

What factors influence fathers' use of paid parental leave without overlapping it with the mother?

Characterization of *solo care* in Spain with microdata from Social Security and an EU comparative

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Session 1: Leave policies and gender equality in paid and unpaid work

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE DESIGN IN SPAIN

Spain from 2005 to 2021: towards gender equality?

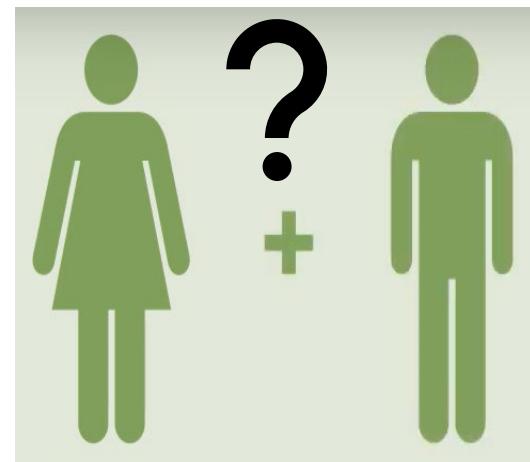
From maternity and paternity leave towards birth and childcare leave



2007: Law on Gender Equality 3/2007 (March 22nd): 2 weeks of paternity leave (4 weeks in 2017 and 5 in 2018)

2019: RDL 6/2019 (March 1st) of urgent measures to guarantee equal treatment and opportunities for women and men in employment and occupation: 8-12-16 weeks of birth and childcare leave.

Key characteristics of paid parental leave in Spain

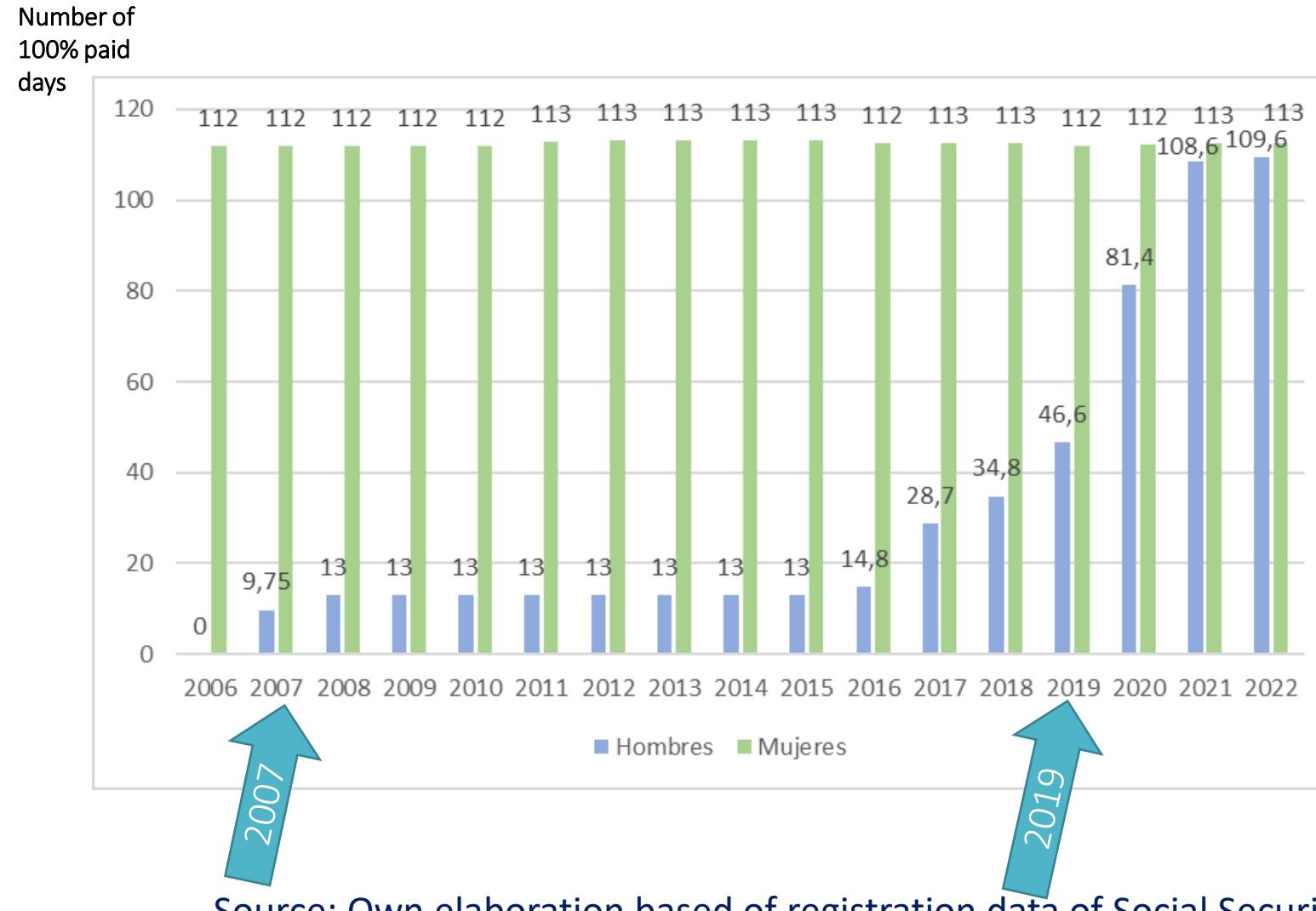


Design of “birth and childcare leave”

Type of leave	Translation of Spanish term	Available number of weeks	Transferability	Payment	Care purpose	Potential use by men	Payer	When can be used
Parental Leave system	Maternity Leave "Permiso por embarazo"	1	No	60% (as sick leave)	No	No	Social Security	Day 1 of week 39 of pregnancy
	Paid Parental Leave (mandatory after birth)	6	No	100%				From birth/adoption
	Paid Parental Leave (fractional with employer agreement)	10	No	Fully paid (1a)	Yes	Yes	Social Security	12 first months (1b)
	Nursing baby care leave (2a)							
	Paid Parental Leave "Permiso por cuidado del lactante"	2-4 (2b)	No	100% Fully paid	Yes	Yes	Employer	9/12 first months (2c)
	Unpaid Parental Leave (full job protection)	8	No	Unpaid (3)	Yes	Yes	-	Up to child is 8 years-old
	Unpaid Parental Leave (full job protection)	Up to child is 1 year-old	No		Yes	Yes	-	Up to child is 1 year-old
Other practices	Full-time Unpaid Childcare Leave "Excedencia por cuidado de hijos"	Up to child is 3 years-old	No	Unpaid (4)			-	Up to child is 3 years-old
	Unpaid Part-time Parental Leave (full job protection)	usual reduction of 1 to 4 hours of a 8-hour working day	No	Unpaid	Yes	Yes	-	Up to child is 12 years-old
	Annual leave	Holidays "Vacaciones"	4	Fully paid	No	Yes	Employer	After PPL
Other practices	Extra Paid Leave (6a)	Maternity and paternity leave provided by employer	Unknown (6b)	No	Fully paid	Yes	Sometimes Employer	Depending on collective agreement

USE OF PAID PARENTAL LEAVE IN SPAIN

SPAIN from 2006 to 2022: PAID PARENTAL LEAVE USE & GENDER EQUALITY



This is the law provision:

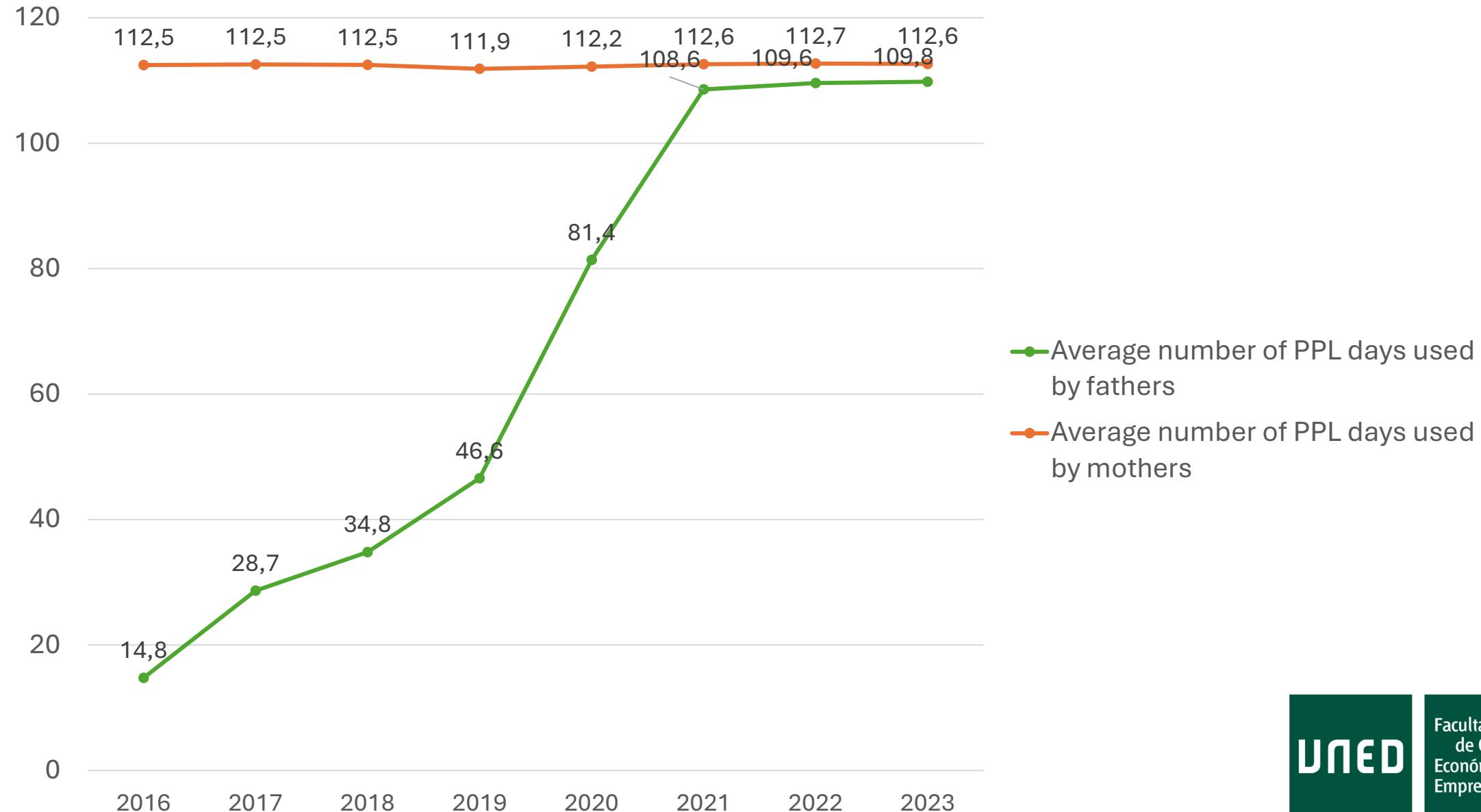
2007: Law on Gender Equality 3/2007 (March 22nd): **13 days of paternity leave**

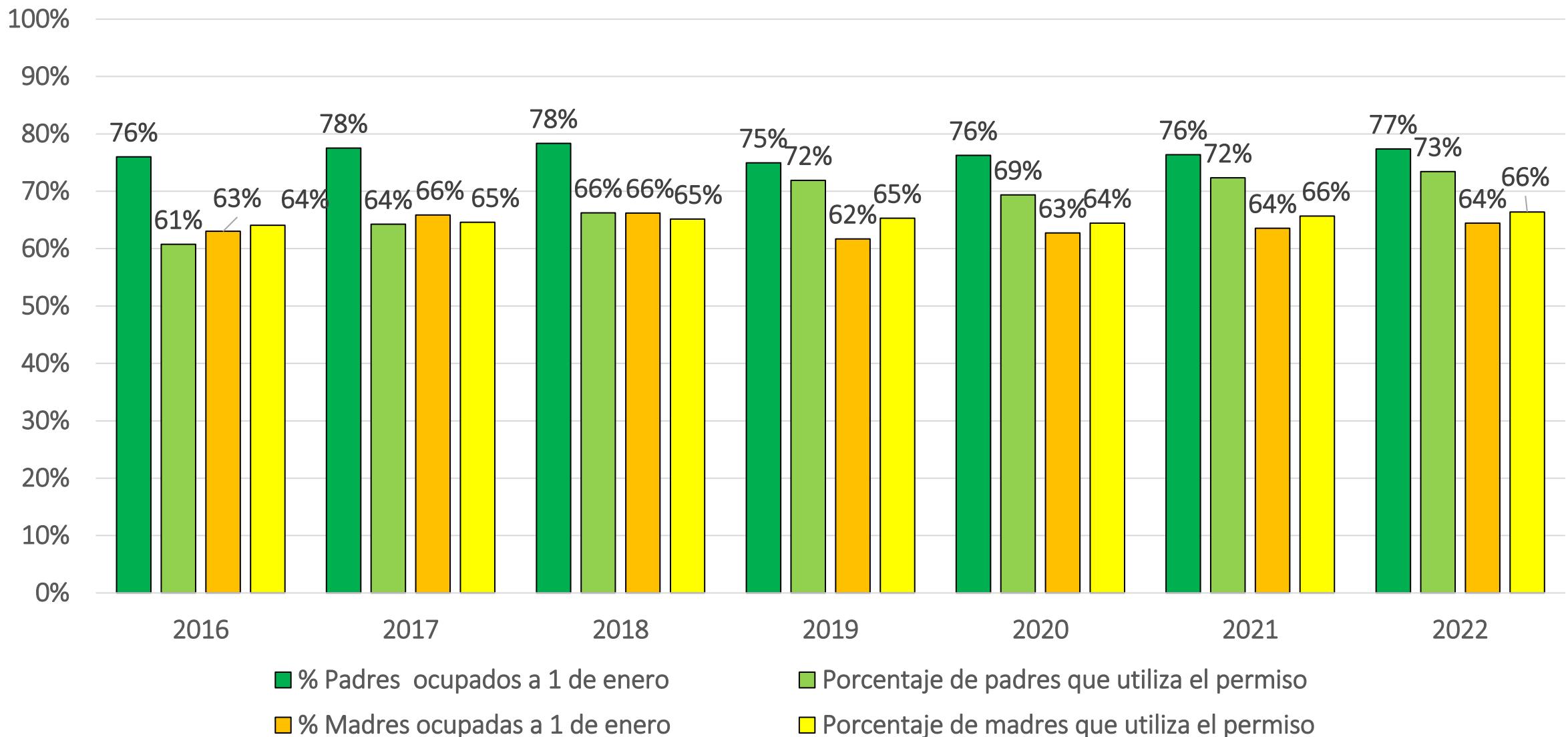
2017: 4 weeks of paternity leave

2018: 5 weeks of paternity leave

2019: RDL 6/2019 (March 1st) of urgent measures to guarantee equal treatment and opportunities for women and men in employment and occupation:
8-12-16 weeks of birth and childcare leave in 2019, 2020 & 2021

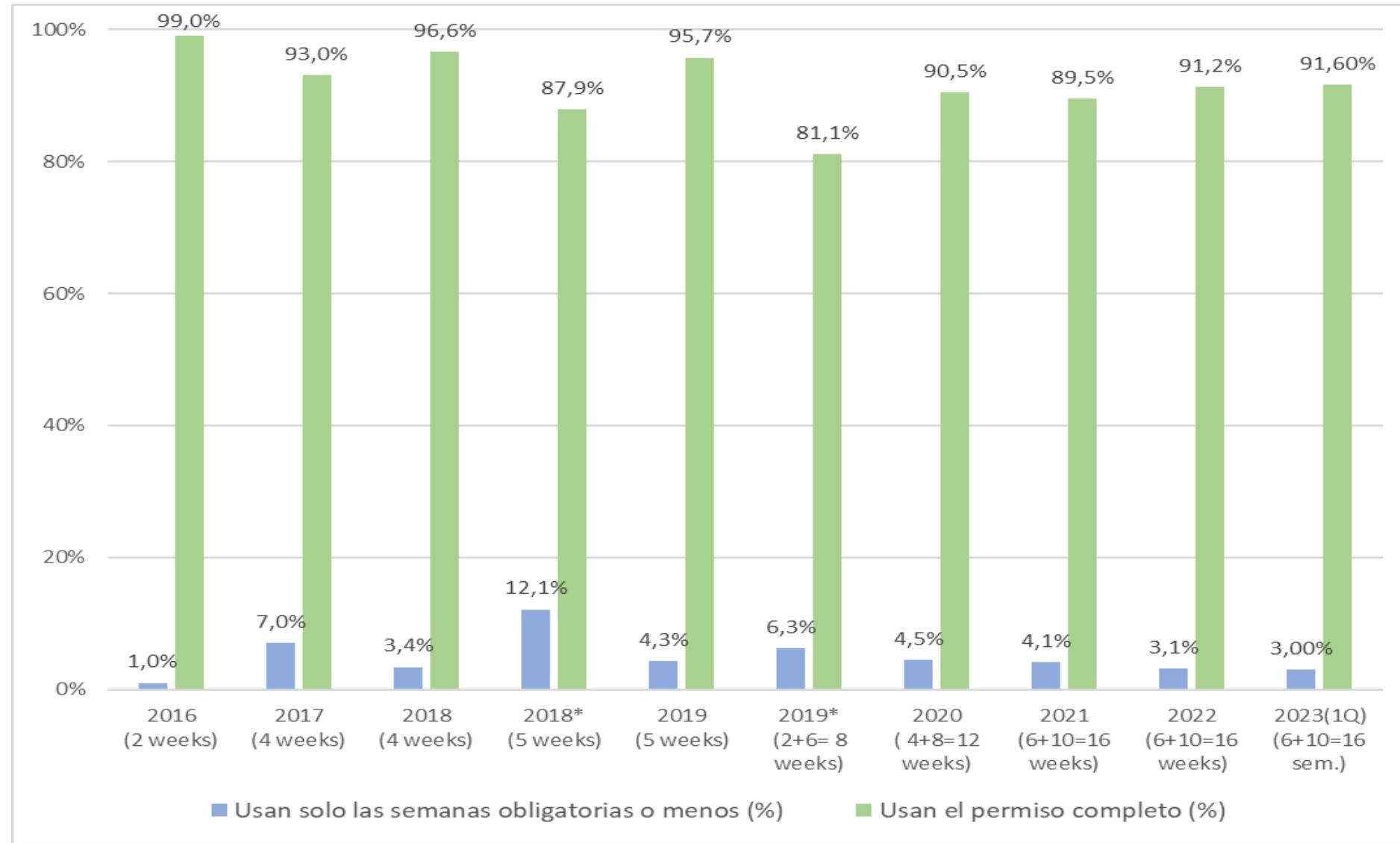
Average days of PPL used by mothers and fathers (Spain, 2016-2023).



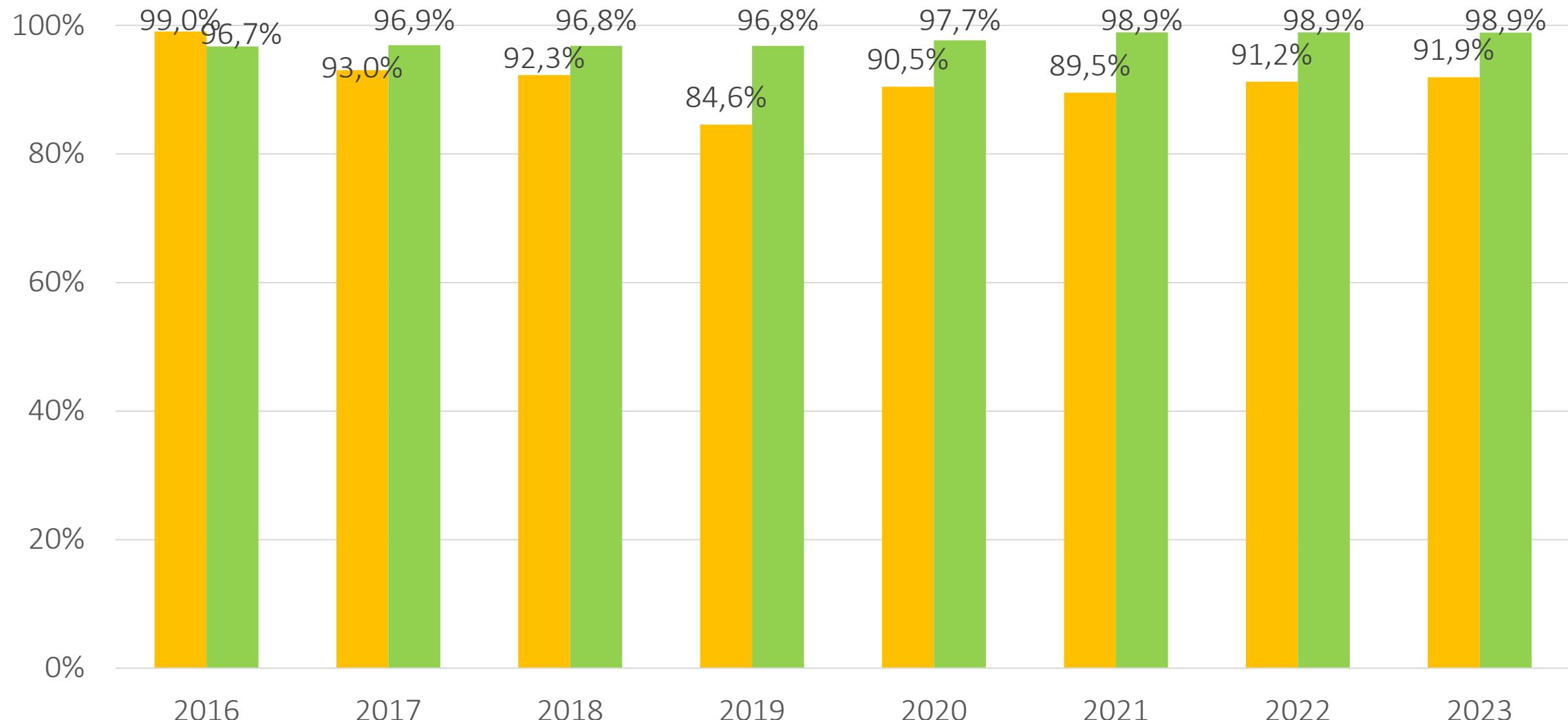


Elegibility vs use: fathers and mothers with right to PPL (estimation) and those who have used it: change between 2016 and 2022.

% of fathers using all available days of PAID parental leave versus percentage using only the mandatory part, Spain (2016-2023)

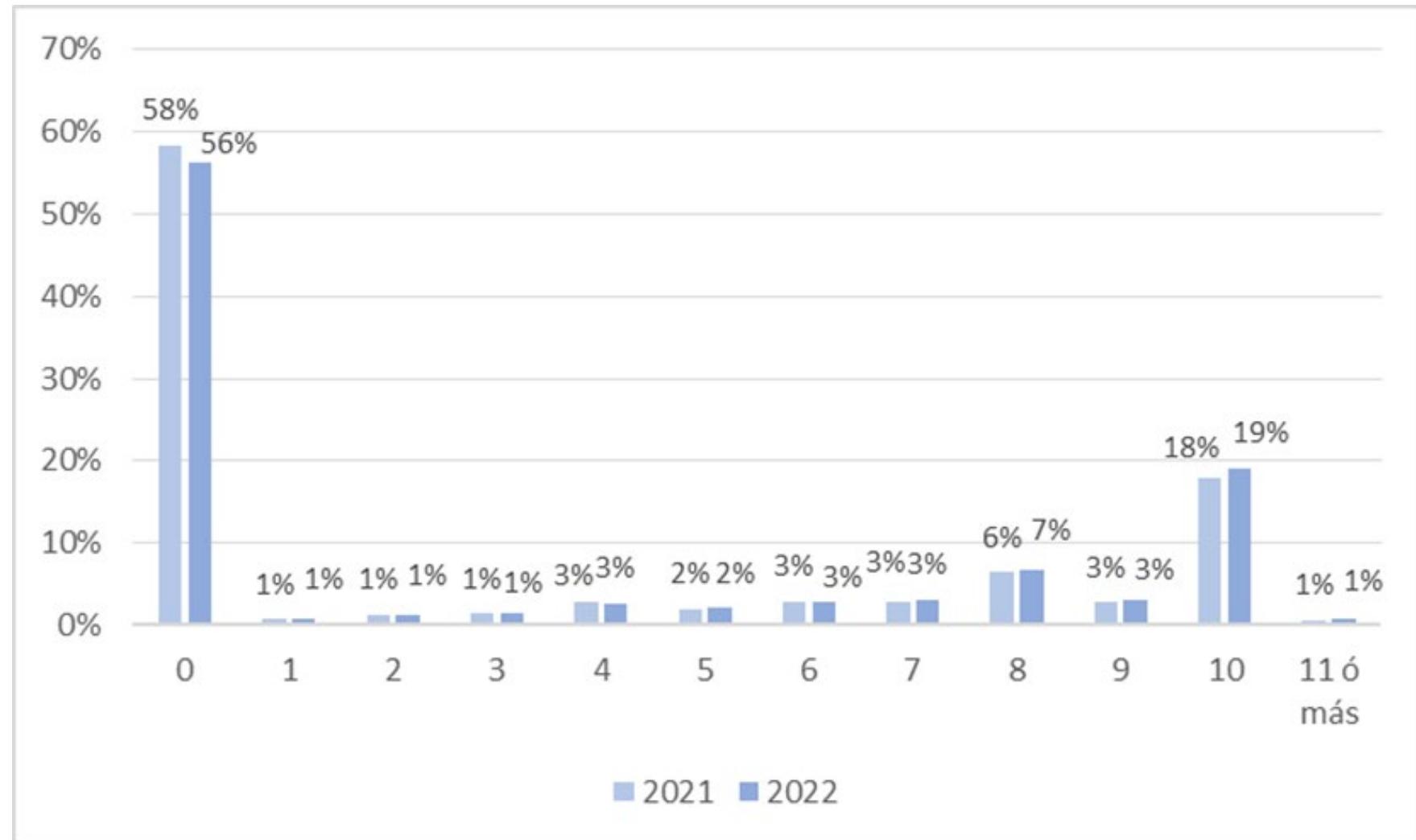


% of mothers and fathers who used all the weeks they have right to



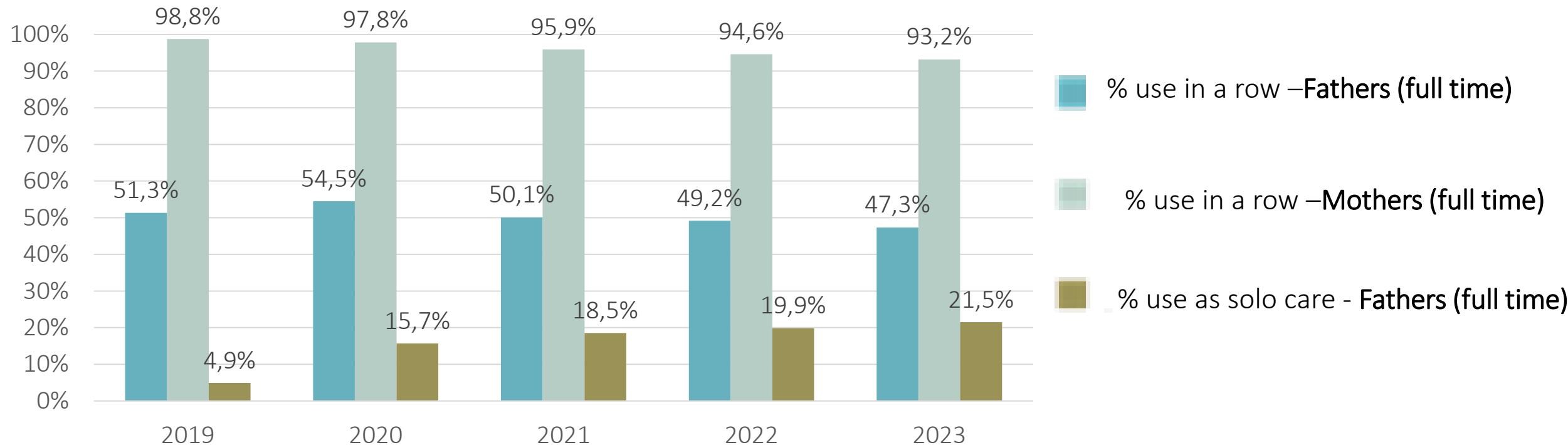
Source: Recio & Castellanos (2025)

% of fathers by number of weeks of leave used after week 16 (whether or not they used the whole leave) 2021-2022 (SPAIN)



Source: Recio Alcaide et al (2024)

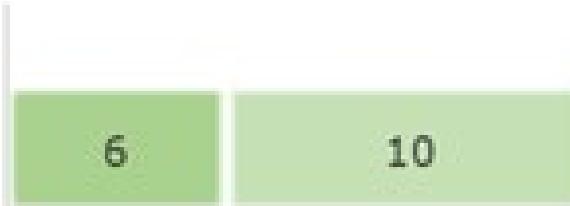
% of simultaneous use and solo care in Spain (2019- 2023)



Source: Own elaboration based on Social Security (2025) in Recio &Castellanos (2025)

Majoritary uses of paid parental leave of parents using 16 or more weeks (2021-2022, Spain)

Mothers who use 16 weeks in a row from birth/adoption (95%)



Fathers who use 16 weeks in a row from birth/adoption (50%)



SIMULTANEOUS USE

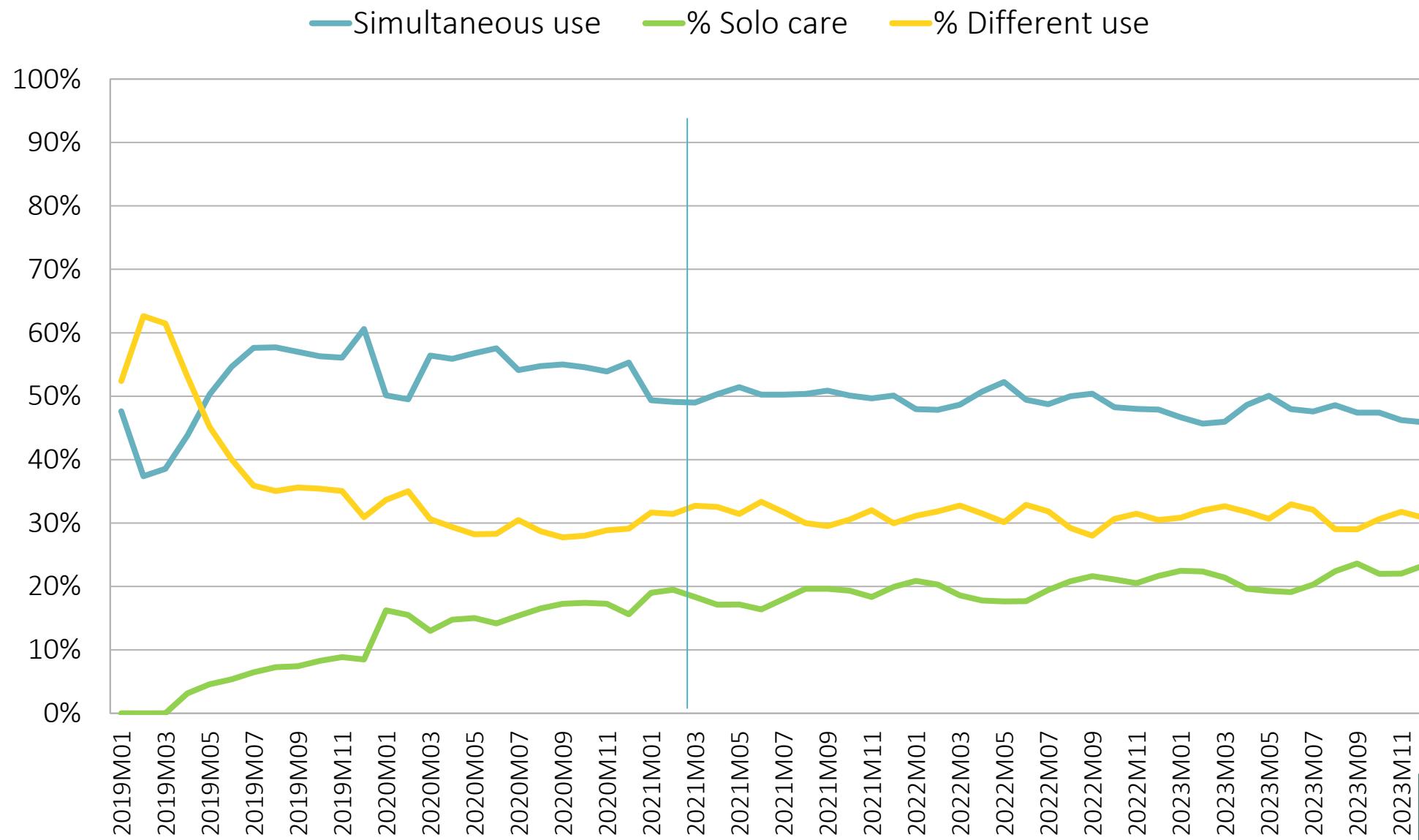
Fathers who use 16 weeks and use 10 weeks after week 16 (20%)



SOLO CARE

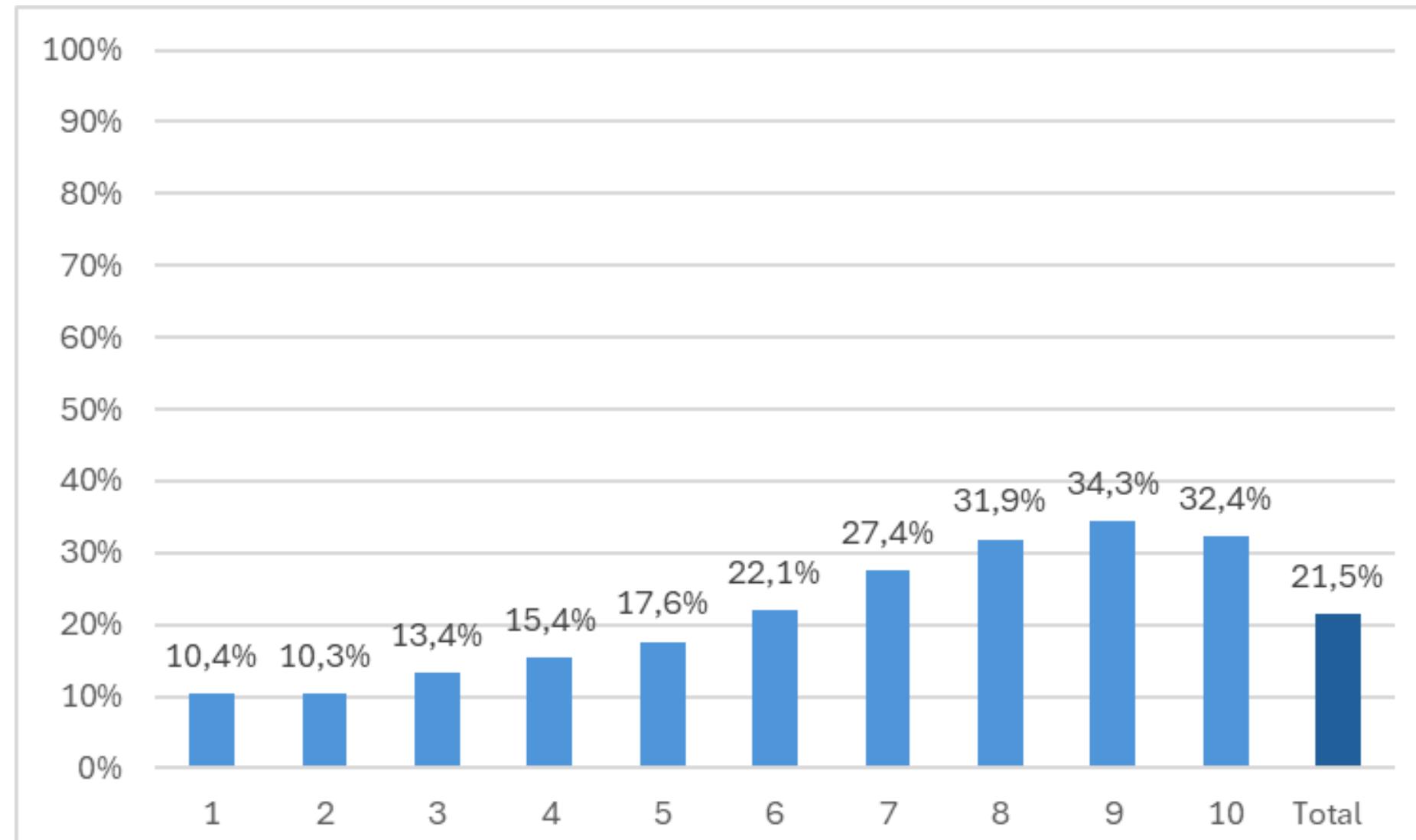
Fathers who use 16 weeks with diverse uses (25%)

Monthly evolution of fathers' simultaneous use, solo care and other uses (Spain, 2019-2023)



Source: Own elaboration based on Social Security (2025), Graph. 7 in Recio & Castellanos (2025)

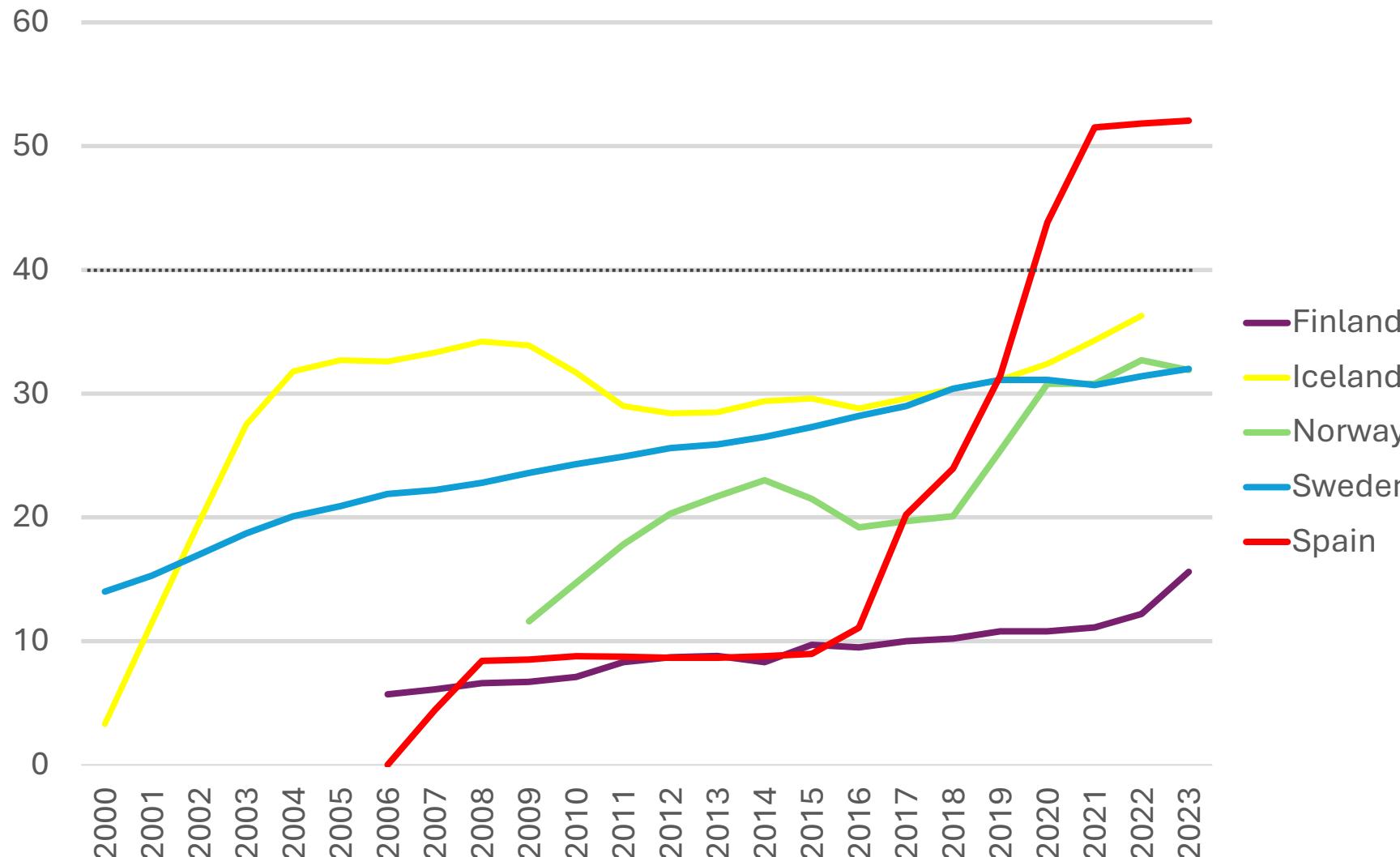
% of solo care according to decile of income in Spain in 2023



Source: Own elaboration based of registration data of Social Security (2024)

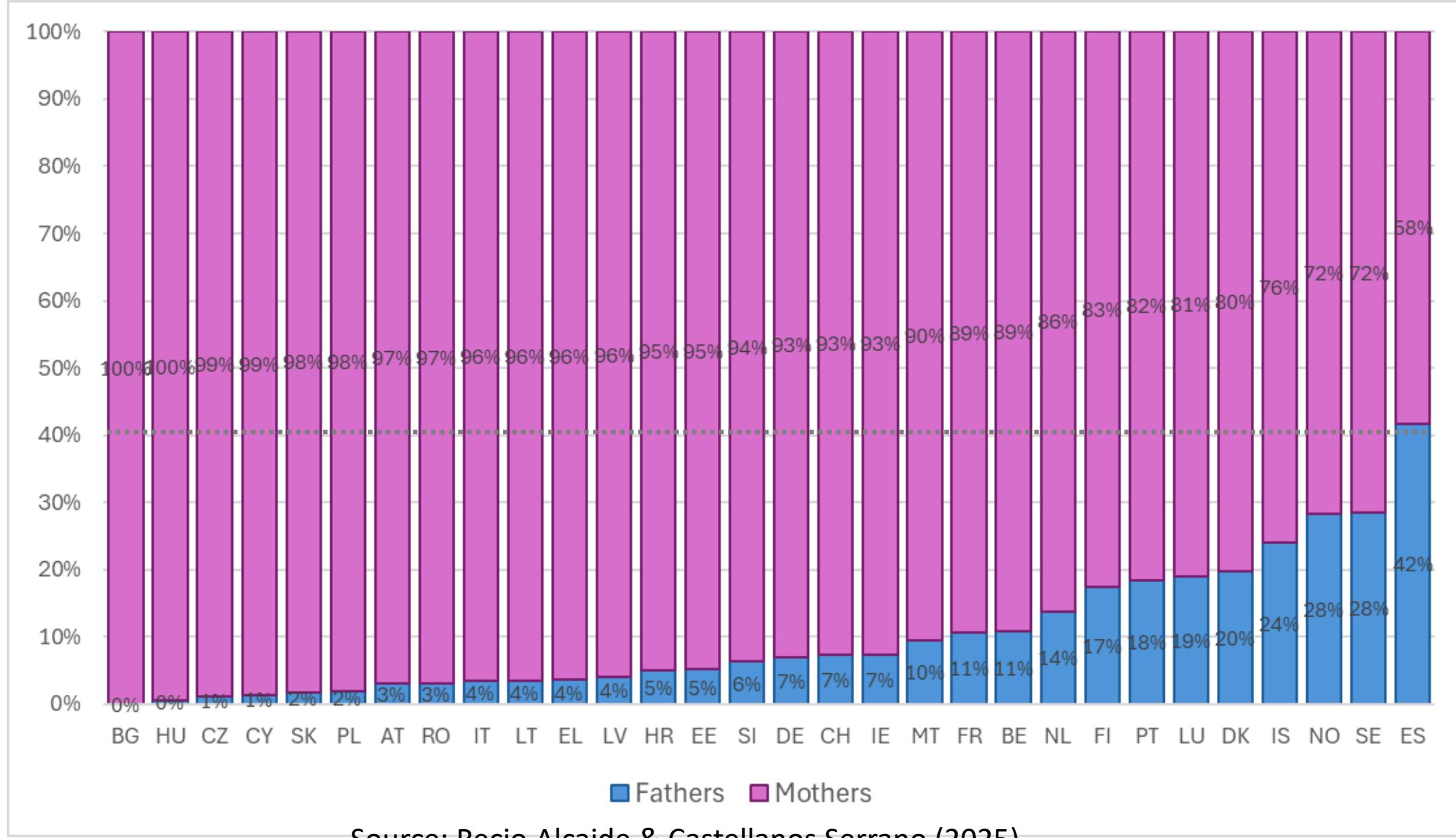
International Comparison of PAID PARENTAL LEAVE USE and DESIGN

% of days used by fathers out of total days of leave used by mothers and fathers by country and year (2000-2023)

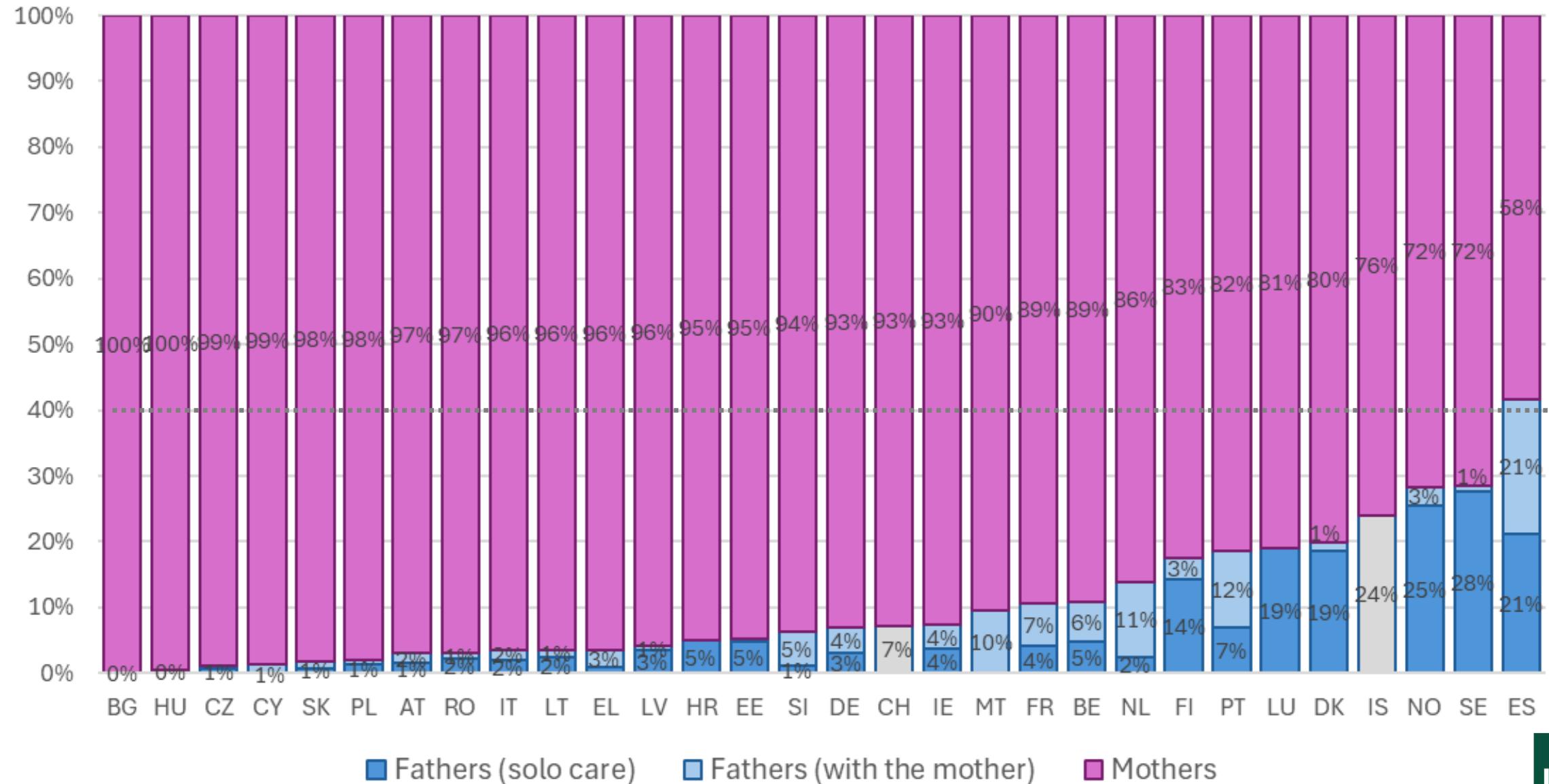


Source: Castellanos Serrano & Recio Alcaide (2025)

Use of Parental Leave and Gender Equality in Europe, 2023



Use of Parental Leave and Gender Equality in Europe, 2023



■ Fathers (solo care) ■ Fathers (with the mother) ■ Mothers

Source: Recio Alcaide & Castellanos Serrano (2025)

PPL: Learning for gender equality at work and at home

- **FULLY PAID:** Most men and many women do not use parental, paternity or maternity leave if they are not paid. Below 80% of their salary, most men don't use it. Mothers are less sensible to levels of payment. **100% PAYMENT (or more) with HIGH CAPS PROMOTES GENERAL USE.**
- **NON-TRANSFERABLE:** Most men do not use paid parental/paternity leave if it can be transferred to women.
- **EQUAL RIGHTS FOR MEN and WOMEN:** From "daddy quotas" to equal rights : gender equality
- **INDIVIDUAL RIGTHS** (gender-neutral name, no family rights, adding to existing rigths, inclusiveness)
- **MAXIMIZE "SOLO" CARE TIME:** Men caring without the presence of the mother is a key element to increase fathers' responsibility and competences in childcare and modify gender roles. Relevance of promotion or capacity of non-simultaneous use of full-time leave.
- **USE OVER THE FIRST YEAR OF THE CHILDREN**
- **Flexibility:** pros and cons (number of blocks to split guarantee by law, part-time, ...)
- **PAID BY SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (THE STATE)**
- **FOR ALL WORKERS:** public and private sector, working for others or self-employed
- **UNIVERSAL RIGTHS:** contributory and non-contributory rigths



Evidence-based proposal for next Spanish reform on PPL



Will SOLO CARE be promoted in next reform?



Everybody cares,
Everybody works



References

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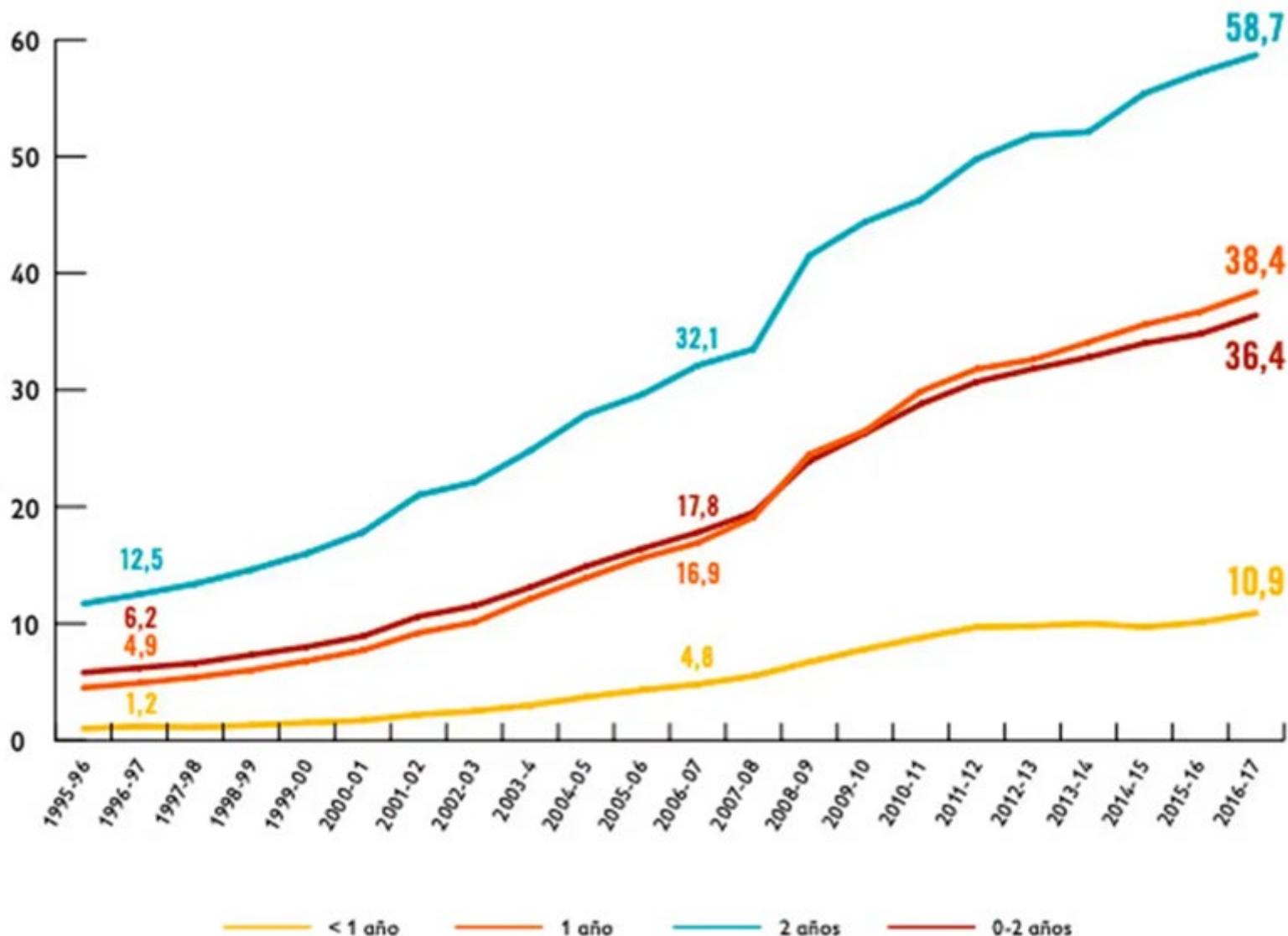
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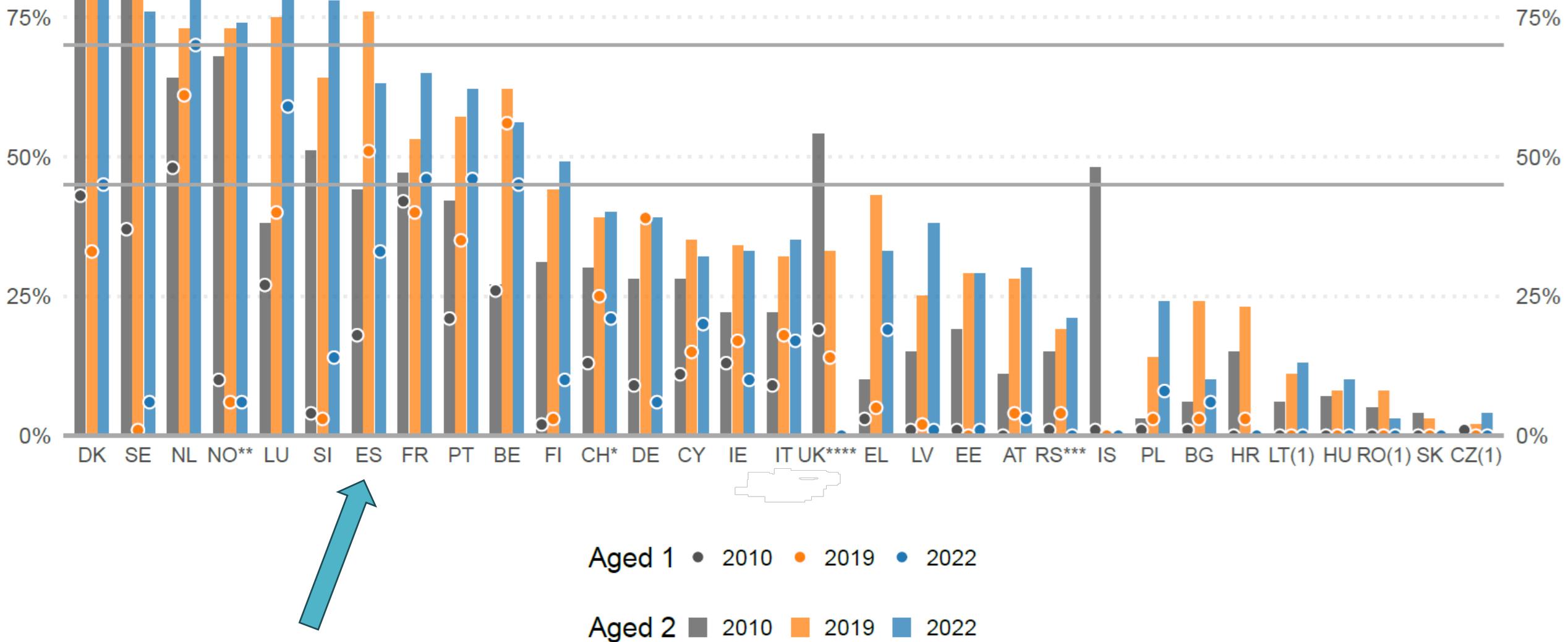
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Spanish ECEC participation rates (children aged 0, 1 and 2)



Source: Save the Children

European ECEC participation rates (children aged 1 and 2)



Thank you very much
for your attention and comments!

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