

Family policies and the weakening of the male breadwinner model^[1]

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Abstract

Family policies within the OECD world have undergone significant transformations. While family allowances, parental leave, and child care continue to vary significantly from country to country, policy change has followed a common trajectory moving away from support for the male breadwinner and towards the dual-earner household and to reconcile tensions between work and family. The article will identify early adopters and laggards of policy change among OECD countries as well as the 'drivers' leading to change. It will be shown that the early adopters in Scandinavia were largely driven by the normative aim for gender equality, while in laggard countries more instrumental reasoning, such as improving the use of human capital through increased female employment or addressing demographic challenges, was employed. Methodologically, the chapter will be based on an analysis of secondary literature as well as various datasets.

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