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# How do single parents use their quota rights to parental leave: The case of Iceland

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# Draws upon previous projects

- The presentation is based on official statistics, policy analysis and data collected in the project **Childcare and labour market participation of parents of children under the age of 3** lead by Guðný Björk Eydal and Ingólfur V. Gíslason
- Funded by: the Icelandic Research Fund (RANNIS), the Icelandic Equality Fund and the University of Iceland Research Fund
- Thanks to Ásdís Arnalds PhD student



# Outline



- The policies and take up from 2000
- The crisis in 2008
- Single parents in Iceland
- How do single parents use their quota?



# THE POLICIES AND TAKE UP FROM 2000

# Iceland and the Nordic welfare model



- Nordic welfare model
- Iceland: Shares the goal but **historically a different path – smaller welfare expenditure – less public support**
- Universal entitlements to 3 months paid parental leave in **1981** and 6 months in **1991** - payment flat rate benefits
- **1990s** bills on fathers quota from MP's
- In **1998** 2 weeks paternity leave

# New act in 2000: Aims

- “...to ensure children’s care from both their fathers and mothers [later changed to both parents].
- Furthermore, ...to enable both women and men to co-ordinate family life and work outside the home”



# Entitlements in 2000

Age 0-18 months	Payment
Mother 3 months [in case of same sex parents both parents]	80% of previous salaries + flat rate payments for non- working parents
Father 3 months	Same
Mother or father 3 months	Same

- Mother has to take leave first two weeks after birth but can otherwise be used as parents like during the first 2 years after birth
- Both parents are entitled to paid leave **regardless of custody/family form/gender/residency etc.**
- The custodial parent has to give consent for the access to the child
- Only in cases of one parent the parent is given the right to all 9 months



# Mothers' and fathers' uptake of paid parental leave in Iceland, 2001-2007



	2001	2002	2003	2004	2007
Applications from fathers as % of mothers	82.4	83.6	86.6	89.8	88.5
Average number of days used by fathers	<b>39</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>97</b>	96	101
Average number of days used by mothers	186	187	183	182	181
Fathers using more than their quota %	14.5	13.9	16.1	17.1	21.2
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# Percentage of total number of benefit days used by fathers in 2000-2006

	DK	FI	IS	NO	SW
2000	5	4	3	7	14
2001	6	4	11	8	15
2002	6	5	20	9	16
2006	6	7	34	12	23



**2008 crisis –Iceland one of the deep crisis countries..**

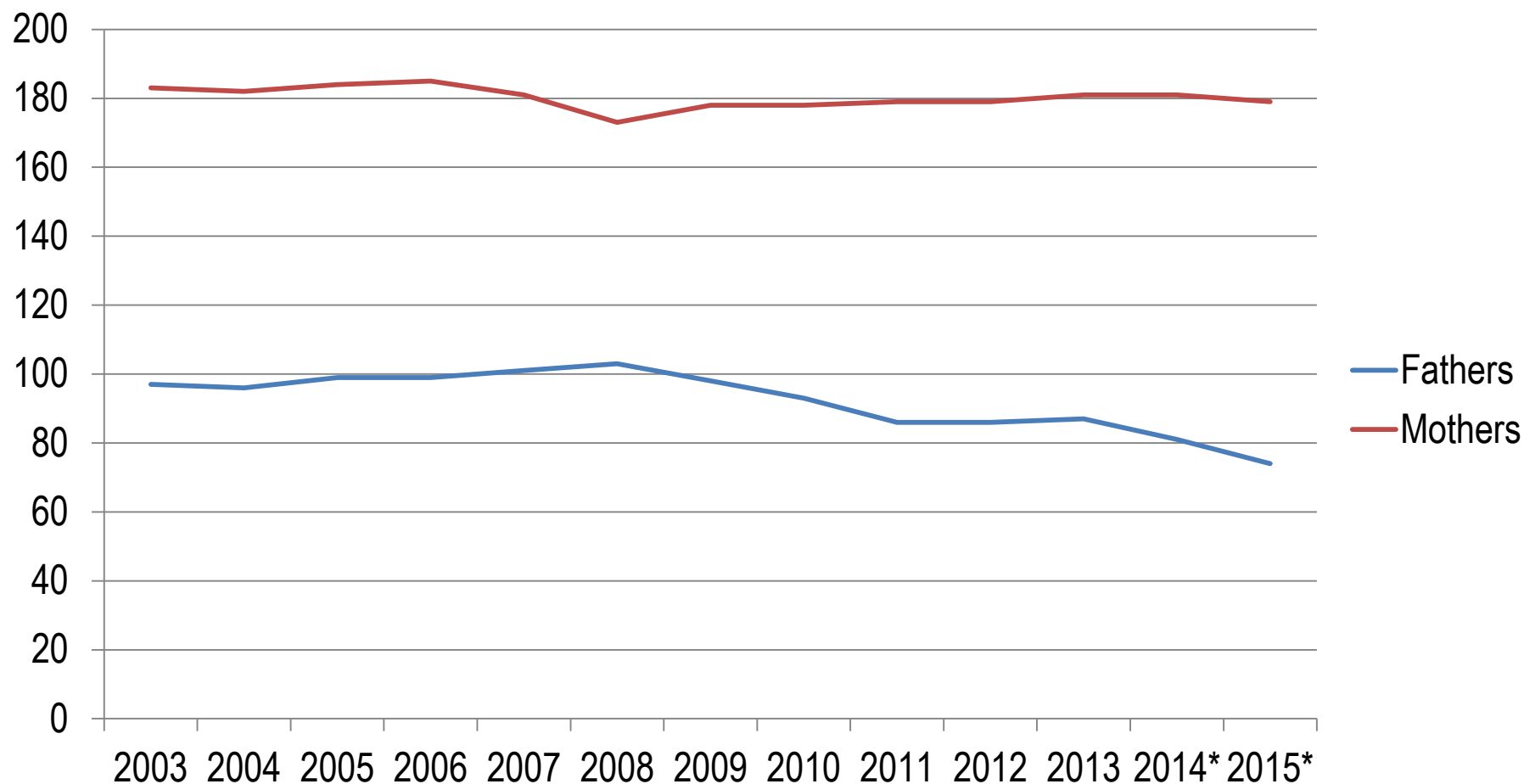




# Austerity measures

- Cuts- lower ceiling from 536.000 ISK in 2008 to 300.000 in 2010
- Slowly being restored, 500.000 in 2016
- **No proposals on abolishing the non-transferable rights** (though it would mean savings)
- Coupled with cuts on local level: abolishment of CFC in municipalities + shorter opening hours in pre-schools

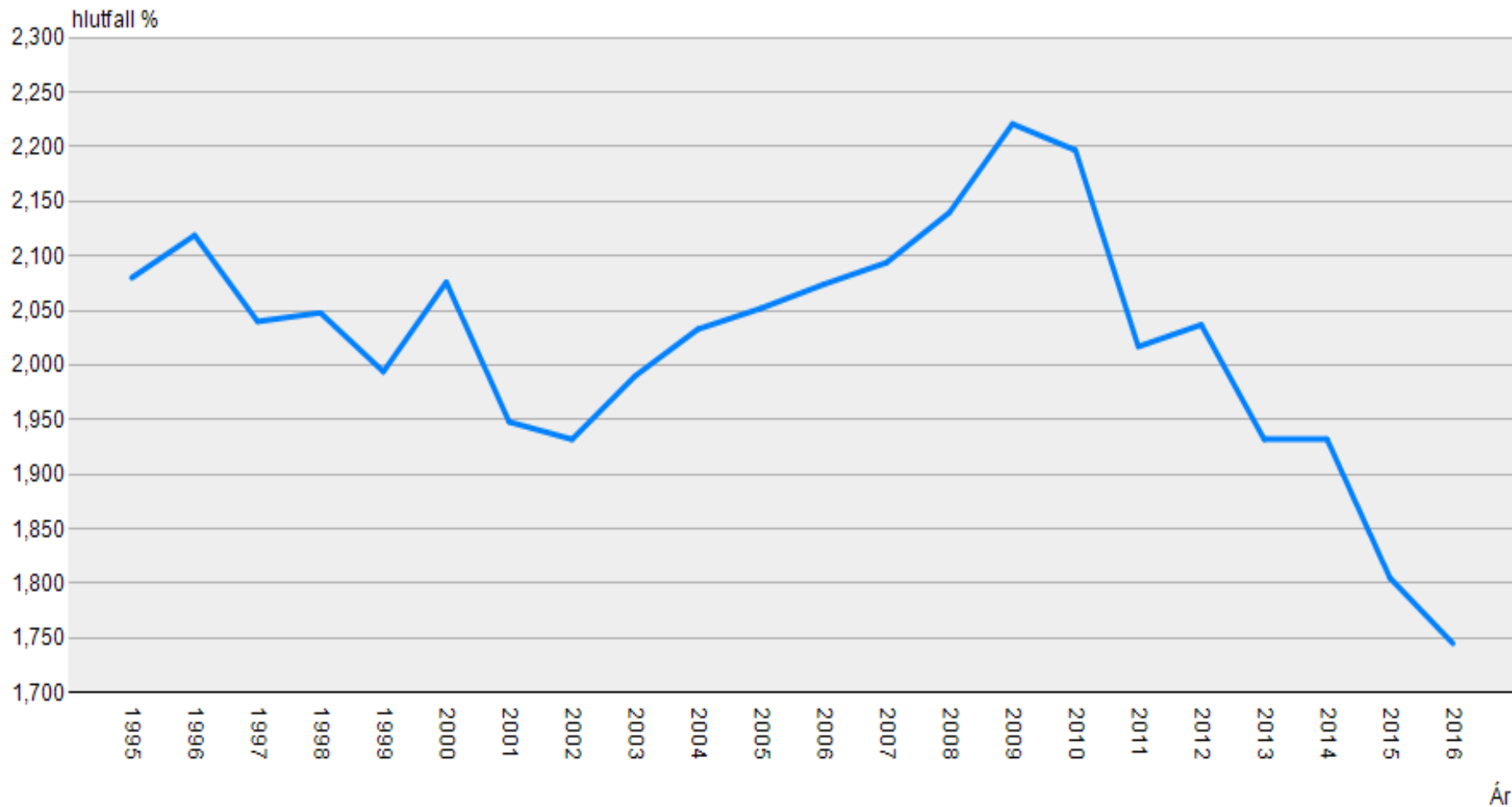
# Average number of parental leave days used by mothers and fathers



Figures for 2014 and 2015 are preliminary

# Fertility rates 1995-2016

Frjósemi og fólksfjölgunarhlutfall 1853-2016



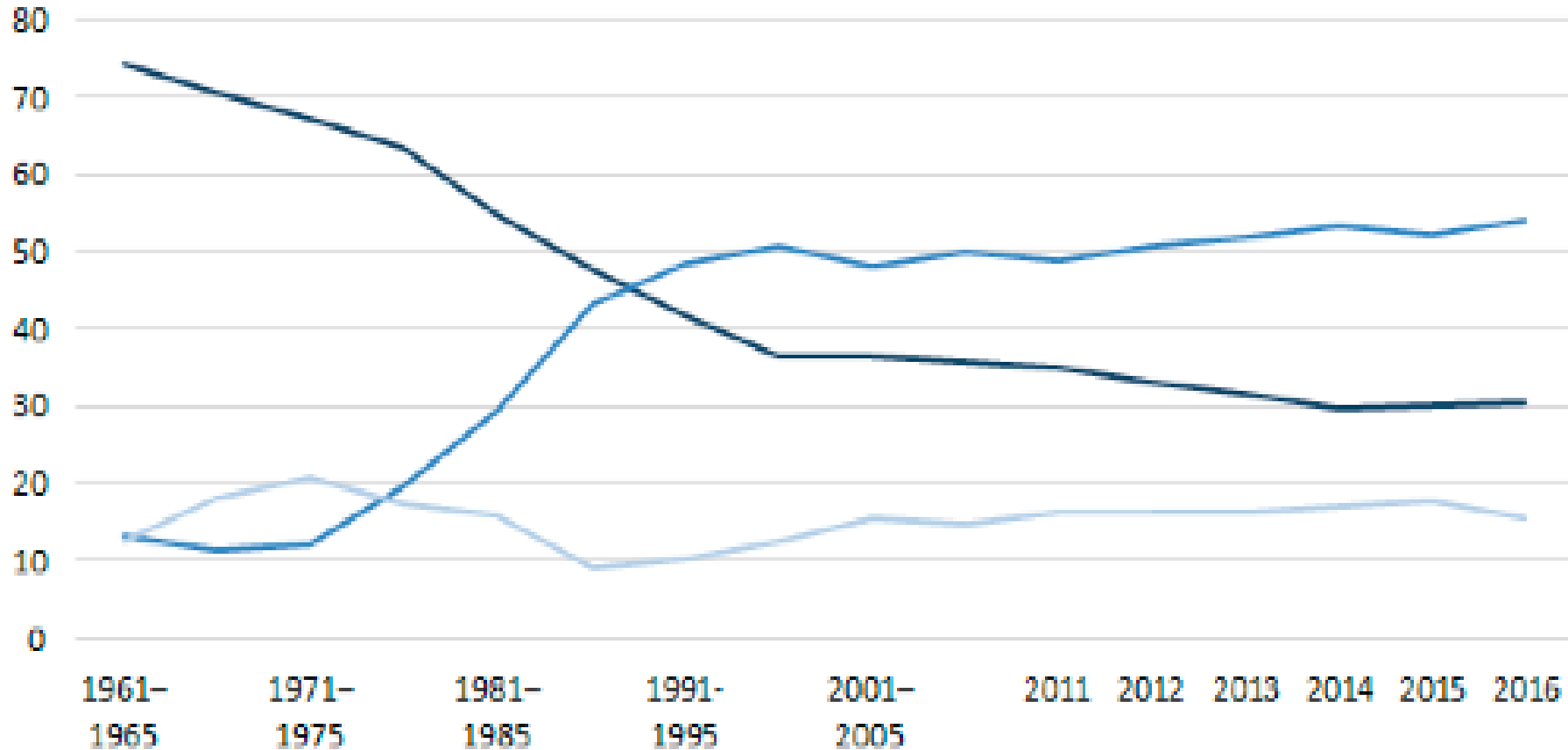
# **SINGLE PARENTS IN ICELAND**

- 2015: Of all families with children, 49% where married couples, 23% cohabiting couples, **3% single fathers and 26% were single mothers.**

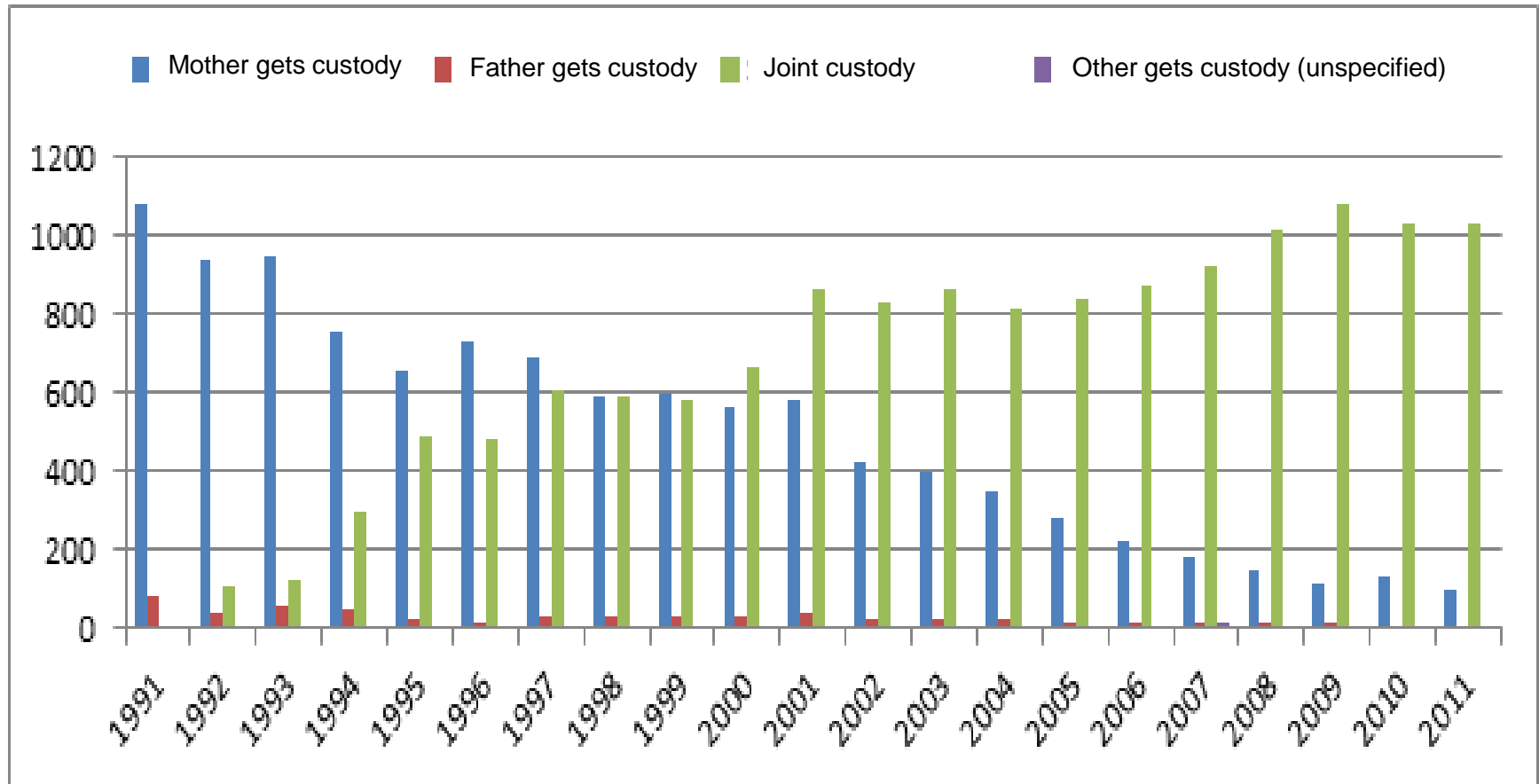
	Activity rate	Working hours
-Fathers	98.2	47.0
-Mothers	87.8	37.0
Mothers with two children:	89.0	37.8
-Cohabiting/ married	90.6	37.7
-Single	80.5	37.8



# New born by mothers marital status: Married, cohabiting, single



Children's rights to provision and care of **both parents**: joint custody 1992, joint custody main rule in 2006, possibility of court ordered joint custody in 2013



# Child has a right to care from both parents



- Family law and the law on paid parental leave emphasize the principle that both parents have common responsibility for the care and provision of their child regardless of if they share residency
- The family benefit system – including child maintenance - has not developed accordingly thus ignoring important changes in family life and family formation
- The non-resident parent enjoys very limited support regardless of the amount of care and time spent with the child

# HOW HAVE SP USED THEIR QUOTA?

# Data collection and response rates



Round	2001	2007-2008	2013
Data collection method	Mail survey	Mail and web survey	Web survey
Characteristics of the population	Parents of children born in 1997 who were their mother's firstborn	Parents of children born in 2003 who were their mother's firstborn	Parents of children born in 2009 who were their mother's firstborn
Number of respondents	890	874	1218
Response rate	57%	56%	63%

# Questions on the division of care:



How was the child's care divided between parents the first 36 months during the day and during the night?

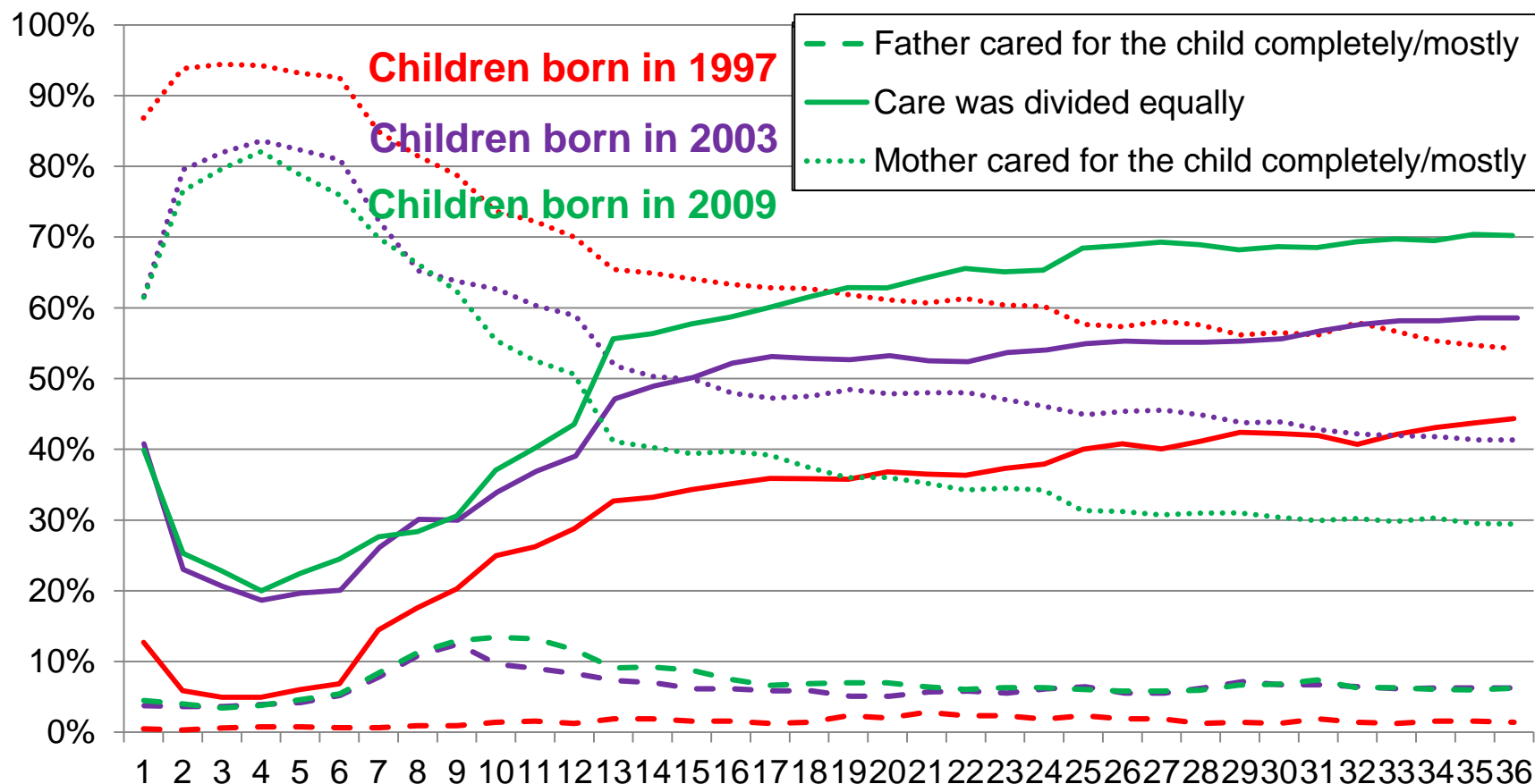
Child's age in months	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	...	36
<b><u>DURING THE DAY</u></b>																		
Mother completely cared for the child																		
Mother mostly cared for the child	x	x	x															
Care was divided equally				x	x	x				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Father mostly cared for the child																		
Father completely cared for the child							x	x	x									
<b><u>DURING THE NIGHT</u></b>																		
Mother completely cared for the child..etc.																		

# Family status of parents of children born in 2009 and fathers' paid parental leave take-up



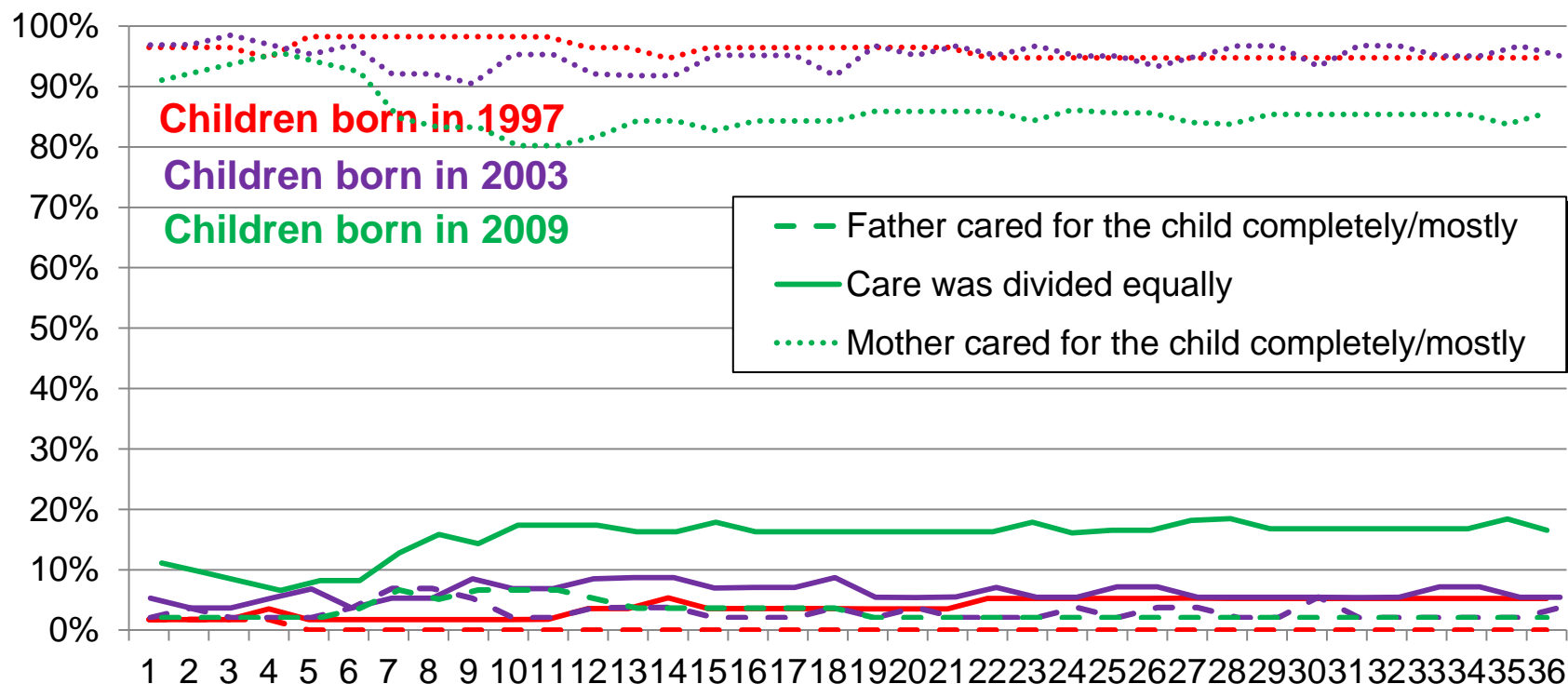
<b>Length of leave</b>	<b>n =</b>	<b>≥ 3</b>
	<b>1086</b>	<b>months</b>
Cohabiting/married	853	78%
Parents have terminated cohabitation or divorced after the birth of the child	167	60%
Parents have never lived together	66	40%

# How did cohabiting and married parents divide care during the day?





# How did parents who did not live together divide care during the day?



# Qualitative study among lone parents, 2008



Relationship at birth	Fathers take up	Fathers access
Not good	None	None
Good or excellent	1-6 months	Regular



# NEXT POLICY MOVES?



# Politics- next moves?

- Extension to one year – 5+5+2 enacted in law in 2012 but abolished in 2013 emphasis on restoring the benefit amount
- Committees- discussion on how to bridge the care gap between paid parental leave and pre-school
- Then the coalition government right of the center fell after 247 days in power last Friday...

# 13<sup>th</sup> July: Two fathers write an article on behalf of their daughters

- Protesting that a man that had sexually assaulted their daughters could be given a “restored honor” which is legally possible 5 years after prison sentence



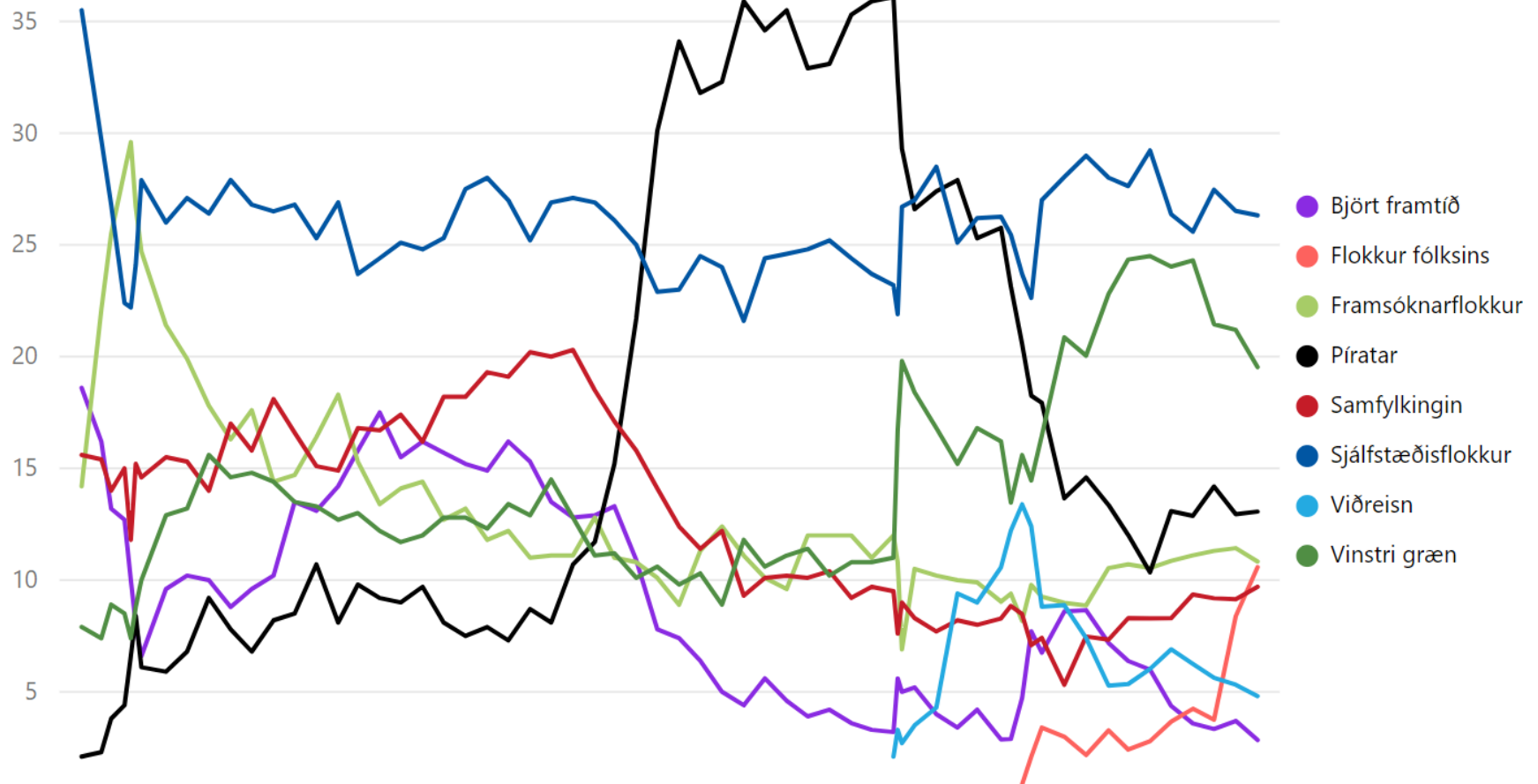
# #höfumhátt letsmakenoice

- Protesting sexual violence and that men could get a restored honor while victims were still suffering
- Media requested information about the process
- Father of the Prime Minister wrote one of the letters, the PM was informed about that in July but informed the other governmental parties recently
- The smallest governmental party, Bright Future then declared that they could not work anymore with the Independence Party

# “A man in a female time”

- “This is a path break, the feminism felled the government, the new open time felled the old and closed one. But the Prime Minister does not seem to understand. He does not understand that his silence was a shield for the patriarchy: He did not understand that his first duty was to the victim not the offender or the system that served him”
- Hallgrímur Helgason,  
<https://stundin.is/grein/5448/karlmadur-i-kventima/>

# Uncertainty- and elections in October





# THANK YOU



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