

Flexible work arrangements and fathers' take-up of parental leave in Finland

Johanna Lammi-Taskula, Finnish Institution for Health and Welfare (THL)

Johanna Närvi, Finnish Institution for Health and Welfare (THL)

Anneli Miettinen, Social Security Institution of Finland (Kela)

Miia Saarikallio-Torp, Social Security Institution of Finland (Kela)

Anu Kinnunen, Social Security Institution of Finland (Kela)

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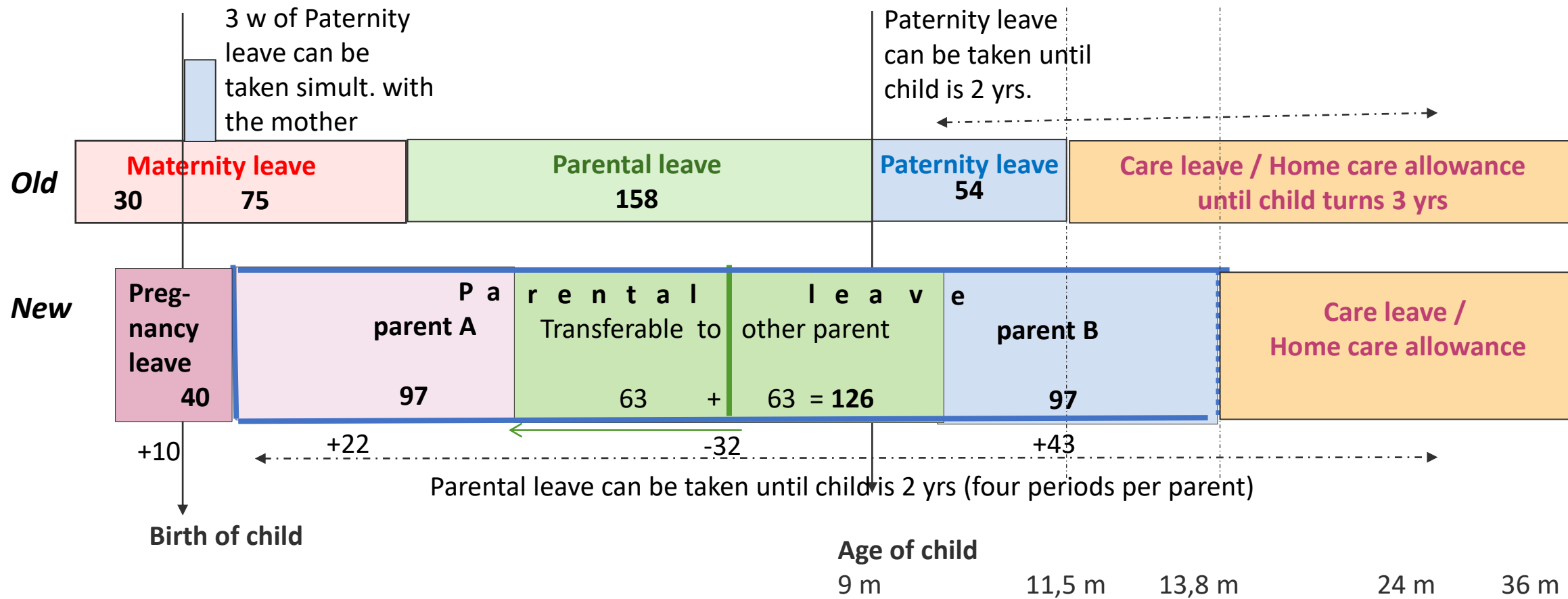
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The Finnish Work Environment Fund

Background

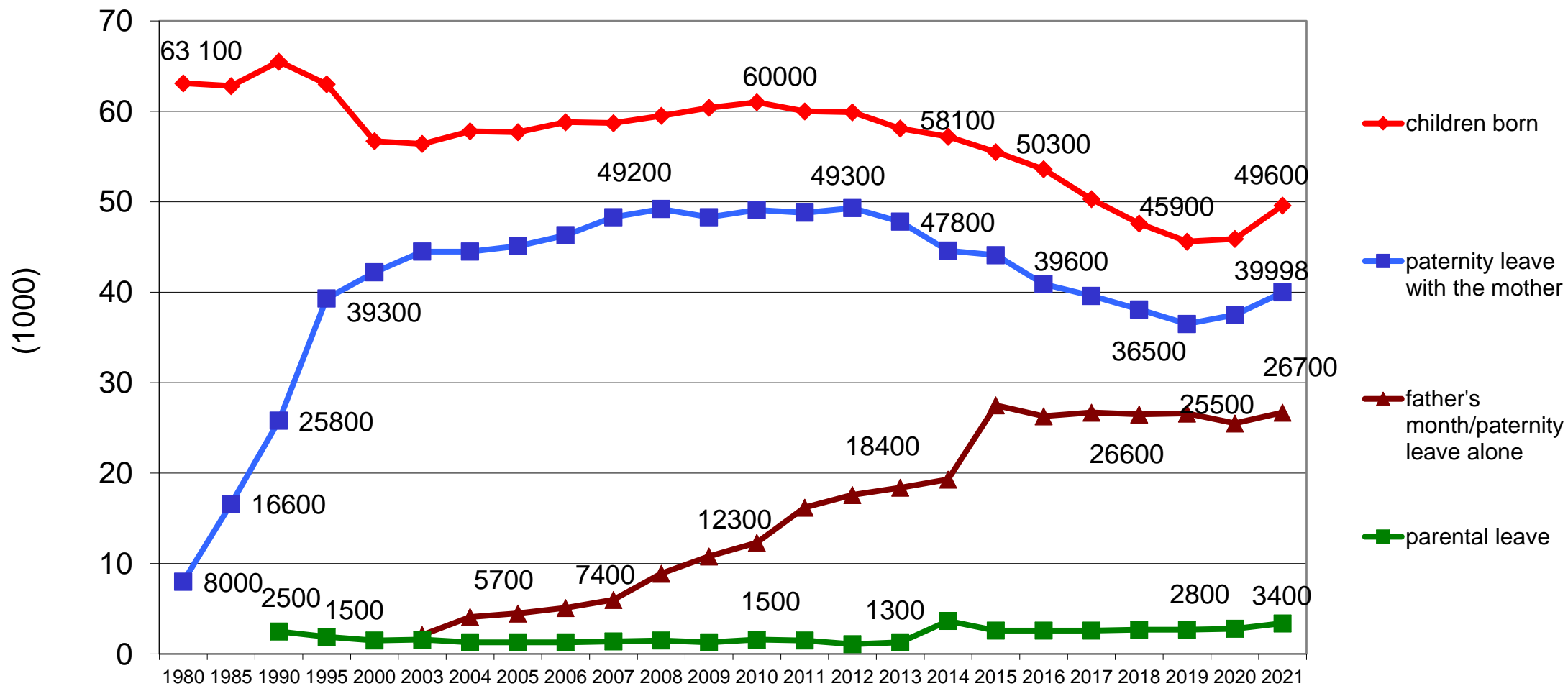
- Recent parental leave reforms in Finland have introduced longer and more flexible leave quotas for fathers in order to promote more equal sharing of childcare responsibilities between women and men.
- Take-up of the father's quota has however increased slowly. Obstacles for fathers' leave-taking identified in previous research include gendered attitudes (care vs breadwinning), the gender pay gap (family economy), and work pressure (greedy organisations, ideal worker ideology).
- As working life is moving towards increased knowledge work with more autonomy and flexibility, this may affect the take-up patterns of parental leave.

Old and new Parental Leave scheme in Finland

(days; 6 days = 1 week; 25 days = 1 month)

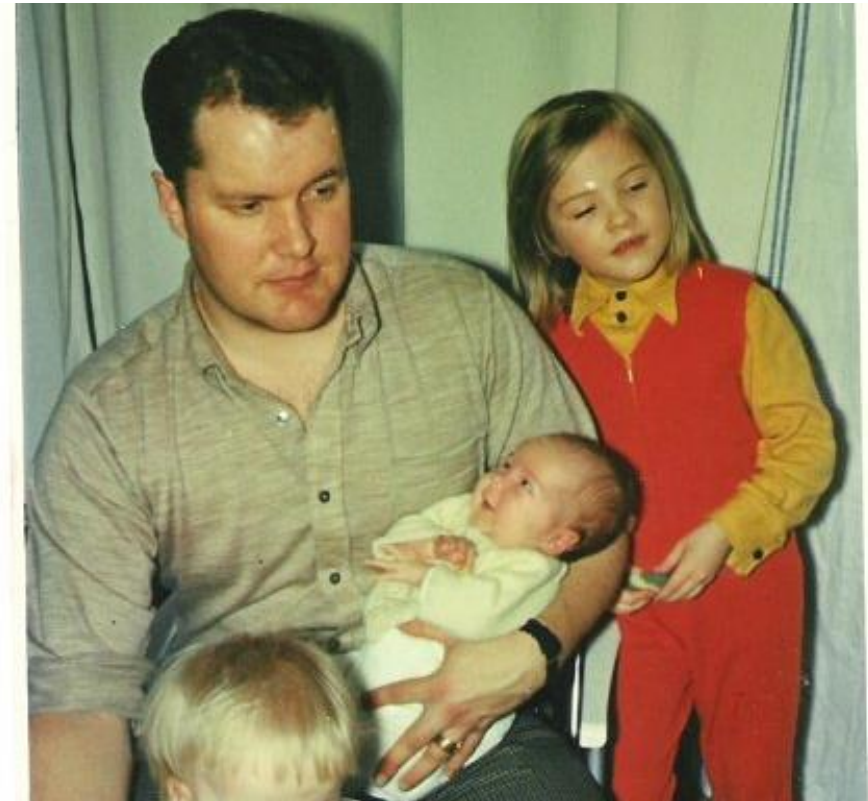


Children born and men on leave in Finland 1980-2021



Research question

Are flexible work arrangements related to fathers' take-up of leave?



Data: Family leave survey 2022

Sample of parents with 11-33 months old children drawn from Social Insurance Institution register on family benefits

- 5 050 mothers, 7500 fathers

Data collected in May-June 2022

- The online questionnaire included questions on socio-demographic background, working life, gender attitudes and use of parental leave and home care allowance.

Data (response rate): 1824 mothers (36 %) and 1524 fathers (22 %)*

*OBS! Data was collected before the leave reform
(base line for future evaluation of the reform)*

**weighed by: age of child, age of parent, number of children, income, area/county*

Fathers' leave use according to work characteristics

(The simultaneous paternity leave* was used more with first or second child and by employed fathers with middle/high education level – not much variation according to work characteristics.)

The independent paternity leave quota** was used more by fathers who worked in

- **female-dominated** or
- **big** (250+) organisations.

Longer leave periods were taken by fathers who worked in

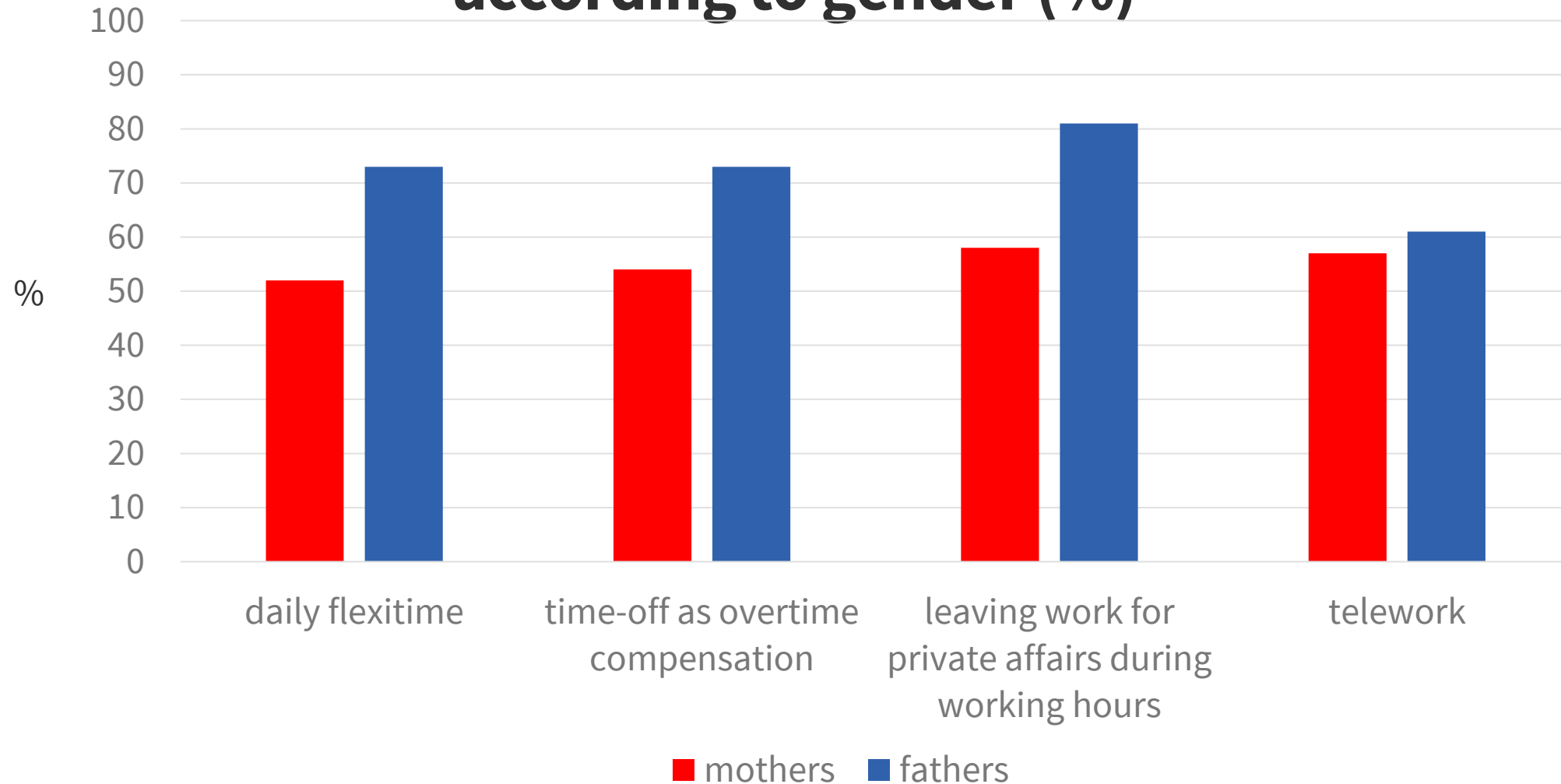
- **big organisations**
- **regular day jobs.**

Upper white collar employees took more often and longer leave periods.

* 1-3 weeks of paternity leave while the mother was also on leave; reported by mothers.

** 6-9 weeks of paternity leave, mother not on leave simultaneously; reported by fathers.

Flexibility at work among employed parents of young children, according to gender (%)



Employed parents of young children: **Flexibility at work according to socio-economic background**

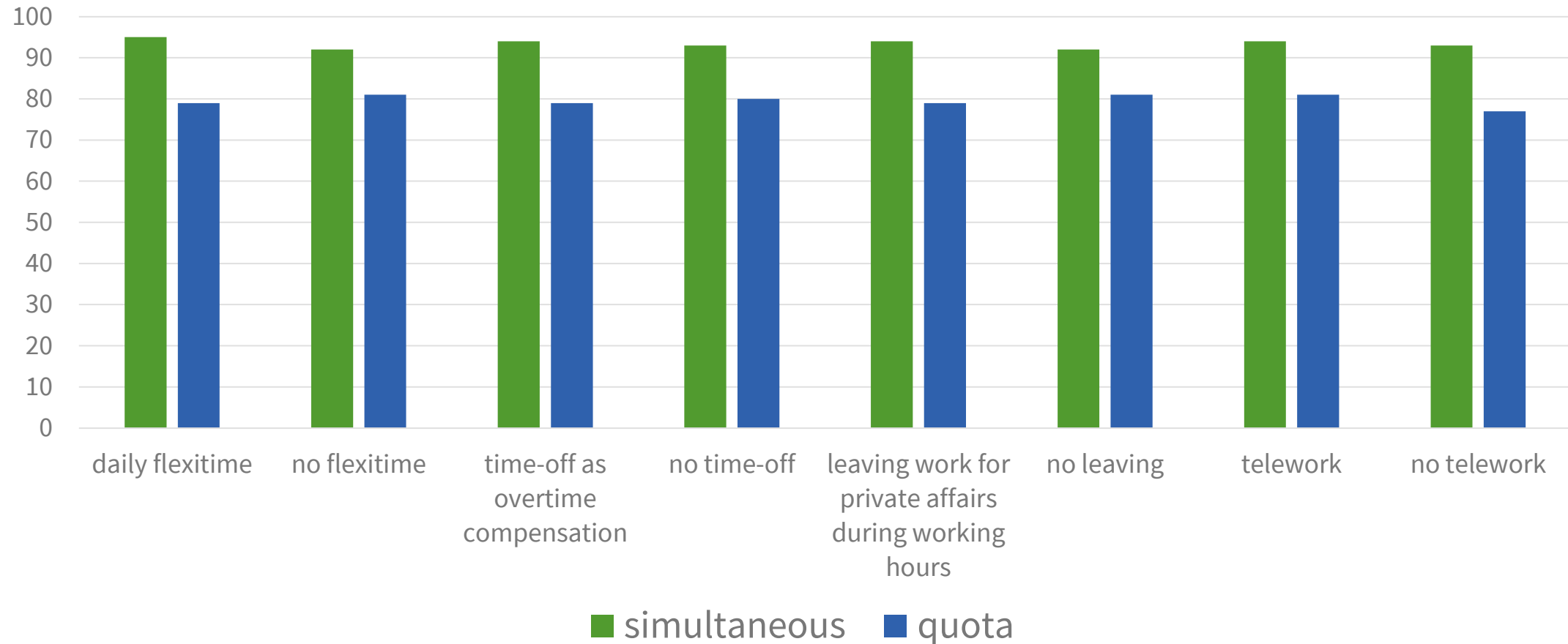
More flexibility when

- high education level
- upper white collar employee or manager position
- over 30 years of age
- day work

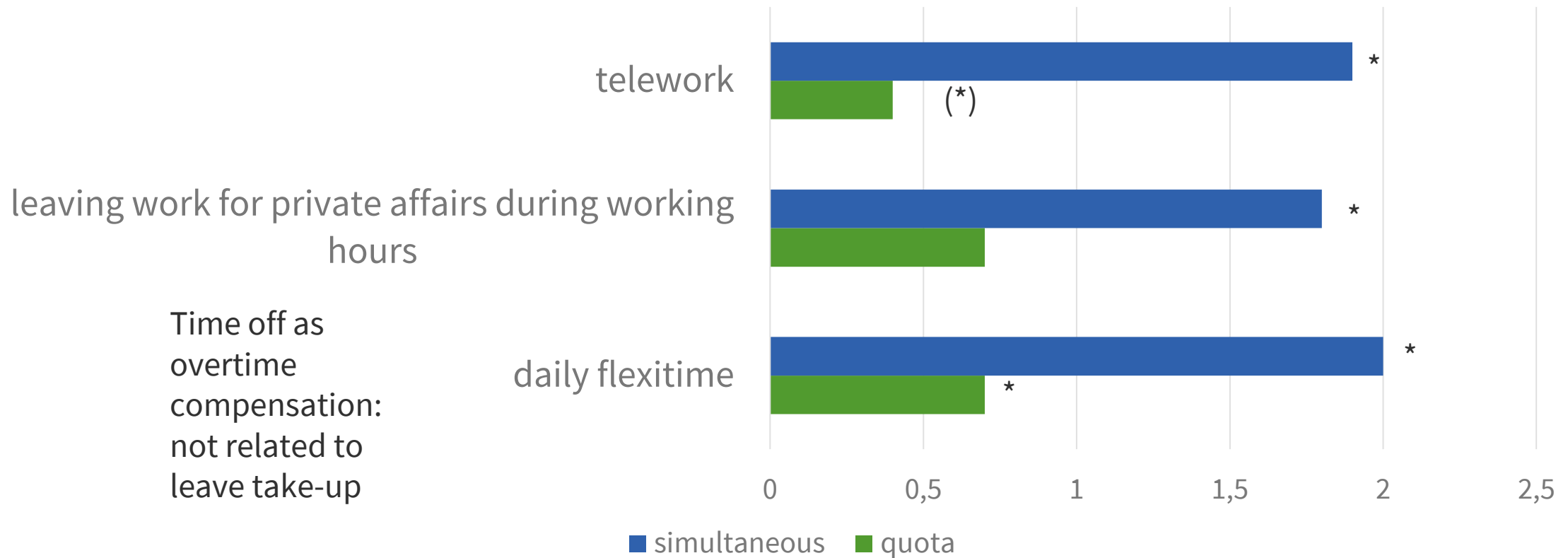
Less flexibility when

- female dominated workplace
- municipality sector

Fathers' take-up of leave according to flexibility at work*, %



Probability of fathers' leave take-up according to flexibility at work (logistic regression)



Controlled: father's age, number of children, education, day work, female-dominated workplace, size of organisation
Limitation: spouse's labour market position was not included in the regression model.

Summary and discussion

- Paternity leave (1-3 weeks) simultaneously with the mother has been “normal” practice for several decades; taking a longer independent leave quota (max 9 weeks) has slowly become more common but there is socio-economic variation in take-up.
- Fathers of young children take less leave than mothers but have more flexibility of working time and place compared to employed mothers.
- Fathers with higher socio-economic position take more leave and have more flexibility at work.

Our results show that during the last year of the old leave scheme

- paternity leave simultaneously with the mother was taken more by those with more flexibility at work; father’s leave quota (after the parental leave period) was taken less by those who have daily flexibility in working time (and a possibility to telework).

During the old leave scheme some fathers have used flexibility instead of leave to participate in child care.

There is more flexibility for take-up in the new leave scheme – will fathers use more leave?

Thank You!

Research group

Johanna Närvi, Finnish Institution for Health and Welfare (THL), johanna.narvi@thl.fi

Johanna Lammi-Taskula, Finnish Institution for Health and Welfare (THL),
johanna.lammi-taskula@thl.fi

Anneli Miettinen, Social Security Institution of Finland (Kela),
anneli.miettinen@kela.fi

Miia Saarikallio-Torp, Social Security Institution of Finland (Kela), miia.saarikallio-torp@kela.fi

Anu Kinnunen, Social Security Institution of Finland (Kela), anu.kinnunen@kela.fi

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