Family policies in OECD countries: A comparative analysis [1]

Author: Thevenon, Olivier
Source: Population and Development Review
Format: Article
Publication Date: 28 Feb 2011

AVAILABILITY
Full article PDF [2]

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the diversity of family policy models in 28 OECD countries in terms of the balance between their different objectives and the mix of instruments adopted to implement the policies. Cross-country policy differences are investigated by applying a principal component analysis to comprehensive country-level data from the OECD Family database covering variables such as parental leave conditions, childcare service provision, and financial support to families. The results find persistent differences in the family policy patterns embedded in different contexts of work-family "outcomes." Country classifications of family policy packages only partially corroborate categorizations in earlier studies, owing to considerable within-group heterogeneity and the presence of group outliers. The Nordic countries outdistance the others with comprehensive support to working parents with very young children. Anglo-Saxon countries provide much less support for working parents with very young children, and financial support is targeted on low-income and large families and focuses on preschool and early elementary education. Continental and Eastern European countries form a more heterogeneous group, while the support received by families in Southern Europe and in Asian countries is much lower in all its dimensions.

Region: International [3]
Tags: policy [4]
child care [5]
maternity and parental leave [6]