

Assessing family policies in a comparative perspective

Henning Lohmann
University of Bielefeld (Germany)
SOEP / DIW Berlin

Confronting family poverty and social exclusion & Ensuring work family balance
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Division for
Social Policy and Development (DSPD), 1-3 June 2011, New York

Overview

- Criteria for an assessment of family policy
 - Focus of family policy
 - Scope of family policy
 - Empirical perspectives on family policy
 - Modes of aggregation
- Data sources
- Family policy assessment: Examples

Focus of family policy assessment

- Family
 - Parents and (young) children
 - Elderly parents and children
 - Adults and children (kin and non-kin)
 - Siblings
 - ...
- Focus
 - Family-centered
 - Child-centered
 - Parent-centered

Scope of family policy assessment

- Programmes
 - parental leave
 - early childhood education and care
 - family benefits
 - employer/firm level policies
 - ...
- mode of delivery
 - in-cash
 - in-kind
 - in-time

Empirical perspectives on family policy I

- Expenditure perspective
 - data cover total expenditure for all programmes
 - increasingly disaggregated
 - high expenditures=high coverage, high replacement rates/quality of services?, high social needs?
- Social rights perspective
 - detailed description of programmes
 - direct link to policy changes
 - generalisation to total population often not possible („model families“)

Empirical perspectives on family policy II

- Outcome perspective
 - take-up perspective, e.g. percentage of families receiving family benefits
 - in combination with social rights perspective: offers possibility of analysis of non take-up
 - reflects what people do but not necessarily what they could do

Modes of aggregation

- **Indices**
 - selection of measures
 - directionality
 - standardisation of measures, weighting
- **Typologies**
 - Clustering
 - Principal components analysis
- **Scorecards**
 - qualitative categories
 - graphical approaches

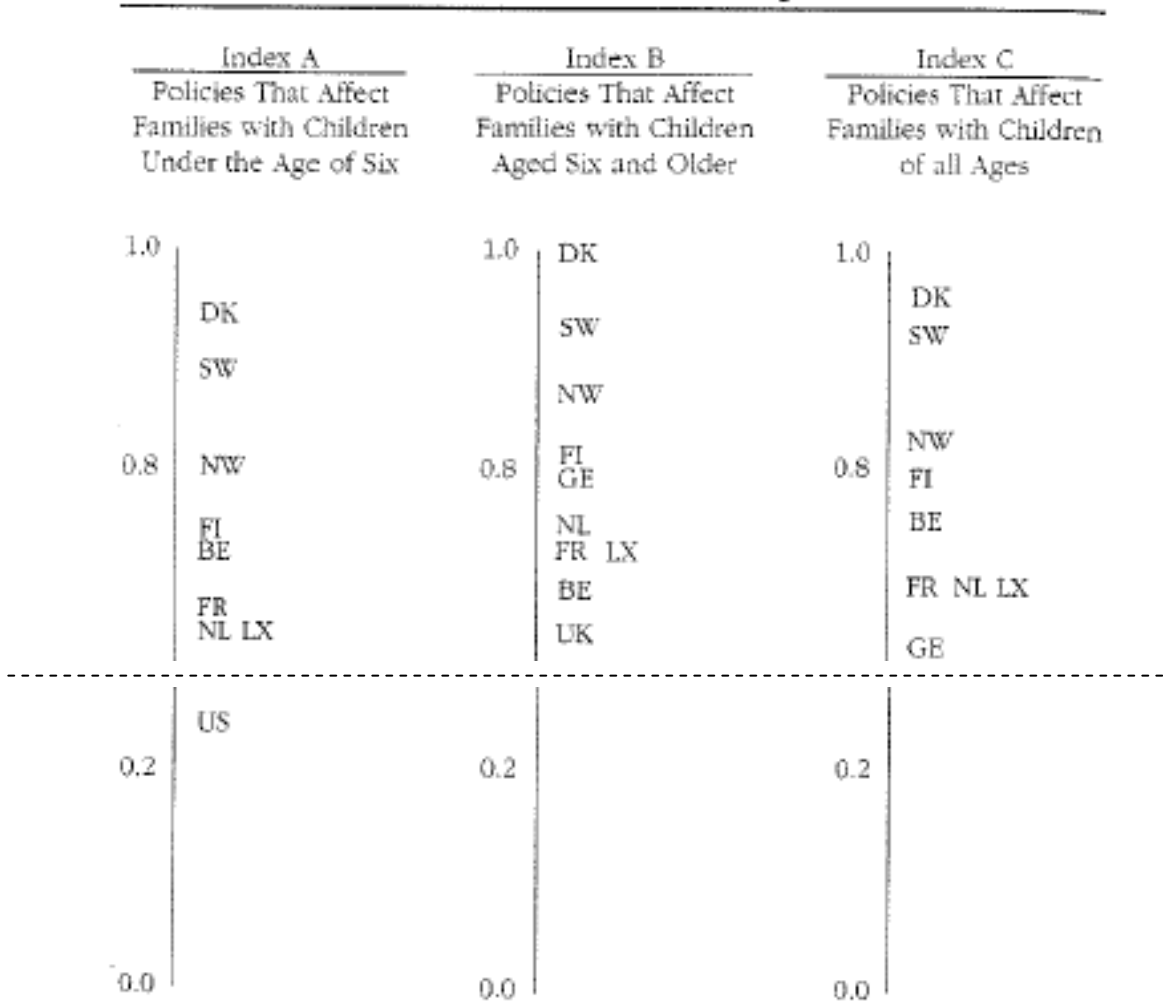
Data sources

- Expenditure
 - SOCX
 - ESSPROS
 - ILO
- Social Rights
 - SCIP (family policy not yet in public domain)
 - Family benefit packages (Jonathan Bradshaw)
 - indicators in reports and other publications
- Combined
 - OECD Family Database
 - Comparative Family Policy Database (Anne Gauthier)⁸

Examples

Family policy index

FIGURE 8.1 Index of Performance of Policies Regulating Family Leave, Working Time, Early Childhood Education and Care, and School Scheduling



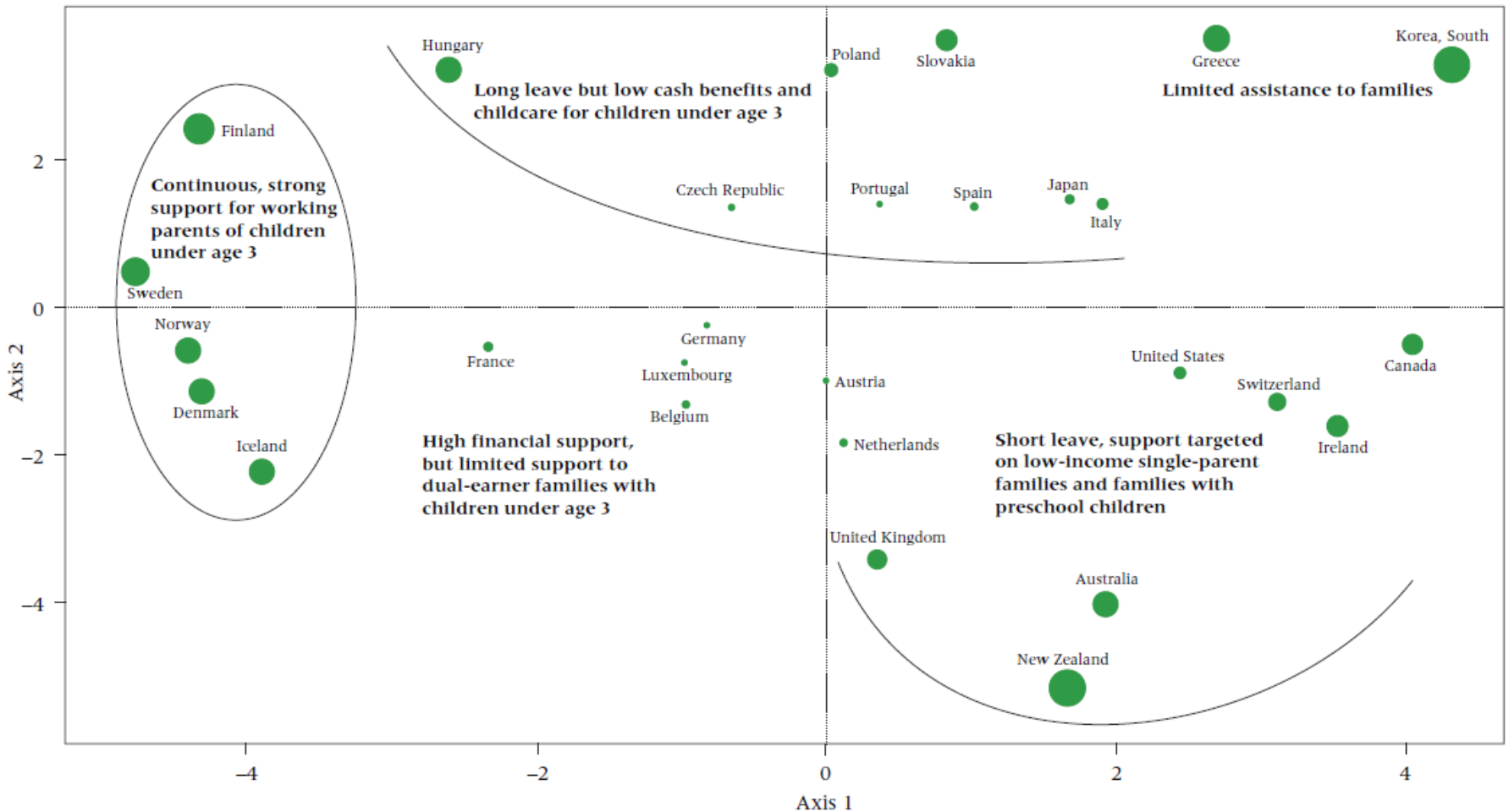
Comparison of rankings from different indices

	KO	G3	G6	G35	MS	BA	SIA	Ø	Ø*	SD	SD*
SWE	1	3	3	4	1	1	1	2.0	2.2	1.3	1.3
DK	2	2	2	3	2	3	4	2.6	2.3	0.8	0.5
FIN	3	4	1	5	4	4	2	3.3	3.5	1.4	1.4
F	5	1	5	1	6	5	9	4.6	3.8	2.8	2.2
B	6	5	4	6	5	8	11	6.4	5.7	2.4	1.4
N	4	10	6	11	3	2	3	5.6	6.0	3.6	3.7
IT	8	6	8	2	7	9	12	7.4	6.7	3.0	2.5
GER	7	7	7	7	10	7	10	7.9	7.5	1.5	1.2
NL	9	9	10	8	8	6	13	9.0	8.3	2.2	1.4
CAN	11	8	9	9	11	10	6	9.1	9.7	1.8	1.2
UK	10	11	11	10	9	11	7	9.9	10.3	1.5	0.8
AUS	12	12	12	13	13	12	8	11.7	12.3	1.7	0.5
USA	13	13	13	12	12	13	5	11.6	12.7	2.9	0.5

Notes: KO) Korpi 2000 (Dual-earner support), G3) Gornick et al. 1997 (children < 3 years), G6) Gornick et al. 1997 (children < 6 years), G35) Gornick et al. 1997 (children 3-5 years), MS) Mandel/Semoynov 2003, BA) Bambra 2004, SIA) Siaroff 1994 (female work desirability), *) without SIA, n=13.

Country clusters

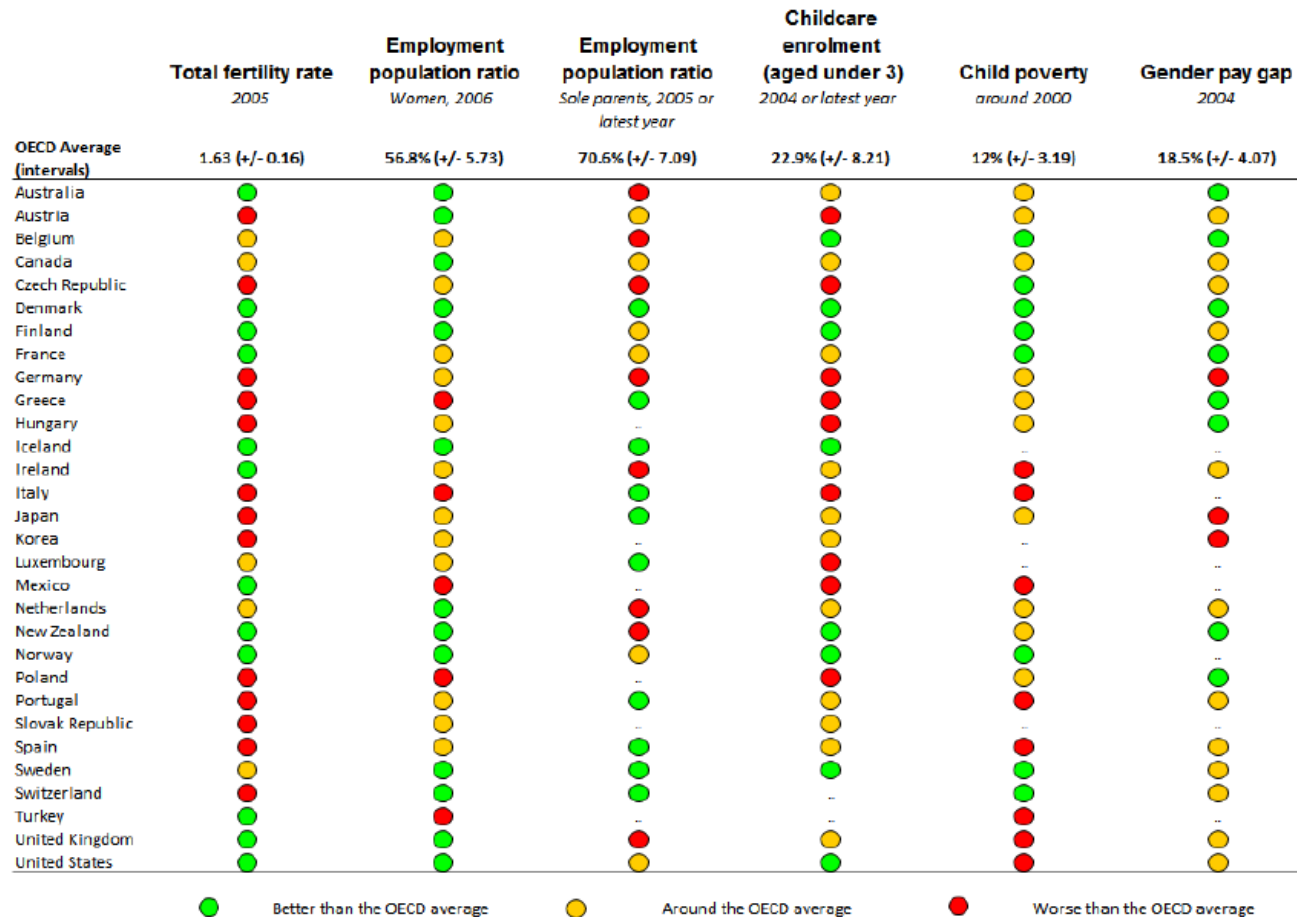
FIGURE 3 OECD countries by type of family policies as gauged by first two principal components



NOTE: Dot size is proportional to the country's contribution to the axis. Numbers on the axes indicate the location of countries on each principal component.
SOURCE: Principal component analysis applied to OECD data (see text).

Categorical scorecards (OECD „traffic lights“)

Table 1: Key Work and Family outcomes across countries compared to the OECD average



Countries are categorised in “better” or “worse” groups if they are half a standard deviation above or below the OECD average. *OECD Babies and Bosses – A Synthesis of Findings across OECD countries*, includes detailed information on data sources, definitions and reference years.

Categorical scorecards (UNICEF)

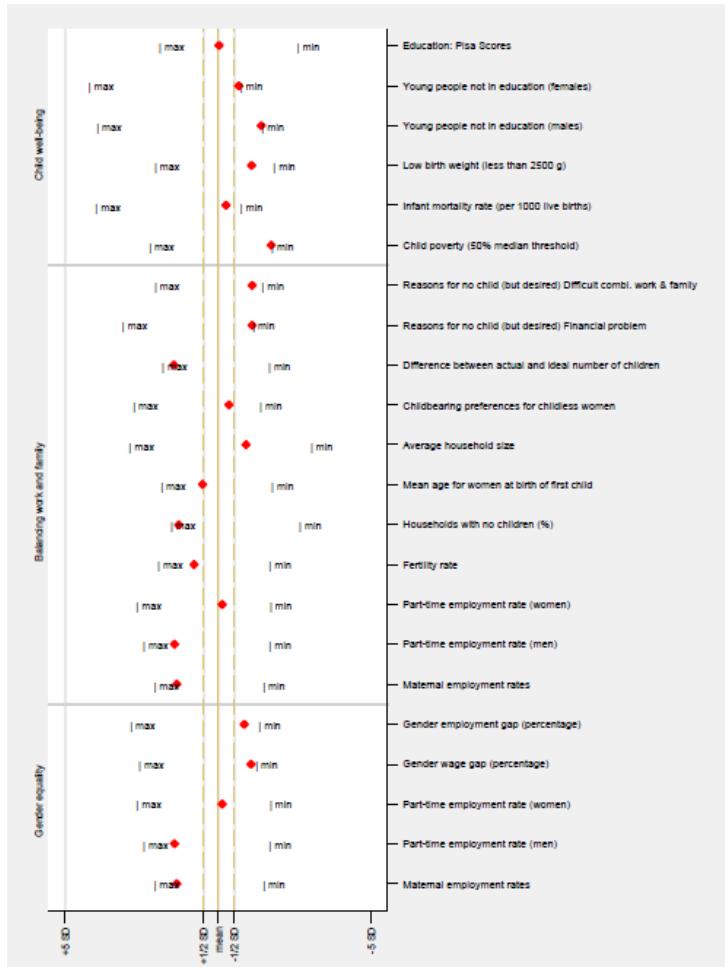
Benchmark		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Number of benchmarks achieved	Parental leave of 1 year at 50% of salary	A national plan with priority for disadvantaged children	Subsidized and regulated child care services for 25% of children under 3	Subsidized and accredited early education services for 80% of 4 year-olds	80% of all child care staff trained	50% of staff in accredited early education services tertiary educated with relevant qualification	Minimum staff-to-children ratio of 1:15 in pre-school education	1.0% of GDP spent on early childhood services	Child poverty rate less than 10%	Near-universal outreach of essential child health services
Sweden	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Iceland	9		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Denmark	8	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Finland	8	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
France	8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Norway	8	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Belgium (Flanders)	6		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓

Graphical scorecards (Lohmann et al. 2009)

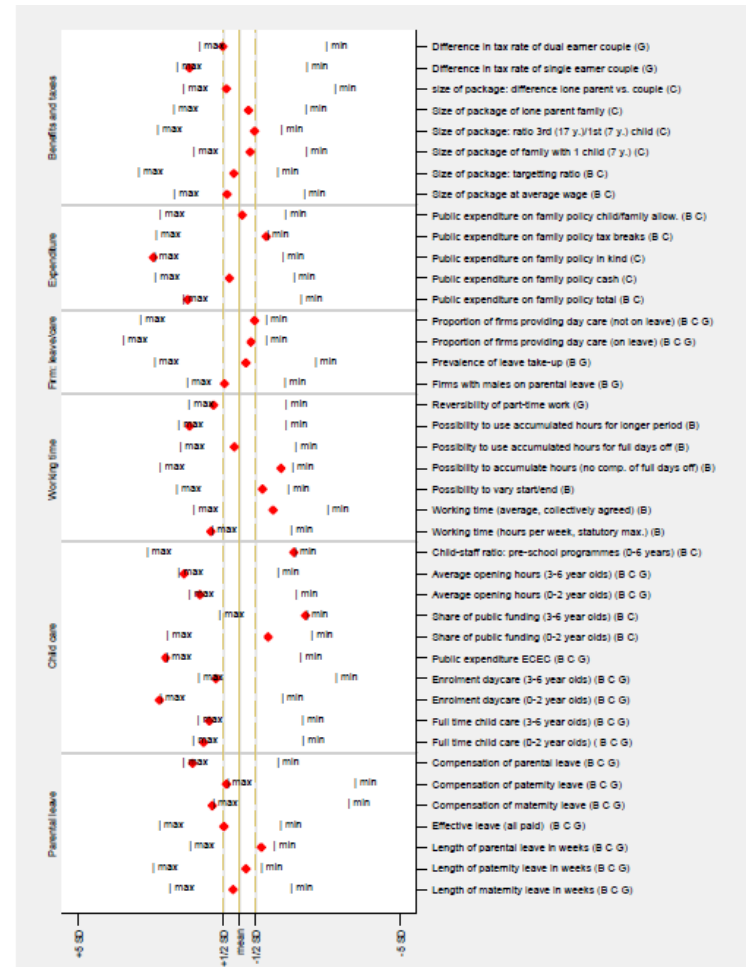
- graphical representation of country specific values
- uses about 60 indicators from OECD Family Database and other sources for 38 OECD/EU countries
- Scaling Technique: z-scores, mean=0, standard deviation=1
- comparison against OECD mean and standard deviation

Scorecards: Example

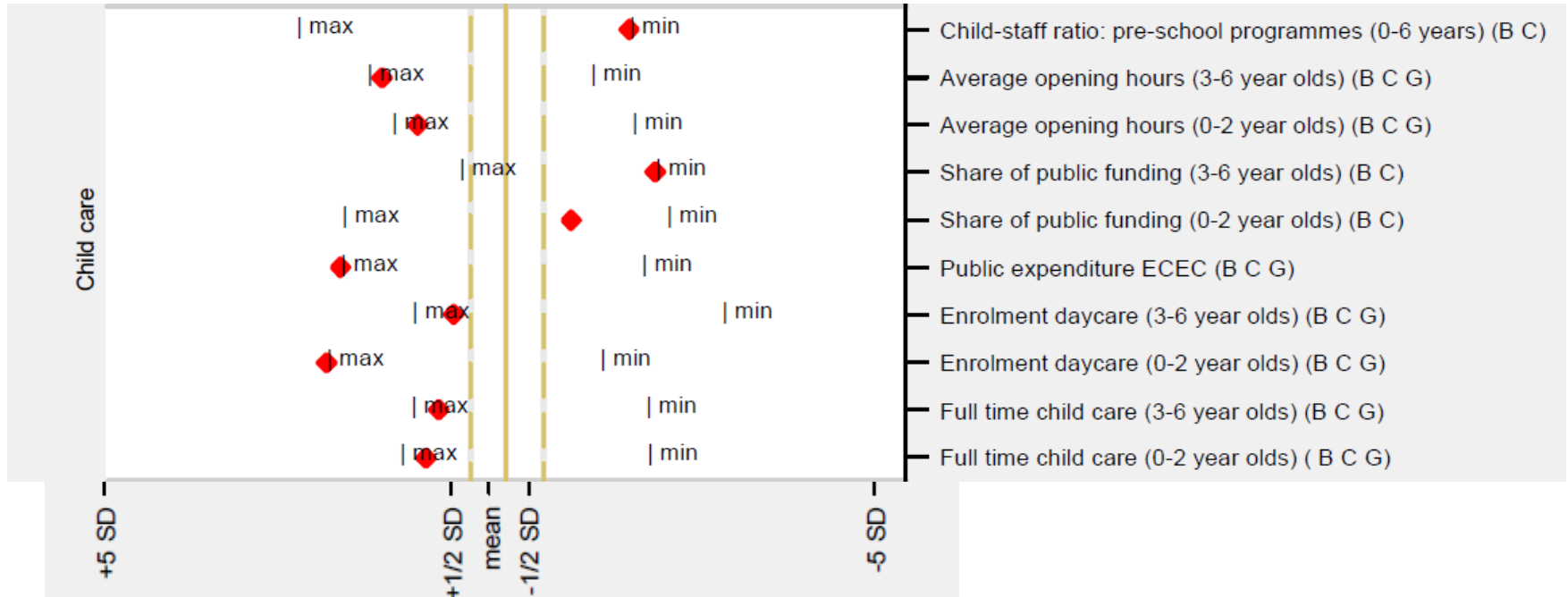
Context/outcomes by policy aim



Family policy measures



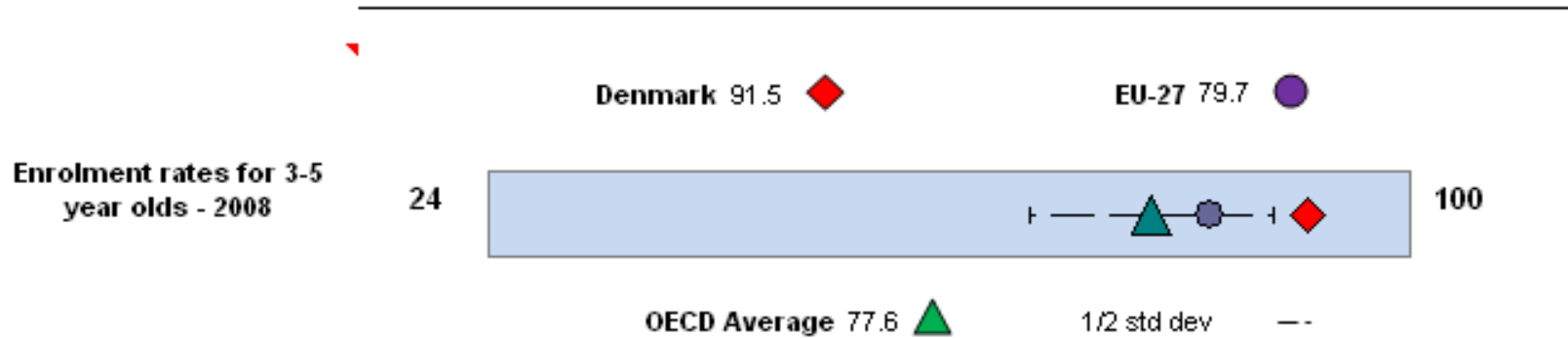
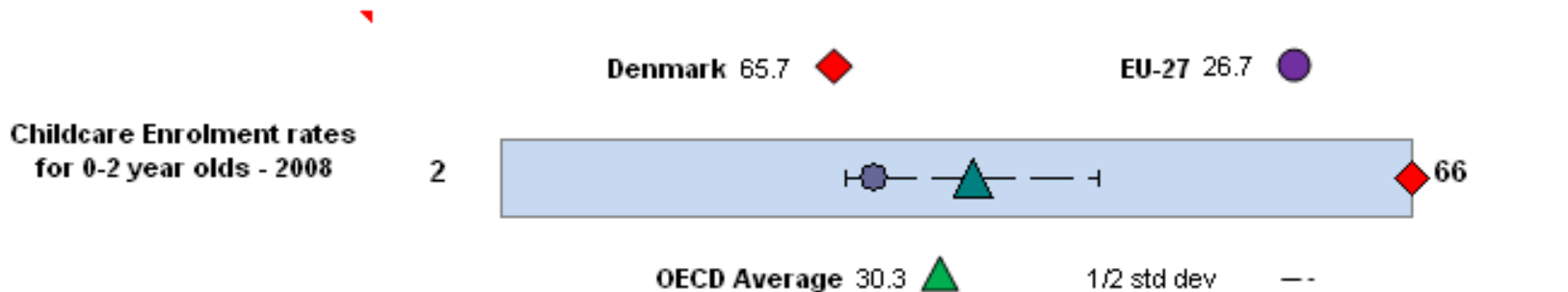
Family policy: Child care (Denmark)



Country Snapshots (OECD Family DB)

- interactive web-tool
- uses 20 indicators from OECD Family Database for 38 OECD/EU countries
- Linear Scaling Technique $(x - \min) / (\max - \min)$, range of values=0 through 1
- comparison against OECD mean and standard deviation (and second comparison group, e.g. EU-27)

Country Snapshots (OECD Family DB)



<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/30/51/45583023.xls>

Recommendations

Recommendations I

- An assessment of family policy needs to start off from well-defined policy aims. If policy aims differ across countries this has to be taken into account in the assessment.
- An encompassing assessment of family policy includes a child- as well as parent-oriented perspective.
- Assessments may use different empirical perspectives. However, the advantages and disadvantages of each perspective need to be taken into account.

Recommendations II

- The availability of indicators differs across countries. A framework for an assessment of family policy needs to be flexible to deal with the problem of missing information.
- Assessments as presented may inform policy makers about the general features of national policy in a comparative perspective. However, such approaches are not suited for the evaluation of single programmes or the establishment of causal relationships between family policy and family outcomes.

Appendix

Scorecards: Legend

