

Parental-leave policy for male lawyers in Helsinki and Montreal ^[1]

Cultural and professional barriers to male lawyers' use of paternity and parental leaves

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In this study, authors interview male lawyers in an effort to determine their attitudes to taking paternity and parental leave when it is legislated. Québécois fathers were less likely than their Finnish counterparts to take leave; this is hypothesized to be related to the age of the policy (2006 and 1978, respectively) and differences in work cultures. Authors suggest policy is the first step, with more needed in terms of changing social mores.

Abstract

Family policies in Finland and French Canada (Québec) include fathers' rights to paternity and parental leaves, which have resulted in more fathers using parental leave. Yet this policy has a limited outreach to male-dominated professions, including the legal profession. In this article, we examine attitudes to paternity and parental leaves among male lawyers and the motives behind their decisions to use or not use them. We approach the issue from the perspective of the legal profession's professional ethos, which impacts lawyers' attitudes and practices regarding work-life balance. In our analysis, we draw on 20 Finnish and 18 Québécois interviews with current and former male lawyers from private law practices in two urban civil-law contexts: Helsinki, Finland and Montreal, Canada. The findings indicate that, in traditionally male-dominated professions, it is not enough to provide men with a statutory right to paternity and parental leave. There is also a need for organisational solutions and peer encouragement in the work environment so that men feel comfortable taking leave.

Related link: Law firms 'do not encourage men to take parental leave' ^[3]

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Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/18/05/parental-leave-policy-male-lawyers-helsinki-and-montreal>

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