

# Fathers' leave take-up in Finland: Motivations and barriers in a complex Nordic leave scheme <sup>[1]</sup>

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## Excerpted from abstract

Despite being the first country in the world to introduce paternity leave in 1978, Finland's current national leave scheme is complex with regard to incentivizing fathers' take-up. Taking the unique Finnish leave scheme as a case example, this article examines fathers' motivations and barriers to leave. Although research on fathers' take-up of leave in divergent leave policy contexts has increased dramatically, fathers' motivations and barriers to leave have remained underresearched. The article reports on a survey sample of 852 Finnish fathers of infants who were taking paternity, parental, and other forms of leave, drawn from the Population Register Center. Results show that less than 20% of fathers report taking no leave, with more than 80% taking some form of leave. A multinomial logistic regression analysis indicates that father's work, partner's education, and family income, along with father's wish to take a break from work and wish to facilitate mother's return to work or studies, are the key characteristics and motivations associated with fathers' take-up of leave. The most common barriers to fathers' take-up of leave were related to the family's economic situation and the father's job. It is suggested that decreasing maternalism in the leave scheme, by extending investment in fathers' individual well-paid leave weeks, will also help promote greater gender equality for working parents in Finland following the path of Nordic neighbors.

**Region:** Europe <sup>[4]</sup>

**Tags:** paternity leave <sup>[5]</sup>

parental leave <sup>[6]</sup>

fathers <sup>[7]</sup>

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