

# Comparative family policy: Eight countries' stories <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** O'Hara, Kathy

**Source:** Canadian Policy Research Networks <sup>[2]</sup>

**Format:** Report

**Publication Date:** 1 Jan 1999

## AVAILABILITY

Available in print for order (see SOURCE) and online for download.

- [Backgrounder and executive summary](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

- [Full report in pdf](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

Excerpt from the Backgrounder and Executive Summary:

The purpose of this study is to describe how eight countries developed their policies for families and children, and in particular the factors that led to the development of divergent strategies. The countries studied were Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Although much of the family policy literature tends to focus on the role of specific actors and institutions in the development of family policy, this paper considers the importance of values and ideas in explaining the emergence of very different family policies in these eight countries....

...The study's perspective differs from much of the comparative family policy literature in several ways. Rather than categorizing different countries' family policies as being more or less strategic or coherent, we argue that each country in fact has a "story" that explains the development of specific policies or sometimes the lack of policies. We do not label concern about the impact of dual-earner families on children as "traditional" or "conservative" but, rather, note that "liberal" values on gender roles are often combined with concerns about the implications for children. While recognizing that many factors contribute to the development of specific family policies, we explore whether values, and in particular ambivalence in values with respect to balancing work and family responsibilities and the level of acceptance of the state's role in the family, are important explanatory variables that have not been explored in the comparative family policy literature to the same extent as other factors.

**Related link:** - [Press release](#) <sup>[5]</sup>

**Region:** [Canada](#) <sup>[6]</sup>

[Europe](#) <sup>[7]</sup>

[United States](#) <sup>[8]</sup>

**Tags:** [maternity and parental leave](#) <sup>[9]</sup>

---

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/02/07/comparative-family-policy-eight-countries-stories>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/02/07/comparative-family-policy-eight-countries-stories>

[2] <https://cprn.org/>

[3] [https://cprn.org/Release/Back/bcftp\\_e.htm](https://cprn.org/Release/Back/bcftp_e.htm)

[4] <http://www.cprn.org/en/doc.cfm?doc=442>

[5] [https://cprn.org/Release/Press/prcfp\\_e.htm](https://cprn.org/Release/Press/prcfp_e.htm)

[6] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864>

[7] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/europe>

[8] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7865>

[9] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/maternity-and-parental-leave>