p 501). This idea means that people reconstruct their view of social reality throughout speech. As soon as we are interested in such issues as *how* a person sees and percepts reality, what feelings and attitudes he or she has towards his or her everyday life, special events etc., discourse is the means to discover it. Following the logic of discourse, the researcher will find out what is more and what is less important for an individual, how he or she represents certain events in life, what the attitudes are, what is emphasized and what is avoided in the speech. (Bryman 2008, p. 501.)

3. "Discourse is a form of action" (Bryman 2008, p. 501). In a sense it is a verbal way to perform certain forms of behaviour: blame, complaint, argument, concern, worry, presenting oneself in a certain context. (Bryman 2008, p. 501.)

4. “Discourse is rhetorically organized” (Bryman 2008, p. 501). Discourse is how we retell events in our own words and from our position, so in a way we impose our vision to others when they listen to us and accept our version of events. (Bryman 2008, p. 501.)

Since discourse analysis treats data, text and talk as particular social practices, it is important to depict the role of an investigator when interview is undertaken. What totally corresponds with our research plan is that discourse analysis by its gist is a more inductive analytical practice, and addresses a discursive phenomenon as a unit of research. Therefore, a researcher handles data and builds up a generalized assumption from the small pieces of the study puzzle, and hence acquires the discursive analytical mentality (Potter in Silverman 1997, p. 158). Hopefully, I will demonstrate this type of mentality implementation on the empirical data analysis.

In the case of our 12 interview extracts, or in other words, discursive repertoires are taken as the research unit. The individuals are speaking out about their parents, their experiences and projections towards possible changes, risks, perspectives of care and support provision for their ageing parents. The keyword here is projection: they construct their discourse based on their cultural background, family patterns, traditions, economic situation, and contextual information of what the situation in the family is now, but they have not been yet in the situation of care provision or taking responsibility of fully supporting their parents. Hence, in a way it is only speculation about how they will act and what they will do, but for the researcher it is a fruitful source of information of values, attitudes, family support and care patterns. Those are the main concern here.

As the theoretical literature on discourse analysis universally mentioned, a researcher should abstain from analyzing the whys of the discourse, but base his or her assumptions on how via the discourses individuals raise up the aspects of care and support, the most relevant and important topics from their subjective perspective. As Sanna Talja writes, “the analysis of interpretative repertoires is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle” (Talja 1997). Informants produce stories and the role of a researcher is to find important patterns in them, to find different sides of the phenomena, to combine them together and create a generalized interpretation of it.

So, in the whole mass of different topics and phrases, repetitive expressions, arguments, descriptions of particular actions and experiences are relevant for the research goals, are searched for and are linked together in a comprehensive system of meanings. The concepts created in the

discourse by the informants, also known as interpretative repertoires, are what will constitute our categorization theorization part.

The search for the pattern of repertoires includes three phases. The first phase consists of the analysis of inconsistencies and internal contradictions in the answers of one participant. The second phase consists of the identification regular patterns in the variability of accounts: repeatedly occurring descriptions, explanations, and arguments, in different participants' talk. The third phase consists of identifying the basic assumptions and starting points (in Foucauldian language, "statements"), which underlie a particular way of talking about a phenomenon. (Talja 1997.)

What does it mean in practice? After thorough made transcription and translation (if needed) of the interview texts, the first stage of analysis would be reading through the texts several times and allocating the answers to the interview questions with the specific terms and expressions used by the informants.

We read the texts with a prepared research question which helps in directing our ideas to operationalizing the theoretical argument in order to search through the texts for arguments pro and contra. Since the subject of investigation is family support between two generations, in real life individuals might use different expressions to define and describe it. Those expressions may be easily detected based on the list of general questions which was set up for an interview plan. When asked about parents' attitudes to pension, similar or synonymous adjectives or meaningful expressions may be found in the discourses of different individuals, which allow combining them together in a group under one common title. Therefore, the second stage of discourse analysis is uniting terms and everyday expressions into more general categories.

Trying to put on the shoes of an informant and imagining oneself in his or her place would help here in developing preliminary categories or keywords that might be commonly used to cover the topic of support, and then to see the neighbouring or parallel topics occur in the discourses. The keywords which are relevant to the research question and the goals are, for instance, "help", "money", "care", "expect", "responsible" etc. At this stage I look for evocative and weighty expressions and sentences containing the keywords used in the discourses. Since the interest of the research lies upon perceptions of support, special attention should be paid to the representation of opinions via such expressions as "I think", "I assume", "In my family we consider" etc.

In the process of combining the expressions together with logical bonds, I trace the extracts that are saturated with the expressions representing an individual's perception of support.

Similar directions of vectors, which connect expressions and follow similar logic, would form the categories of a higher level. To illustrate them, extracts from the interviews will be provided in the analytical chapter with the keywords in italics for the reader's convenience. After the categorization, I will name the general concepts using the individual's most commonly used expressions to qualify them and at the same time, highlight the authenticity of the concepts derived from the data. In the case of this Master's Thesis I will address three aspects of social patterns: moral obligations, dependency and reciprocity, as it suits best to link the main concepts mentioned in discourse and to build higher generalized assumptions about care and support practices.

The last stage of discourse analysis, namely the interpretation, involves both descriptive and analytical skills in a correspondent sequence. After the categories and contextual links between them are detected, it allows us to extract them into separate themes. Once those themes appear frequently in the discourses of different informants, they are handled in the analysis as repertoires. Such repertoires as examples of support and care responsibilities in the family, potential chances to become a supporter, support practices and traditions in the family are interpreted accordingly. From the researcher side, first the description of the repertoires in more general scientific terms takes place, and then the possible connections, the consequence interrelations and the socially embodied meanings are examined. Interpretation means finding the meaning and possible tendencies of what was said in the discourse and the reflections of it in its other parts.

Such interpretative repertoires will on the one hand represent the uniquely formed perceptions of individuals, and on the other, time group them into joint patterns. At this point, analysis of the meanings and interconnected themes takes place and concludes with a generalization in the analytical summary of the study outcomes.

Every discourse has its logic, and similarly flowing discourses may reveal similarities in the general terms and topics raised there. At the same time, starting from a different point discourses may intercross at some crucial point as well. Therefore in the interpretation it is important to study through what assumptions and deviation of a story, raising up some parallel topics etc., the discourse has come to the point of family support. When the informant uses different expressions in order to characterize his or her perception of the problem, they reflect their potential behavior and the actuality of the issue in the family at the moment. As I have mentioned before, discourse is contextualized and socially produced talk, which might lay the basis for an *action*. When one interprets discourses he assumes that they are subjective and

cannot be treated as facts. However, the action of talk may become socially influential: once the individual says “I will take care of my ill mother” it leads to the correspondent consequences of following mental reflections, and then for certain behavior to take place. Therefore, the discourse may change social reality once spoken out loud.

4 People's voice: support of ageing parents in their families

Through the reading and profound examination of the texts keywords, phrases and extracts of discourses that match and describe the main theoretical concepts of moral obligations, reciprocity and dependency were found. On the practical ground they will allow withdrawing different dimensions of discourses, some of them unique, some of them repetitive and mentioned by more than one informant, and bring forth conclusions about the research.

4.1 Dilemma: moral obligation or economy?

Once parents get older, in traditional societies it goes without saying that adult children take their shift in taking care and supporting ageing parents when the need of it is evident. It will be a rough approximation to say, but nevertheless in the ideal type of society it will be the only option: at the beginning stage of a person's life one's parents take care of their children and correspondingly, on the declining years of the parents, children are expected to provide the needed support, just as much as they got in their childhood. In reality this certainly varies and individuals are put in front of a dilemma: whether to support an ageing parent and how, and what are the motives for the support.

The extracted interviews contain many different dimensions of discourse, and accordingly, various interpretative repertoires and subjectively relevant topics. Therefore, even a small piece of three-line text is filled with many intertwined ideas an individual has. Whilst working closely with the texts, the topic of payback, returning favour, the informant's turn to support ageing parents as moral statute or inevitability, become some of the discourse patterns. What it exactly is and how it is constructed in the talk with connection to other thematic motifs in discourses is detailed as follows.

I: Do your parents expect you to help?

RF_26: I think yes, in future when they are pensioners. It's kind of logical because pensions are small and they won't have enough financial means as they have now. Then it will be *my turn*, or my family (me and my husband) to help and support them. (RF_26)

“My turn” in this case is logically connected to the probable need for parents to be financially supported, since they are entering the new stage of life - pension, - and they will not have enough means for living; therefore the family of the adult daughter is the one to take on the duty to help and support her parents. In this abstract many ideas are interconnected. “My turn” indicates the way how the informant argues why she will help her parents: they are in need of economic help. In more broad terms it may reflect her *moral obligation* to support the living standards of her parents on pension. Certainly, it is not yet a fact that she will ever help her parents, but we can see the social pressure of the obligation that makes the informant say so. At the same time the statement has entirely economic reasons: “because the pensions are small”. Supposedly, the economic factors of decreased quality of living when pension starts boost the initiation of the ‘turn’ to help and support.

The term ‘turn’ itself implies that there was some event or action in the past, and now the correspondent or responsive action will take place. In the context of support, it means that parents used to foster the child from the time she was born and was in need of support and care. Now, as time goes by, her ageing parents become the ones to be maintained and provided with additional means for living. Therefore, the expression “my turn” might also be understood as a vector of a family support duty, only now it is directed from an adult child to the pension-aged parents.

Taking up the supportive role also implies that the adult child will be able (or try to) afford the maintenance of the ageing parents, and she displays this intention and availability of resources. In other cases it will be accompanied with other expressions implying concern about possibilities to support parents in the future; however, they all are derived from the idea of an individual’s turn to pay back: agreeing on the prospective for the adult children to engage in support and care responsibilities of their parents in case of their need. There is a consequence of interconnected ideas in the following extract:

My father is thinking about early retirement, and then I kind of start thinking, Oh god I need to hurry up with finding work and graduation because it seems like it is about time for me to start supporting them, rather than for them to continue supporting me. Which they still do. But soon he will live on the pension, it will be less money, so it will be *my turn* to provide and help them. (FF_26)

Together with the issue of “my turn”, in this passage the clear concern of overlapping life situations was conveyed. The abovementioned parents are retiring; however, the daughter is not yet ready to support them: she does not have work sustainable enough to cover her and her parents’ expenses; nor has she graduated yet, hence the motif of deep concern and intention to

“hurry up” with her life establishments. However, again, the idea of retiring parents suggests the ‘my turn’ talk to come naturally.

Another significant turn in the conversation took place when the topic of the tradition to return favours between generations in the family was touched upon.

He [uncle] does [support grandparents of the informant] though, he is a manager on one plant, and once he became one he started support grandparents. But when, for e.g. he was studying for the second higher degree, they were sponsoring him. Even the alimonies of my father went there on my uncles’ education. Now he is just *returning the favour* to the parents. (RF_27)

In this case, the growing possibilities to support parents are the main leitmotif of the talk: once the uncle reached a certain position in his career, he may have started earning more money which allowed him to support his parents at full range. At the same time, a previous experience when parents were investing in his education is also mentioned, so those two facts are weighted in the conclusion that once the parents were the providers, now the adult son is.

The “return of favour” merely implicates the same as “my turn” as a backward action directed to the ageing parents, and bringing them back the amount of support they need in this condition. It sends us back to Featherstone’s theoretical argument on family responsibility to support its members (2004) and an understanding of support represented in different forms from direct money provision to engagement in informal care (Wolf, 1986). Families certainly have different resources (for instance, economical) and characteristics (different amount of members and quality of social networks), so discourses of “my turn” to support take various shapes in practice.

Again, this supposes that there was a certain ‘favour’ made in the past (as a part of child care and upbringing in the family) which needs to be returned now or in the future. In this regard “my turn” and “return of favour” can be from the one hand seen as a moral obligation which regulates the flows of support in the family, and on the other, this moral norm still has got some economic conditions involved: in order to actually support parents, the adult children should have resources to afford this support. Therefore, there is no chance to divide the concepts of moral obligation and economy of support apart from each other, as they are just two sides of one phenomenon and are tightly interrelated.

4.1.1 Natural morality dimension: “how else”

When it comes to family responsibilities, the talk of a ‘moral duty’ to care after family members and blood-related relatives may arise, as if this bond per se stipulates the support provision for needy, young or elderly especially. In the following example we can hear the motif of duty that is inevitable but yet somehow unwanted:

I: Who supports who in your family?

RM_29: All on the situations and so all support each other!

I: Morally and materially, respectively?

RM_29: Of course, *how else*...

I: Do you plan to support the parents when they become pensioners?

RM_29: And what choice do I have? It is natural (RM_29).

Certainly the caregiving is interconnected with some self-sacrifice, as it is time-consuming and takes away from the commonly accepted daily routines. Therefore, we can determine this ‘how else’ expression used by the informant as, first of all, a display of a *burden* that may be loaded or not on the individual, and secondly, as a representation of *altruism* and acceptance of the support duty for granted. Both concepts are integral components of family support obligation, which will be discussed later in detail. By now, this “how else” expression means that there is no alternative social pattern other than supporting kin morally and materially. If there were some other options, perhaps the individual would take advantage of them; however, obviously there are none within his or her moral frames.

The question that was put forth in the discourse “what choice do I have?” is a type of rhetoric question that is assonant to the theoretical concern of moral dilemma of choices, aggregated by Watson and Mears in a similar “who else than me?” problem (1999). To clarify, in the type of family that the informant belongs to, care provision to parents in need stands without any alternatives, and care should be given when it is required. Yet again, it drags us back to the topic of the burden of moral responsibility for support: there is no choice for an individual as he or she must take care of parents once they cannot do it by themselves. In the current conditions of life it is still actual for the families in which the traditional moral is set as a code of family ethics. Here comes another important line in the discourse that says that this care responsibility stands to reason: “It is natural”. In just one phrase it sums up the whole moral attitude of the given individual: the moral obligation has a natural origin and it is not to be skipped or avoided, since

disobedience to the moral laws will lead to some social punishment measures and signify tearing apart from the family entity.

To draw a comparison with the payback discourses where we can distinguish clear interpretative repertoire of giving back a favour or kindness that was provided by parents *before*, and correspondingly postponed in time, the idea of moral duty is represented as a more altruistic example of an indisputable rule, or code of family ethics which is taken for granted, which sets it aside into its own discourse practice.

I: And who is helping whom in terms of money, you to them or they to you? Or are you completely independent?

RF_34: We are independent because there are grandparents (smiles). Well, I have helped them in something big, like huge spending. Flat remodeling done, buying a car last year.

I: It's great that you help. Were you financially supported when you are studying?

RF_34: Yeah. Well, of course. I have not worked. So now *I kind of feel like I need to help them back.* (RF_34)

In the extract there are several ideas combined. First of all, it represents the kind of financial aid delivered to the informant's parent. I can conclude here, that the material help is highly targeted: some common investments or expensive purchases that parents cannot afford alone. So, the support is seen as participation in some common financial inflows resulting in the well-being of the parents (car to have an easier transportation, modernized flat, etc.) It is good example of reciprocation, or the family gift-based economy (Barsukova, 2003) on the micro-level, when the investments on a child's higher education are gratified in the form of financial help and sharing the expenses on some more valuable purchases for the family, now directed from the adult child to the elderly parents.

On the other dimension of interpretation, this topic of feeling the need to help parents back falls into the category of natural urge to care and sustain, which is also supported by the argument of realized support: from the topic of financial independence arises the issue of notwithstanding help from the adult child's side such as investing in common costly purchases or construction works in the parent's apartment. Thus, here we have the particular descriptive pattern: reassurance of the financial independence of all family generations, yet provision of the fact of material support for the family, and, finally, the "need to help them [parents] back" as a projection to the modern situation and the future.

We are two kids in the family, me and my younger brother, who has a band and wants a career of a ***. I guess *it will be me* caring after my parents when they are old and in need of care. (FF_26)

In the possible alternatives who should support and care of parents, it is often a female to undertake the major role in this duty, like, for instance in this case of Finnish female, being an older sibling in the family and allowing her brother to concentrate on the career instead. However, with the exception of this extract I didn't find any vivid examples of moral obligations to support in Finnish discourses, yet many of the Russian ones developed the correspondent topic.

In general, the moral need to care and support the older generation and the 'naturalness' of this kind of moral obligation were mentioned in several discourses. It underlines once again the importance of continuity of moral aspect inside family relations, which may concern different sides of life, and in our case, support in the family.

4.2 Altruism as family support base

In the previous passages the motif of altruism has already been retraced, and here I argue that it can go both ways, from children to parents and vice versa. From the one hand, 'turn to payback' in family relations occurs as something natural and standing to reason, from the other hand it sometimes may be totally denied by the parents. Discourse of parental altruism and objections against help from the adult child arises in the following extract:

I: Do you plan to support the parents when they become pensioners? In what way?

RM_26: Yes, nobody else can! My parents lived all their lives and live for me. So it will be my payback and a big respectful bow to them.

I: Do your parents expect from you help? What?

RM_26: I am sure it is not expected. There was never any hint from them of what I must do something or I owe them something! They are golden! (RM_26)

Again in this extract, controversial dimensions clash together: one point is that perspective of support of parents is taken for granted as "nobody else" can actually take this role once parents are pensioners; however, another point is that parents for their part *do not expect any help* from their son: they never mentioned that he owed them anything. Once again, the theme of 'owing' something to parents quite often occurs in his talk. It opens up the aspect of parental *altruism*, clearly detected as the discourse proceeds: parents have lived their life for their only

son, and he is willing to pay their kindness back, however they do not expect anything from him. The pattern of the family is such that there is only the obligation to be caring parents, but there is no rule or established law of having to pay back. That would be an example of particular moral setting within the family, which is surely not the only example but neither gives us an opportunity to extrapolate and expect this from any other case. This is a peculiar case, and interesting to examine. First of all, the way of determining parents as “golden” is quite a powerful statement, meaning that they are greatly valued. Second of all, in the discourse the absence of any support expectations is presented from the side of parents: they give their all not expecting anything in return. Therefore the payback issue is questioned: is it really so that they do not need any payback (spiritual, moral, financial, or in the form of care) or do they thereby construct a moral obligation for the son to provide them support in any case, in an arrangement that they do not even ask for it? In the situation of high gratitude towards parents for all that they did, and the fact that the son is very deeply and emotionally aware of it, it is very likely that the support and care will take place anyway and in any case. However, parents display a certain degree of altruism, giving all and expecting nothing from the adult child. Altruistic actions (Folbre, 2001, Midlarsky in Kahana et al. 1994) suppose an individual does not expect anything in return, and closely relates to family obligation. However, in the real world, the economic component is also joined with the social relations, and altruistic actions regarded as such have the background of time-shared exchange which is well displayed in the discourses of payback and mutual expectations between family members.

4.2.1 Burden of parental support: heavy morally and physically

In contrast to altruistic motives in some discourses, support responsibility is pictured as a burden in others. It is certainly a hard duty to provide support and care to the elderly, especially when they are ill and have physical limitations. The dark side of the support obligations in front of close kin is that it is difficult to combine caring duties with other work, and it is mentally demanding to see parents grow old and become ill and disabled to take care of themselves.

RF_34: My mother's grandmother is very ill. It's her Alzheimer's disease. No memory at all. It was the fact that for the parents was hard. For mom it was *very hard*. She lives with my mother. For mum is very *difficult... morally*.

I: Your father is involved in the care anyhow?

RF_34: Dad helps so. To feed, wash her hands, face. My grandfather, my father's father, lives alone. They are the same age with my grandmother. Grandpa is alone while he copes. There were crises, now more or less ok, which is very *nice*. (RF_34)

Yet, again, the adjectives ‘hard’, ‘difficult morally’ display the concern that the support duty is quite a demanding activity, especially from the emotional side. An additional aspect of care for an Alzheimer patient is that she needs constant control, hence needs to live together with the carers. It says in the discourse that it causes extra difficulty for the mother of the informant, who is used to living alone. A positive point of it all is that the spouses help each other in caregiving for the grandmother. On the other side, there is another relative who is quite elderly too, the grandfather, who is not dependent of caretakers yet and lives alone. Consequently, the fact that the grandfather does not need care yet is described as something positive, or “which is very nice”. Regardless of how hard it is to take over support responsibilities, the mother of the informant carries on doing so, so the call of duty outweighs the burden difficulties. As soon as these caring responsibilities are taking place in front of the very eyes of the informant, she projects them on herself and perceives them as a heavy burden.

One may never predict at what age he or she will be responsible for support provision or caregiving in the family. Some of the informants share their family experience in supporting elderly members, whether provided by the informant personally or by some other kin.

Illness of an ageing but still active and capable parent is hard to accept emotionally and practically. It often happens that the whole lifestyle of a person who has suddenly become a supporter changes radically, which is accompanied by additional stress, emotional downturns, physical tiredness etc. In the following extract I will try to detect different themes in the following cancer care discourse of a young Finnish woman:

My mum has got a lymphatic cancer. At the time of her diagnosis she was 63, and it was *shocking*. She was quite immobilized and I moved in to her to help her to prepare for operation, she could not drive, she couldn't go to a shop, she was not able to cook for herself and do the basic stuff like, going to shower and stuff like that. All of her stuff to get done, laundry, cleaning; I needed to care of it. And that was (laughing) *very hard* because I did not have a car. So I had to go to shop every day, because I couldn't carry all the food that we needed. I had to do laundry every day, all this *horror*. It sounds silly, when I tell it now. (FF_23)

News about her mother's illness is described as ‘shocking’ in the text. Since cancer is quite a threatening diagnosis, taking caring responsibilities was a radical change in her mother's

life and her own lifestyle. She rearranged all her daily routines, stopped attending university and dedicated all her time and energy to taking care of her ill mother. This practice is qualified as “very hard”, “all this horror”, “heavy responsibility” that she was committed to. It was accompanied by a constant fear (“I was afraid”, “here was always danger”) of her mother getting worse, hurting herself or causing a rupture. All these adjectives the informant uses in the discourse signify an emotionally difficult situation she has been put into. This extract illustrates an argument about the caring responsibility burden employed by an individual to be a dramatical change in lifestyle and a difficult emotional experience for a newly-qualified carer (Watson, Mears 1999). Indeed, the reflection on this experience is also dynamic, going through the stages of it being heavy and unbearable to the understanding of its importance and, at the end, inevitable for the family’s well-being.

I couldn’t work; I *quit* school, to take care of her, to be with her. And now when I tell it, I feel like, yeah *it wasn’t that horrible*. Maybe you need to go to shop two times a week, but the things itself is too heavy. Like very *heavy responsibility*. When I was away from home, to shop for 30 minutes, I was *afraid* that she would... there was always a danger of her spleen to rupture, and she would have to through emergency operation, she had to be very careful and I always was afraid that she would do something that would cause this spleen to rupture. (FF_23)

It is noteworthy to highlight the two conditions, or levels of reasoning, that can be allocated in this text: representation of emotions at the time when the practice of care took place, and the reflection of it afterwards, which the informant shares with some small laughter, saying ‘It sounds silly, when I tell it now’. However, *at that point*, the situation and all the care practices, and the whole change in life pattern were truly horrifying for the individual. Certainly, when the individual tries to reflect the past and analyses why this or that was done, all this shopping, doing laundry and cooking does not seem *that* difficult or problematic. By contrast, when in the context of being next to a deadly sick mother, the attitudes and perception of reality shifts dramatically and perhaps everything is seen from a negative perspective; however, at the end of the example the informant displayed the ability to prescind from the old ‘self’ and to see the situation in the renewed eyes of today.

4.2.2 Not-Owing-Anything discourse

Together with numerous discourses about the moral aspect of support and heavy yet inevitable potential to become a supporter for the ageing parents in the future, there is a counterargument against this ideal picture in the form of negation of the obligation to pay back. For some individuals support obligations for the parents occur naturally, and for other individuals there are no strict social directives about them:

And then mum was acting like, 'Oh my kids back home' but at the same time promoting the idea 'it's my home, my rules'. So, she gave me literal rules that I would have to obey if I want to be at home. I didn't like them so I moved away, I was 17 we had a really huge fight; I still think my mum kicked me out with those stupid rules. She still thinks that I was the one who left, and we did not have contact for half a year at all; we did not talk [...] My mum still tries to tell me what my life should be. So, I had to move to different town. To be far enough (laughs). But in these circumstances *I don't feel I owe them anything*. (FF_22)

Using economical pragmatic terms, the bad relations between generations may leave the ageing ones without sufficient care and support later in future, and therefore they might need to rely on some other sources of social care. The feeling of owing that might potentially lead to a support disposition towards the parents is presented as exhausted in the discourse. The daughter talks about the dissatisfaction about her mother's action, which resulted in her moving away from the parental house to 'be far enough' not to see or talk to them often. And it brings her to the idea that, even when they are her parents, she does not owe them anything, and consequently, they might not expect any kind of help or support from her.

Hence, once dropped, the seeds of discord may lead to disintegration inside the family and separation, geographical as well as social, where the bonds get weaker and the potentially expected support is emotionally impossible.

4.3 Reciprocity: give and take in the long run perspective

Another aspect of the multifaceted concept of 'my turn to pay back' is highly entangled with the topic of how much parents put time, effort and of course, financial means into education and raising up the child. It is derived from completely subjective estimations and weightings: since they did this and that, it is my time to do that or that. It allows us to talk about specific and

very individual and subjective calculation of the parents' participation (in other words, how good parents they were), made by the adult children: they rationalize their responsibility to support ageing parents via reminiscences and realization of how much parental investment they have experienced earlier in their life. It is clearly retraced in the repetitive expression of 'as much as', which metaphorically represents this kind of attitude of subjective support calculation and what is considered to be a fair exchange, or, in other words, *reciprocation* (see Barsukova, 2003) at this stage of family life.

I have always been a centre of the family universe for mum and grandparents. They tried to give me the best things they could afford even though now I realize it was very hard and difficult for them. They save up some money to spend it on me [...] There was time when I was earning money, and of course I did presents and give money for the accommodation fee and food to my mum. Simply because it *would be fair*, and she deserves it, she did so much supporting me from the very beginning. But now *I cannot pay her back* because I don't have the source of income. She understands it. I do some nice small present though. I hope the situation changes once I finish study and find work. So I can do *as much as* she did for me. (RM_27)

Certainly many social factors may influence exaggerations or, on the contrary understatement of parents' investment in their adult child. However, the payback has a connection to the parents' actions in the past: the mother has gone into great lengths in order to let her son receive education etc., so now it is only 'fair' that he pays her back with the same equal treatment and attitude. Certainly, this assumption is very subjective and also depends on the moral obligations of the children, as some might not count the involvement in taking care of their parents in their current achievements, even though they were objectively made in huge amounts. Reciprocity is clearly connected to the pattern of moral obligations and responsibilities, which are particular in every family; however, there are more examples coming up to indicate that it is an important aspect of support arrangements between two generations of a family.

4.3.1 Investments and reward

The payback discourse can be interpreted from different perspectives: social (moral obligation) and economical. Adult children represent themselves as investments and therefore imbed this category in the family support discourse. Accordingly, the concept of reciprocity opens up another dimension of it.

I consider myself an *investment*: I going to *payback* according how much they put effort in me. If one invest in me, I will return more [...] My mum *did a lot* for me. My dad *did zero* [...] And I don't owe him anything. Of course, for the parents I will try my best. For me parents are my grandfather and grandmother and my mum, and uncle. (RF_27)

In the small extract of the interview, the word 'investment' was used up to three times in connection with *payback* and a subjective ratio of how much each of the parents did for the informant. The conclusion that the individual in this case makes is based on the memories and facts from previous experiences quite far away in the past (we refer to it in the interpretation of the next extract as the discourse goes on). However, already here we can detect clear logic of a child's expectations once she has grown up and can justify the parental behaviour one way or another. Once a mother did "a lot" for the child, and "put a lot of effort" in her, she deserves the "payback" in both economical and moral aspects: reframing the argument of Featherstone (2004), the mother has invested in her child before so now she reaps the benefits. An adult child represents herself as an investment and speculates in terms of invest-return relations. It is a peculiar and at the same time significant argument to the family relationship as investments in different dimensions and directions made in the long run: from the birth of the children till the time the parents are ageing and children have grown up. Therefore, it implies the simple idea that parents should have thought about this investment in advance: being active and responsible parents, so that in the future the children would keep it in mind when considering the family obligations of care and support as "payback" for good investment of parental time, positive attitude and money. Certainly, our memory is quite selective and the conclusion made about the father's behaviour as a parent is very subjective, however it causes some action (or in this case, denial) in the child.

Negative reflections towards parents' behaviour in the past are the first topic we can scrutinize from the discourse, and, additionally, conclusions of subjective investment-reward estimations that the informant makes are at our special interest. Further on in the discourse the individual tries to rationalize her choice by providing subjective arguments of inappropriate fatherhood:

On my father's side, ok, they paid alimonies when I was small. His parents, I haven't seen them since childhood. They hardly bother about me. We don't have very good relation with him, to say the least. My mum was trying to make them help us financially, but in vain. But my father, he expects that I should support him somehow! That *I owe him something* and now I need to return it back. Initially he thought so that I would need to give him back. At the same time, *he never gave me a thing*, never brought me a proper present, only recycled from something he got for free. [...] I see myself as investment, if

one invests in me, I will return more. He doesn't understand it and doesn't perceive me like this; *he thinks I owe him* from the very beginning. (RF_27)

In almost every sentence in this extract different aspects of a bad relationship with the father are enlightened: absence of contact with grandparents, forced payment of child support, no gifts that would be considered good ones, and as a climax to it all, unrealized hopes in the father. The interrupted reciprocation is based on crossing incompatible expectations: the father expects financial support from the adult daughter whilst the daughter is still in need of the father's support and remembers all these 'underachieved' discontented things and actions from her childhood.

The discourse of the young Russian daughter unsatisfied with her father goes on as the topic of owing arises. The father expects that the daughter realizes that she *owes* him on default, since they are related, whilst the daughter does not even know how to determine or qualify this 'something' in words, that something that she owes. Is it money or attention, and promise to care for her ageing father in the future? Therefore we can ascertain different directions of expectations that form this conflict: the father wants the 'payback' that he thinks the daughter 'owes' him, whilst the daughter still considers that there cannot be any payback since the father did not do anything to deserve it.

As a counterargument to what her father did not do, the informant provides some information about her mother and her parents:

Well, I think they are *investing* in me, gave me good education. When I was studying and working in Moscow, they paid for my flat so I can save money I earned at work. For travelling, for some additional costs. When I had the second better job, I was paying flat myself, but I couldn't save anymore. I mostly spent money for some trips. Now, for e.g. my granny wants me to stay and live in Europe and then, step by step, bring my mum to live here with me. In prospective, and then of course, I'd take care of her here. (RF_27)

Yet again, it is the subjective assumptions that they "gave [her] good education", "paid for [her] flat" are some proofs of the investment, but this is the way the informant operationalizes it. To support the statement that the parents have invested in her, she makes a discursive turn to the topic of owing and paying back that is shaped in the idea of bringing her mother to live with her abroad, as a sign of her turn to support and take care of her when the time comes. Therefore, the discourses of the family support aspect of support and care, especially financial matters have some similar structure: the description of relations with kin, listing the deeds they have done or have not and reaction on how the informant is planning to act in the future, in connection with

what was said before. This is how the topics of payback, owing, moral duty and expectations are tangled in one discourse, yet the structure can be applied to many discourses dedicated to the family relations issue.

The practices of payback to the older generation for all the support they provided in the early age of a child who now has become an adult suggest the acquisition of the concept of *reciprocity* concept for the final theoretical interpretation of the micro data. In fact, the idea of reciprocal exchange suits best in the cases when support postponed in time takes place. Accordingly, it is the practical side of family support arrangement: first parents provide care and support and after some years it is a moral obligation of adult children to take this part, however the amount of this care may vary. In our cases it depends on personal memory of parental involvement, children's commitments, so-called sense of natural duty and subjective estimation of investment and reward that ageing parent deserve. Therefore, it allows me to talk about rationalized reciprocity: it is not a blind call of moral duty but social practice explained by individuals in pragmatic terms. Reciprocity is closely connected, on the one hand, to the patterns of moral responsibilities in the family, and on the other hand, to the subjective perception of the investment exchange and contributions made by the two generations.

4.4 Dependency vs. independency in family support

4.4.1 Pension as independency

As originally assumed, the pension age is associated with risks of falling into all sorts of dependencies, poverty, bad health and social disintegration. Surprisingly, not all individuals regard it as such, and here is a discourse of a Finnish male regarding his parent's retirement:

My mum is quite happy to move on the long-waiting pension, she worked a lot in her life. Now she experienced some bureaucratic problems, there is decision about her pension to be made, so it upsets her a little [...] She (mother) had a doctor appointment and they told her that she is a bit stressed out. I wonder what is it so stressful about going on pension though [giggling]. I guess they will still be independent in the pension. (MF_29)

Regarding pension as a "long-waiting" event in the parent's life, the informant displays a certain level of contentment for his mother, with the only concern of her stress connected to the pension formality procedures. Pension per se is represented as a joyful reward for the years his

mother has dedicated to work. In the discourse there is a distinct division between pension as a new advantageous lifestyle and stress exclusively connected to the formal aspect of it. Therefore, the informant talks about it on a very positive spin, and even dares to joke about the incompatibility of pension and stress, presuming that there might be less stress in the life of a retired person.

The use of the category 'independent' in the last sentence of the extract suggests that the informant believes in prolongation of parents' independency even in their old age, which perhaps adds up to his own freedom from the support responsibilities in the short run. I believe, this subjective assumption made based on the state of things in the informant's family at the moment is quite well represented in the plurality of voices in the positive perception of retirement and ageing, which speak for the possibility of maintaining personal independency from being a burden for adult children, and, from the perspective of children, independent from the supporter role.

4.4.2 Support duty as dependency

The perspectives of being involved in support provision show the level of responsibility that family members pay off each other. Nevertheless, the other side of the coin is connected with risks and fears of losing his or her independency and fundamental change of accustomed life pattern.

Mum spends a lot of spiritual force in them. She was baptized, even. I do not know if it helps or not but in dealing with my grandmother, she learned not to worry very much though. So somehow it helps, though of course she has some breakdowns. In the first place, absolutely, it is her sense of duty. Well, even my mother has always lived alone and now lives with her mother who is ill! *God forbids!* It scares me very much that I would need to do the same. No one, unfortunately, is immune. Here with my father I make timid attempts at something there to advise: to refrain from something, or something like that but he just jokes back. And his favorite saying, "I will not live till then!" It makes me so furious! (RF_34)

Seeing the example of her own mother and her business with care provision, the Russian female expresses dismay for her own opportunity to carry out these functions in the family in case there is a need of it. The expression 'God forbids!' came out so naturally and brightly displays her fear and wish for the care responsibilities to never fall on her personally. Therefore, not only does an ageing individual lose his independence with the age-connected disabilities and

need for support, but also the second party of the support relationship may also perceive the supporting duties as burdening and complicating their life and everyday functioning. The pressure of family responsibilities may add to the stress and fears of the person in charge. Hereby, in this discourse the contraversive perceptions of the support potentials boil down to a very concise expression “God forbids”. The fear of being tied up with the caring responsibilities and losing independency of choice which can be retraced from the other discourse of the same informant. Such conclusions obviously derive from the background knowledge of care duties implemented by the mother of the informant towards her elderly grandparent. She saw that her mother dedicated a lot of time to this duty and would not present eagerness for the same fate for herself. Therefore, I can argue that caring function implementation brings certain independency to the role of the supporter, which makes it unwelcome as a potential activity for the adult children.

4.4.3 Independence from being a burden as a moral value

Coming back to the position and perspective of the elderly, I admit that the role of independency is highly regarded in the discourses dedicated to them. The theme of independency based on individualistic values is well-elaborated in the following discourse:

She [mother of informant] still manages to provide everything by herself, and she used to be a head nurse in a local hospital, and ...Well, welfare state in Finland is sort of slowly falling to pieces, care services are no longer as good as they used to be, and she is *afraid of getting so old* that she might have need help. And, she has actually told me that she most likely to commit suicide instead of going to the elderly house. She knows how bad it can be. She has a very high *moral* herself but she knew how in a way humane the stuff could be, that they would do the easy way and not the way patient would need it. She doesn't want to be there anyway that she would lose her independence. (FM_35)

This discourse is produced by a Finnish male informant and it would be an extreme example of individualism and independency representation, however, it is important to pay additional attention to this kind of outstanding discursive repertoires. This example has many different discursive dimensions. Firstly, the fear of getting old to the stage of disability to stay without additional helps from others. Secondly, there is the radical decision to rather commit suicide than to use institutional or informal care. Thirdly, there is the discourse about moral, yet from an absolutely different angle to the one we have we have detected by now: the *morale not to be a burden*, i.e. *independency morale*. In the discourse the concept of independency is formed out of fear of ageing and the refusal to accept help and to display her weakness. This shapes the

concept of an extreme feeling of independency that is expressed as a special kind of individualistic morale. Additionally, the conditions of being a burden to their children are obviously decreasing the well-being of the elderly (Kane, Penrod 1993). On the other side, it is a clear personal choice of a loner who manifests the refusal to experience any kind of social dependencies, and therefore by her own will crosses out the support arrangements, whether organized by the adult children or by the welfare state.

With the refusal from physical help provision, there might be the rejection of moral support as counter-reaction to being 'needy' coming along:

She hates the fact that she is very *needy* sometimes, and she reacts in a very hostile way. And sometimes, she is like 'Oh nobody loves me' and I think she has a lot of grief about falling ill and she has a lot of grief from the situation at the moment. I try to encourage her but she says she doesn't need it. (FF_23)

Individuals in need of support may be struggling with the objective reality of the need and their subjective morale, or personal principles. The feeling of becoming a burden for their adult children does not allow using the support arrangement fully and openly and causes remorse and dissatisfaction in the conditions they happen to be in. In this case, reassurance that it is not their fault and the greater display of altruistic intentions to help would be the best practices from the side of the closest kin in charge of the support.

4.4.4 Formal care and personal independency

There might be many factors that prevent individuals from choosing informal or formal ways of care for their relatives. It is interesting to see the choice of formal care with the existence of a wide tight kinship network: even in families with many cousins and nephews, no one is certain about their willingness to take the care responsibilities inside the family.

She [grandmother] *wanted* to go there [elderly house], and all of those relatives, like, my mother is not that much of a caring person in this sense, that of course she loves her mother but she does not want to take care of her. Even all the family went to see her in the elderly home, and especially two my mother's elder sisters also went there, to look after her. It's a bit different situation with my father side, because all the brothers live in the same area that they took their parent to look after in their home. They were often annoyed by my father who did it less, but the reason was that his hometown is 40 km away from where he lives. It takes at least 30 minutes to get there compared to 15 minutes for them. (FM_22)

The text above is provided by a Finnish young male with a wide network of relatives, numerous uncles and cousins. He says that the choice to go to the elderly house was made by the grandmother herself. At the same time, her daughter was described as “not that much of a caring person” who did not display the readiness to take on support obligations even though the whole family was visiting the grandmother in the elderly house; still, in the discourse this case is compared with another situation of another grandfather who has been cared in a house by the informant’s uncles and father in shifts. Yet again, geographical distance is an obstacle for support provision and informal caregiving! As the talk goes on, we find out that the fact that the informant’s father lived further from the other brothers caused him to indulge in support responsibilities less often than they did and it made them displeased with the fact. Hence, one dimension here is the release from support provision duties for the family members, as formal care was chosen to serve the needs of the elderly kin, and the second dimension is the willingness of the grandmother herself to receive formal care and support from the official institution rather than from within the family. “She wanted to go there” implies the personal choice to refuse family-based support. It does not clarify the reasons for that, except that female family members do not find care as a suitable role for themselves; however, it is clearly a preference based on certain principles and beliefs that involve considerations on family load, personal independence and need.

There are other kinds of discourse where the choice of informal care is considered conditional:

I: Who will take care of your parents if they need help, they are ill / incapacitated?

RF_26: I will but if I won’t have enough time and force, we will have to hire someone, to find resource from outside help - such as nurses. To help in house. (RF_26)

The choice for formal professional care given by a third party at home is made in case the closest kin is not available for care provision, either due to lack of time or opportunities. This discursive rationalization of care provision is quite typical, since both parties are satisfied with it. There difference between these two examples is that the Russian female refers to the formal care provided inside the parents’ house, and does not give any assumption that her parents would be sent to a formal care institution. In the Finnish male’s discourse the elderly relative expressed her wish to go to the elderly house herself, where the professional care will be given to her. In a certain way it displays the disposition to formal care by individuals: accepting it as a sufficient option in the Finnish case and arrangement of formal care in domestic conditions in the Russian

family. By all means formal care systems in these two countries differ significantly, and I presume the level of services in Russian institutions is not sufficient for some individuals. However, what is important to underline here is the difference in attitude expressed by the two informants.

4.5 Comparison of Finnish and Russian discursive practices on family support

As the reader may have already been convinced, there are many topics having arisen in the discourses, and each and every informant has made a great contribution to the development and enrichment of the actual research. All of them had something to share on the topic of family support, based on their perceptions, assumptions and lives. Some of the informants have experienced support provision being providers or carers themselves or having a member of the family in this role; however, for many of them the discourse of family support is where they express their perception and anticipation of this phenomenon.

To present it in a brief yet informative way, I decided to address the matrix table technique of data visualization. As the analysis of each interview was completed, I managed to retrieve discursive repertoires on each of the undermentioned concepts of moral obligation, reciprocity and dependence together with their sub-dimensions of altruistic behaviour, support duty as a burden, dependency of the adult child (*individual* perspective of the ageing parent) and personal dependency of the inevitable *duty* of support and care provision (adult child perspective). The reader notices the indexes that I assigned to each concept, in accordance with whether or not it was discussed and appeared in the discourse (if it was talked about, then it has a certain index; the absence of a theme is indicated by '-'). Depending on how the categories were regarded by the informant, and in what tone (positive or negative) the perception or the personal experience was represented, I correspondingly assigned the indexes -1 for adverse reference or negative statement on the topic, 0 for neutral (yet it was mentioned by the informant) and 1 for positive or affirmative statements and comments during the talk.

Overviewing the matrix indexes I can say that Finnish and Russian discursive practices generally vary yet have similarities in some aspects, and so do the female and male discourses. I will go through the closer investigation of the matrix and comparison of the results based on the gender and country division, including the analysis of particular cases standing out from the rest.

Table 1. Categorical matrix of family support qualitative data

Informants			Moral obligation		Reciprocity	Dependency	
			Altruism	Burden		Individual	Duty
Females	Finnish	FF 22	0	-	-1	-	0
		FF 23	1	1	1	1	-1
		FF_26	1	-	1	-	0
	Russian	RF 26	1	0	1	-	0
		RF_27	1	-	-1	-	0
		RF 34	1	-1	1	0	-1
Males	Finnish	FM 22	-	-	1	1	0
		FM_29	0	0	1	-1	0
		FM 35	0	1	0	-1	1
	Russian	RM 26	1	0	1	0	1
		RM 27	1	1	1	0	1
		RM 29	0	0	1	-	0

All discourses contained the theme of reciprocity, with a neutral or positive regard, given that the mutual exchange between generations was accepted practice in the families of both societies, with a small deviation of one Russian and one Finnish female’s discourses about negative perception of reciprocity. Both of those cases describe negative experiences with a father (Russian female’s discourse) and a mother (Finnish female’s discourse) which were not resolved by the time of the interview, so the informants represented negative expressions and dissatisfaction with the reciprocation with the given parent. When addressing the primary data of the interview, I can identify that the negative experience of reciprocity is based on misunderstanding, controversies in expectations and absence of mutual ‘social’ contract between the relatives: while parents were expecting adult children to behave in a certain way (to obey, to provide material support etc.) adult children perceived it as a mismatch to their previous

experience (absence of father's care in childhood, change of relation degree from friendly to oppressive with the Finnish mother). This mismatch and conflict of expectations shifted the negation of reciprocity and its regard to impossible in future.

As for the rest of the discourses, the individuals talk about reciprocity mainly in a positive way, identifying it as a significant component of family life and the basic rule of interaction between kin. Reciprocity is evidenced in the informants' everyday language by investing share in common family purchases, cross-help with goods, cleaning, baby-sitting, caring after when ill, paying the rent when living together with parents, to say the least, supporting new ideas and projects morally and financially. The list of the reciprocal transactions may go on and the actual data shows the transactions vary greatly.

The concept of dependency of the adult child is developed almost equally neutral or not mentioned at all by a range of presented discourses. The exceptions are three discourses of Finnish males and one female, who regard this topic differently. There are examples of an opposite perception of public care institutions: one informant tells that the ageing relative expressed the will to go there herself and was satisfied with this state of support arrangement, and another presents the opinion of an ageing Finnish mother with a very individualistic living morale and total non-acceptance of becoming a dependent person, regardless of who is responsible for support provision, her adult son or the formal institutions of care. The third perception is indicated as negative but only to mark the opposite of dependency, namely *independency*: in the discourse ageing and retirement were expressed as a 'breakout' or, in fact becoming independent (from work) and getting more free time for other purposes.

Surprisingly enough, the duty of support is perceived as acceptable in two of the Russian male and one Finnish male discourse, while unappreciated by some females. In the three discourses informants displayed their readiness to indulge in the caring duty when needed, because they felt obliged to do it for their ageing parents, and, for instance the in Finnish case, it brought him satisfaction and closeness to the mother, which he had not experienced before. In two Russian cases, imposing socially-approved behavior and taking up the caring duty speaks for the informants in this case; on the other hand, they all confessed a lot of self-sacrifice by their parents in the past in order to make children happy, which made them consider the 'return of the favour' for all their parents have done. From this viewpoint, the duty dependency is closely related to the reciprocity.

In the two females' discourses of support duty, the need for caregiving was mentioned as actual for the family and experienced at close quarters, whilst for the rest of the discourses this topic was just *hypothetical* in its anticipation in the future. As the informants or their relatives have experienced caregiving duty, they describe it as demanding and mentally exhausting, hence the negative perception and awareness and even fear of the necessity to be involved in caregiving again.

When it comes to the concept of altruism, I can immediately conclude that it was not discussed in the Finnish male discourses, and at the same time clearly referred to in a positive way in the Russian discourses of both genders and generally well in the Finnish female talks. The implication of altruism talks being typical for females corresponds to the previous discussion on altruistic morale to give and not ask back, typically inherent in females (Folbre 2001).

Every third informant in each subgroup talked about moral obligation to support parents as burdening, yet some of them qualified it as an acceptable possibility for themselves and expressed readiness to carry this burden prescribed by the moral obligations in front of the family. An exception is the Russian female discourse which expresses her fear to take the caring responsibility that outweighs the obligation to do so. The burden discourse to a great extent reflects the talks about the duty, yet the fine line lies on the supposition that obligation represents the principles and morals of the individual based on family support patterns and, to some extent, social pressure. Being dependent and involved in the support duty means take action, which certainly is connected to the feeling of obligation, but concerns the practical aspect of family support and its feasibility.

Based on the results of discourse analysis, I reject the assumption that there would be more help and mutual assistance (reciprocity) mentioned and taking place in the Russian discourses, since the reciprocity motifs were detected in the discourses on both sides, Russian and Finnish. The supposition of females talking and assuming more possibilities for them to take over the support duties (dependency concept) is also disproved due to the fact that male discourses also contained this topic in a significant amount, and especially Russian male talks represented the readiness to be indulged in family support activities in the future. When mentioning family responsibilities of support as a burden, there was no consensus in the tone and opinions in the discourses, and it was peculiar to detect many different forms of expressions and feeling formulations across the individuals' discourses.

To sum up, the main findings provided in the perception matrix is that Finns talk a lot about individual dependency, hence I assume that this matter is significant for them, whilst Russian males develop the repertoire of duty dependency as inevitable and expect it to be implemented due to moral obligations and the mutual reciprocity. Females, much more than males, raise up the theme of altruism in their stories, which can be partially explained by the socially imposed patterns of a woman as the main carer in the family. Additionally, according to the discourses, reciprocity is actual for most of the informants and takes place in their family on a regular basis.

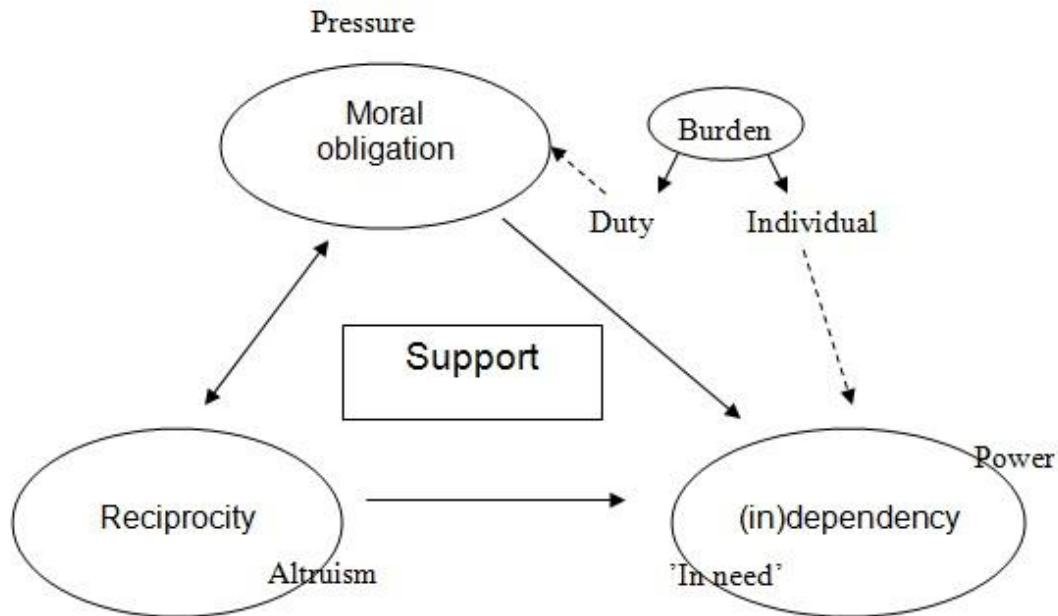
4.6 Summing up the findings

Within the outline of discourse analysis, I have been searching for fruitful examples and allocating different dimensions in the family support perception. In fact, discourses vary greatly and each of them has value in itself. At the same time, they form some bigger topics, or repertoires, that describe directions of how support practices across the generations are implemented in practice. The rich empirical data allowed us to undertake deeper interpretations and build generalized assumptions as the final result summed up in a conceptual framework.

I have been analyzing family support discourses that have different logics of narration, various dimensions, lead and sub-themes that were important for informants. It is vital to keep in mind that depending on these various discursive patterns, the discourses about family duties and obligations, along with care and support practices go various directions, as there are no conventions for the discursive flow.

In order to combine the concepts I have drawn from the data using the discourse analysis, I will present them in the following illustration and explain the links between the concepts. As the discourses of family support were carried out, three important patterns were retrieved from the interviews and generalized into the concepts of moral obligation, reciprocity and dependency. The conceptual framework connecting those three components is applicable on both macro and micro level of societal relations.

Table 2. Three concepts forming the family support



When informants were talking about support provision for their ageing parents, they presented their perception of support from the perspective of moral obligation: it is a natural need for the adult children to take the turn to care of their parents as much as their parents cared and supported them when they were young. Certainly, moral patterns of behaviour may be associated with social pressure, since individuals are expected to do something they themselves might not like or choose to do in more liberal conditions. The closer an individual is incorporated in the family network and the stronger the family bonds and habitus of support functions inside the family are, the bigger the possible pressure, which increases during the risky situations of illness and ageing of the closest kin. In this respect it looks like the individual is caught up in the trap of socially imposed actions and expectations of others, with no alternatives to make his or her own choice.

Developing the different levels of understanding of the moral obligation concept, it should be emphasized that individuals may reflect it as a burden. Depending on the object of burden, two types were distinguished: *individual*, presuming dependency of the elderly on support and care from the adult children, and *duty as burden*, where the bearer of the support duty is the adult child. I encountered a lack of theoretical literature on the family support as burdening practice, therefore took the liberty to develop my own typology of burden.

Moral obligations compel the individual to shoulder the support burden, which might be hard and unbearable to manage, like some of the informants testified in the discourse. For a young supporter, it is sometimes even hard to anticipate the need of care and support of the kin in need. Individuals who had experienced it shared their fears to repeat it or be involved in it in the future.

The burden of being supported lies upon some ageing parents who experience uneasiness and a shift in power relations inside the family as the transition from a supporter to one in need may not happen smoothly. The individual burden is closely connected to the issue of dependency (see Table 2), which also concerns both potential supporters and ageing parents.

When a need of care or support responsibilities arises, with the moral obligation to take this duty comes the resolution of dependency –independency dichotomy. Dependency is often connected to the vulnerable social groups, such as children and the elderly, as they usually require additional assistance and care in everyday life functioning. The concept of dependency in this context is interrelated with the idea of an ageing parent in need of support being a burden to the adult child. The attitude to this relation of dependency may vary from total appreciation and expectation of it by the adult child to the refusal of any help and the whole situation of becoming dependent. In this case, it is not the duty that is a burden but the individual experiences the shift of power relations within the family, drifting from being a supporter to the ageing person in need. Quite often this power shift is characterized in the discourse as a painful unsatisfying event in life, especially for the persons who value individualism and independency. This power shift brings additional duties to the supporters and probably an unacceptable yet inevitable life stage for the ageing.

On the other side of the dependency continuum, there are perceptions of retirement as finally gained independency from working life and duties and chance for new opportunities to realize oneself. At the same time, some individuals display certain expectations from the adult children, including the reciprocations, yet some of them refuse to accept the idea of their dependency and react differently on this life situation. This conclusion brings us back to the theme of reciprocity and its impact on dependency: the act of reciprocation may be understood dually in the aspect of dependency: in the form of realized expectations or denial due to high independency and need for control by the ageing parent. Whatever the outcome of reciprocity is, it is directed to the individual in need and sets him or her as a subject of the family support arrangements.

As mentioned above, the perception of support obligation as burden was shared amongst many individuals. However, what resolves this dilemma is the inter-relation between moral obligation and reciprocity (see Table 2), where the individual is presented as either altruistic or, more commonly, guiding herself to build up a relationship with their family based on mutually beneficial reciprocation. The reciprocal approach of family support duty rationalizes the individual's behavior, and justifies the subjective estimations of the investment-return relationship with the parents.

The reciprocation discourse also contains the emphasis on the give and take exchange as social investments in individuals. Some informants perceived their relations with their parents through the prism of investments made by the parents in them in the past and their possible outcome in the future. Hence, I can speak about a rationalized reciprocity that is not only based on socially imposed patterns of support but on joint benefits for both generations.

The expression of a payback, used by many of the informants, rather well reports on the reciprocation, in a way that there is an exchange of support and care between parents and children that is prolonged and separated in time. Time is a risky variable here, since these two events are distant and the mutual agreement for support may not work after some time and in certain life conditions. Anyways, reciprocity requires responsibility and altruism of the individuals involved in the family relations, or otherwise it stops functioning and turns into an economic or formal level of social interaction. Regardless of some relevant studies on altruism increasing the satisfaction of caring duty accomplishments (Midlarsky 1994), my informants referred mostly to the mutual benefit, so it is more suitable to use the concept of reciprocation (Barsukova, 2003) for a better description of the phenomenon.

To sum up, the informants regarded mutual exchange as the starting argument in their assumption that they will have to become their parents' supporters some day. From the macro perspective, society benefits from the support of moral obligations in the family support system, since it structurizes the family kin's behavior, and therefore the social control over the matter is set up. Reciprocity in the micro level also works as a security mechanism if the public social system does not fulfill its functions, while the dichotomy of dependence-independence assigns roles on all levels of social structure and establishes the balance of power and control between individuals.

In general, the illustration above sums up well the results of the research made on the stage of interpretation and theorization of the data. The concepts of moral obligation, reciprocity

and dependency are proven to be interrelated in the greater matter of family support study, and when one is highlighted, another becomes a leitmotif, which helps in the deeper understanding of the whole phenomenon. The triangle of the three components and developed sub-themes and inter-relations between the concepts is shaped into a general conceptual framework, applicable for Finnish and Russian family support studies.

5 Conclusion

This research concerns the perceptions of family support by adult children in Finland and Russia. The aim of the study was to discover how adult children understand support obligations and how they anticipate being involved with them in the future. The data consisted of twelve semi-structured in-depth interviews with Russian and Finnish informants aged from 22 to 35, whose parents were entering retirement age. To theorize the results of discourse analysis further, the conceptual framework representing interrelations of moral obligation, reciprocity and dependency was developed. The main goal of the research was to answer the research question *'How do the adult children perceive family support duties and anticipate potentials for themselves to become supporters of their ageing parents in the future?'*

In this Master's Thesis I descended from macro social and cultural background to the micro level of particular cases and discourses of adult children, and so went my assumptions where I tried to establish connections between welfare systems and family support care. I anticipated Russian discourses to be filled with themes of family support and informal care practices, whereas in the Finnish cases the talk was expected to concern mostly institutional care and impersonal support. In fact, all the discourses raised up the topics of informal support and the reciprocation within families both in Russia and Finland.

One of the valuable outcomes is that I discovered discourses dedicated to the cross flows of support, including financial and immaterial help, that is not only directed from adult children to pension-aged parents, but the other way round, too. In many cases, ageing parents were still supporting their adult children, not only in Russia but in Finland as well. Additionally, the argument on the role of weak or strong welfare states in this case does not particularly represent reality, since in Russia there were cases in which even retired parents and grandparents were still supporting their adult children or investing in common family projects. So it is not correct to assume that pension age signifies dependency, poverty, weakness and incapability to contribute to family life; on the contrary, ageing members of the family stay active, and there are examples of it in both Finnish and Russian discourses. At the same time, when an adult child reaches certain level of income and career development, he or she gets involved in the support provision and takes upon the leading role of a family supporter. Therefore, support in the family depends on, first and foremost, who can financially afford it best. If the child has means for it, the support provision vector changes towards the ageing parents.

In Finland, characterized as a strong welfare state with good social security mechanisms, the attitudes to elderly houses vary greatly. Many individuals refer to public elderly houses as a non-option for their parents, and vote for home care and support from their side if it is needed, rather than putting in formal elderly care. On the other hand, there is still a share of individuals whose families had positive experience in this matter, and ageing members themselves regarded elderly houses as the best option for themselves, without considering it to cause any harm to the family relations, reunions and visits on a regular basis.

The assumption that male adult children are more financial support oriented and female ones are informal care oriented is not represented very clearly in practice, since many of the Russian and Finnish females displayed their readiness to buy care services for their parents if it was needed and if it saved their time and did not disturb their professional work process. Additionally, male informants (especially Russian ones) also shared their view that they could support their parents with some home duties and nursing if there was a demand for this. The leitmotif of altruism occurred in both Finnish and Russian discourses, especially in great extent in female discourses which claims that selfless acts are a female prerogative (Folbre 2001). Therefore, there is no clear gender division based on the anticipation of the support responsibilities; however, with the general appreciation of reciprocity, females were the ones to talk about altruism.

All the discourses touched upon the concept of reciprocity and regarded it as a positive and important issue for the individual's family's aspect on the relations and support arrangement basics. Reciprocity within the family was common practice for Finns and Russians alike, and was in many cases perceived as the reward to the parents who had invested in their children from the very beginning of their lives. Therefore, it is a form of long-term relation which implies a payback based of subjective assumptions of debt to the parents, mixed with a feeling of moral responsibility and reciprocity.

5.1 Discussion and evaluation of results

The value of my research is that on the one hand, it allows us to see family support from many dimensions including moral obligations of adult children to implement the caring and maintaining duties; on the other hand it gives the reader space to think and reflect upon the social complexity of the family support phenomenon based on the conceptual framework I have developed.

According to the conceptualized framework in which family support is represented in the interaction of three aspects - moral obligation, dependency and reciprocity - the role of social policy in this respect consists of addressing the problematic sectors of the matter. If we are to consider the concepts of the theoretical 'triangle', social policy may hardly reinforce moral obligations to provide support for individuals, since it is a personal choice, and only the established pattern of family organization and societal expectations may drive an individual to impose this obligation and take over this responsibility. The same goes for reciprocity: it qualifies as one of the basics of family functioning established and shared across the members on the micro level, and what public institutions can do here is only to boost it or support those participants who are excluded from this informal exchange.

In fact, the definite sector for social policy to take care of is the 'dependency' body and burden of the support duty (see Table 2). On the one hand, ageing is just another stage of a person's life which every individual should be aware of. In order to change the perception of ageing and consecutive need of care and help as being burdens, the idea of active ageing should be better introduced to the wider audience. On the other hand, those ageing individuals in need who are not included in a kin network that provides care and support (Wolf 1986) are falling into the category of public care and assistance recipients. The goal of the policy-makers is to disclose such elderly and provide the sufficient quality help, and additionally relieve the burden of young supporters and care-givers by substituting some of the duties with the help of social workers.

In general, within this conceptual framework social policy operates as the public force to set the dependency in balance with regular life standards, and to remove the tension of burdening duties off the supporter and the independency unease off the individual in need, thus providing some share of feeling of 'independency' they demand.

To conclude, the conceptual framework elaborated with the help of theoretical literature and the analysis of twelve interviews is the main outcome of the research within this Master's Thesis. It aggregated a whole range of different discourses of family support perception in three crucial concepts of moral obligation, dependency and reciprocity that represent the dimensions of the family support phenomenon. In this Master's Thesis I succeeded to answer the research question and observed differences and similarities in family support perceptions and anticipations by adult children in Finland and Russia. Based on the data from Finland and Russia, the conceptualized outline of the research is applicable for other sorts of family policy studies and exhibits high explanatory capacities.

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Appendix 1. Interview questions

1. Relationship with parents

What kind of relation do you have? Do you meet often? How close are you? Do you call each other every day?

2. Relationship parents with their parents

What kind of relation do they have? Do they and you meet often? How close are they? Do they call each other every day? Do they take care of them?

3. Social circles of the family

Do they have friends? Wide circle of relatives? How close are they? How often they visit each other, how they help each other?

4. Division of roles

Who supports who in the family? Do you plan to support parents when they are pensioners?

5. Attitude parents to their own parents

Did they take care of their own parents? Do they expect something like that from you?

6. Situations of emergency

- Imagine a situation: What if they need help?

Who will take care of your parents if they needed help, they are ill/disabled, who will provide care and coverage of expenses?

- Health situation in the family:

Do parents have some illnesses? Do they have some constant medication? Do they need help, if there was such situation when they were ill who was taking care of them?

- Financial situation in the family:

Do they earn satisfying amount of money now? Will situation change after pension? How they will get the missing amount of financial means?

-Attitude to pension, fears, worries.

Are they happy to entre pension? What they plan to do in pension? What they say about financial aspect of pension life?

Appendix 2. Categorization of discursive repertoires

Independency of children	‘We have a very extended family, many aunts and aunties and cousins. But granny anyways was taken to the elderly house at the end, after spending some time at different relatives. Its easier. Everyone has got own life and work, its hard to take care and find time’ [Finnish male informant]
Independency of parents	‘She [mother of the informant] claims that she will commit a suicide rather than going to the elderly house. She cannot stand the idea of being <i>cared</i> . She is a very independent lady’ [Finnish male informant]
Reciprocity	‘There was time when I was earning money, and of course I did presents and give money for the accommodation fee and food to my mum. Simply because it would be fair, and she deserves it, she did so much supporting me from the very beginning. But now I cannot pay her cos I don’t have the source of income. She understands it. I do some nice small present though. I hope the situation changes once I finish study and find work’ [Russian male informant]
Investment / Subjective estimations of investments made by parents	‘I consider myself an investment: I gonna payback according how much they put effort in me. My mum did a lot for me. My dad did zero. If one invest in me, I will return more. He doesn’t understand it and doesn’t perceive me like this, he thinks I owe him from the very beginning’ [Russian female informant].
Moral (natural) duty	‘It is natural that it is my turn to take care of them’. ‘They are parents after all, I should take care of them when time comes’
Payback (to parents), return of favour	‘I feel that I owe them’
Fears	‘Thanks god they are in good health otherwise it will be really hard for me’ ‘They say that the pension is too small to be able to live and survive on it’ Impossibility to talk about it, anxiety, refuse to answer
Subjective estimation of need of care and support: moral aspect	‘They never ask for anything, even more they still try to support me materially’ [Russian male informant]. ‘She [mother of Finnish female informant] is still under treatment [cancer remission] and is concerned about her work, since it is hard for her to continue working. But she needs to pay the mortgage, and I

	cannot really pay it [informant is working and living separately].
Subjective estimation of need of care and support: economical aspect	<p>Interviewer: and parents to help them financially, or they have enough money to live on?</p> <p>Informant: Grandpa supports us! [with surprise in the voice] and grandmother, too, they both have a good pension. So that they are helpful for [my] parents</p>
Parent's altruism	<p>Interviewer: Do your parents expect from you help? What?</p> <p>Informant: I am sure it is not. There was never any hint of what I must do something or I owe them something! They are golden! [Russian male informant]</p>
Formal vs informal care	<p>Interviewer: Who will take care of your parents if they need help, they are ill / incapacitated?</p> <p>Informant: I will but if I won't have enough time and force, we will have to hire someone, to find resource from outside help - such as nurses'</p>
Economy of support	'If my mum ever needs personal care, if she is ill or something, needs assistance, I will act according how much I can afford and if I am able to buy her a nurse. Or to relocate her to where I live now. I think (I hope) the latter is the best option, if anything like that happens. Because its cheaper'.
Proximity/ tightness of bonds	<p>'We have never been very close. Mum even does a lot to make me leave the house once I'm 18. Now when I come to visit, she says 'My house, my rules' and doesn't let me smoke inside' [Finnish female informant]</p> <p>'We are very close, she supports me morally and materially, and welcomes all my ideas' {Russian female informant}</p>
Different directions of support, from parents to children and vice versa	'I still live with them under same roof', 'They still support me'. 'He [uncle] started supporting my grannies when he became the head of the plant, in his late 30s'