

Lawyer Dads In Quebec Are Less Likely To Take Paternity Leave: Study ^[1]

Policies have a limited outreach in male-dominated professions, researchers say.

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EXCERPTS

Policies that give fathers the right to stay home with their new babies aren't enough for them to actually take leave if they work in a male-dominated profession, according to a new study comparing Quebec and Finnish dads.

Researchers at the University of Eastern Finland and Université TÉLUQ in Montreal analyzed 38 interviews with current and former male lawyers in Montreal and Helsinki, Finland. They found that Canadian male lawyers were significantly less likely to take paternity leave than their Finnish counterparts, which they hypothesized could be explained by Finland's more established policy, as well as organizational differences in law firms, according to a news release.

Canadian male lawyers were more likely to use vacation time instead of paternity leave when their child was born, the release explained.

Quebec has offered a five-week non-transferable leave for fathers since 2006, and Finland has offered dads the right to paternity leave since 1978. In 2013, Finland extended its paternity leave time to nine weeks.

"It is not enough that men's right to parental leave is guaranteed by legislation. We also need organisational solutions, collegial encouragement and examples set by male law firm partners," researcher Marta Choroszewicz from the University of Eastern Finland said.

"In law firms, family policies and flexible working arrangements are mainly targeted at women, and this has a negative impact on women's career development. If fathers took a more active role in child care, it would facilitate the emergence of a professional culture that is more family-friendly. In the process, it is also likely that this would reduce gender bias in the division of legal tasks and career paths within law firms."

The study, which was published in April in the International Journal of the Legal Profession, also noted that young lawyers in Finland tend to work as part of a team, whereas a Canadian lawyers' work tends to be more focused on the individual and faces higher expectations. In 2017, the Canadian government updated its parental leave policies to allow parents to take up to 18 months off work, a move aimed to encourage more dads to take leave, according to the Globe and Mail. And in February, the government announced a new "use it or lose it" proposal that would offer an additional five or eight weeks to two-parent families, conditional on two parties sharing the parenting responsibilities.

In Canada, only one in 10 eligible fathers claim paternity leave benefits, according to Maclean's magazine, and those who did only took an average of 13 weeks off work.

Fathers who take on caregiving roles face more workplace harassment and mistreatment than "traditional" fathers and men without children, according to research from the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management.

Region: Quebec ^[3]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/18/06/lawyer-dads-quebec-are-less-likely-take-paternity-leave-study>

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