



UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW
Faculty of Economic Sciences

Are women who work from home more likely to have babies? Evidence from the UK

Beata Osiewalska, Anna Matysiak & Anna Kurowska

University of Warsaw

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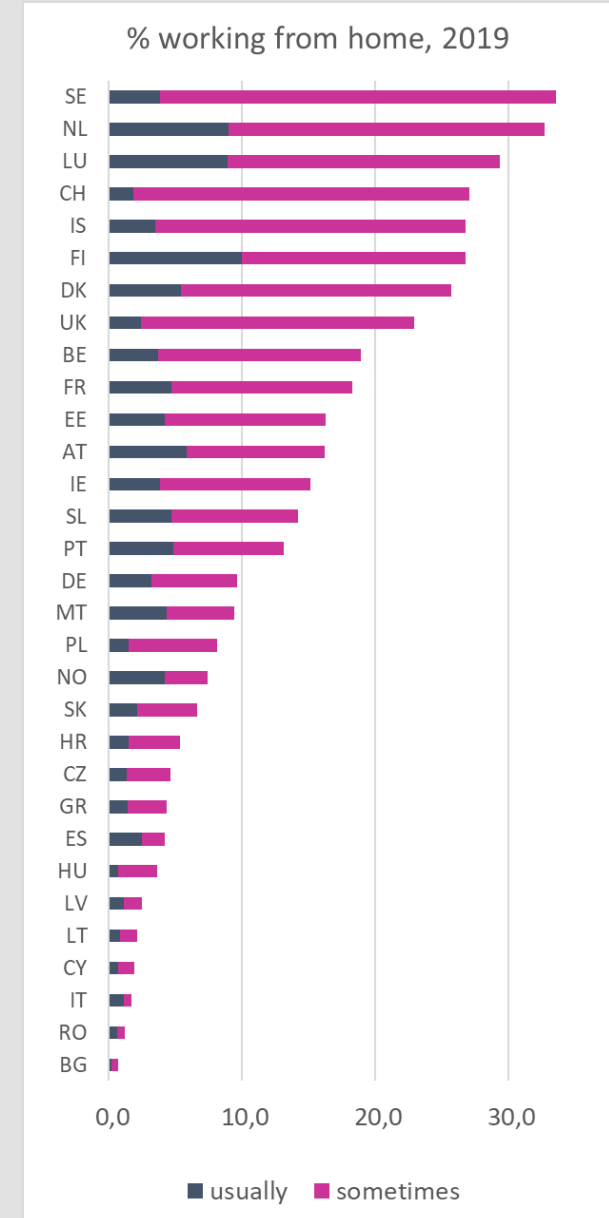
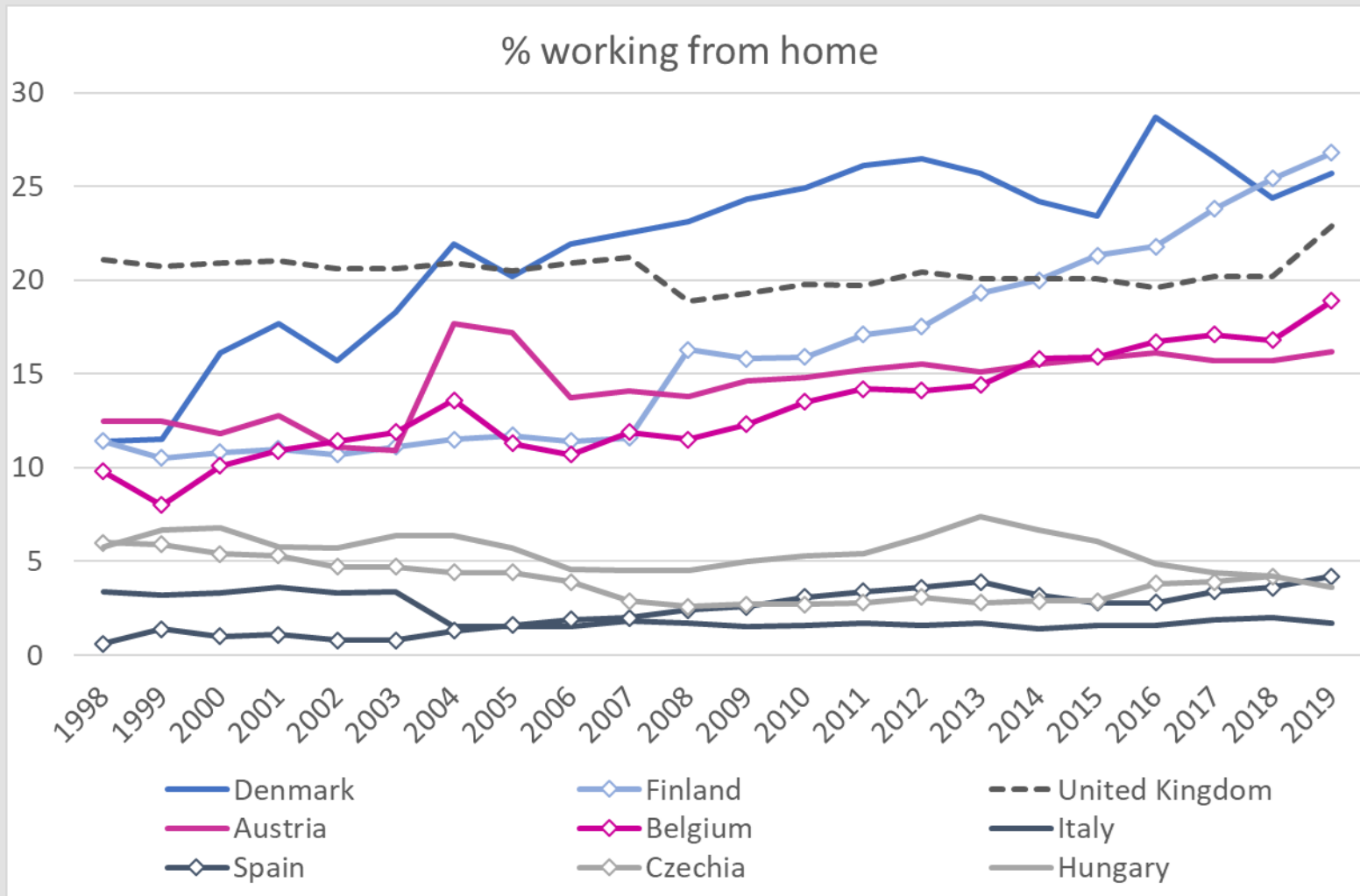


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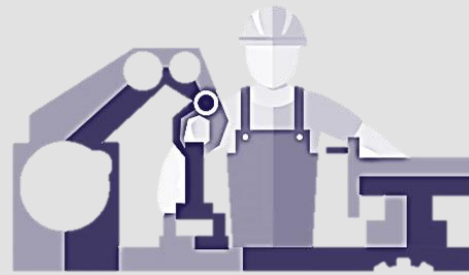
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HBW has been gaining on importance...



Source: Eurostat



PRE-INDUSTRIAL ERA

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTIONS

DIGITAL REVOLUTION

1800

1990



PAST STUDIES

1. HBW and fertility

- Sinyavskaya and Billingsley (2015): time- and place-flexibility at job, incl. occasional HBW, is positively related to fertility intentions

2. Internet and fertility

- Billari et al (2019): positive relationship between access to internet and fertility (Germany)
- Liu et al. (2021): negative relationship between Internet use and fertility intentions (China)

HBW and work-life balance

POSITIVES

- saves time: less commuting, multitasking (Hill et al., 2003, Bailey and Kurland, 2002)
- allows for organising paid work flexibly around childcare obligations (Crosbie and Moore 2004)
- allows for being more present in children's lives (Callister and Singley, 2004)

NEGATIVES:

- fragmented work time & stress (Powell and Craig 2015)
- longer work hours & evening work (Felstead and Henseke, 2017)
- blurring of the boundaries between paid work and family (Glavin and Schieman 2012)
- higher expectations on women (Ammons and Markham, 2004)

HBW and work-life balance

- Qualitative studies: women tend to use HBW to combine paid work and care (Sullivan and Lewis, 2001; Hilbrecht et al., 2008)
- HBW may indeed be particularly helpful if women want to work but cannot count on the partner
- The effects on HBW on work – family balance mixed (Gajendran and Harrison 2007, Allen et al. 2013)
- Better work-life balance if:
 - HBW does not entail long working hours (van der Lippe and Lippényi, 2020, Peters and van der Lippe, 2007)
 - the conditions for a physical separation of the two spheres are better (Baruch, 2000, Solís, 2016)

HBW and professional career

POSITIVES

- allows some mothers to continue employment (Edwards and Field-Hendrey 2002)
- allows for longer work hours (Chung and van der Horst 2018, Arntz et al. 2019)
- allows for minimising work-related interruptions and thus higher productivity (Hill et al. 2003)

NEGATIVES

- fewer networking opportunities, less influence over what is happening at the workplace and poorer access to training (Martinez and Gómez, 2013, Baruch, 2000)
- lower visibility at work (Richardson and Kelliher, 2015)
- Flexibility stigma (Coltrane et al., 2013, Munsch 2016)

We expect...

- The relationship between HBW and childbearing depends on woman's circumstances **(H1)**

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP

- provided that HBW allows for combining paid work and care, e.g. timesaving, spacious apartment, no long working hours **(H2)**
- Among women who receive little support from their partners at home **(H3)**
- Among women who do not experience negative consequences of HBW for their work careers **(H4a)**
- Unless they have no other option (e.g. they already have one child, little support in care) **(H4b)**
- Access to HBW more important for childless women, use of HBW for mothers **(H5)**

Data & Sample

Data:

- UKHLS waves 1 to 10, 2009 to 2019

Sample:

- Employed women aged 18-44 living with a partner
 - 2017 childless women (6,000 woman-years)
 - 1828 women having one child (5,000 woman-years)

Method

Method: Discrete time EHA

Events: 1st / 2nd birth

Key explanatory:

HBW: 1 – no access, no use
2 – access, no use or occasional use
3 – access, regular use

Measure of HBW

Access to HBW:

If you personally needed any, which of the following arrangements are available at your workplace?

- *To work from home on a regular basis*

Use of HBW (asked to those with the access):

Do you currently work in any of these ways?

- *To work from home on a regular basis*



- Access, regular use
- Access, but irregular or no use
- No access, no use

Moderators

Work-family reconciliation:

- commuting time
- number of bedrooms
- work hours

Partners' involvement in paid work / at home:

- Partner's work hours

Consequences for work career:

- job anxiety (tensed / uneasy / worried about work)

Control variables

- Woman's age
- Type of settlement (rural / urban)
- Partnership status (cohabiting / married)
- Family orientation (how important the family is for the sense who you are)
- Woman's income
- Partner's income (relative to woman's)
- Wave
- (Age of the first child)

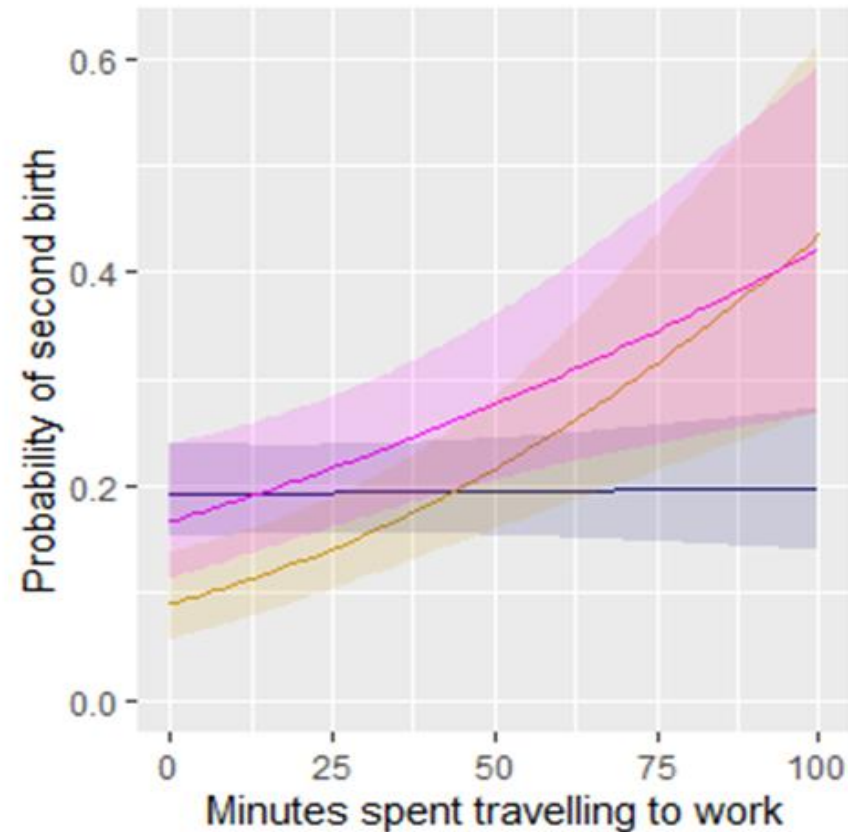
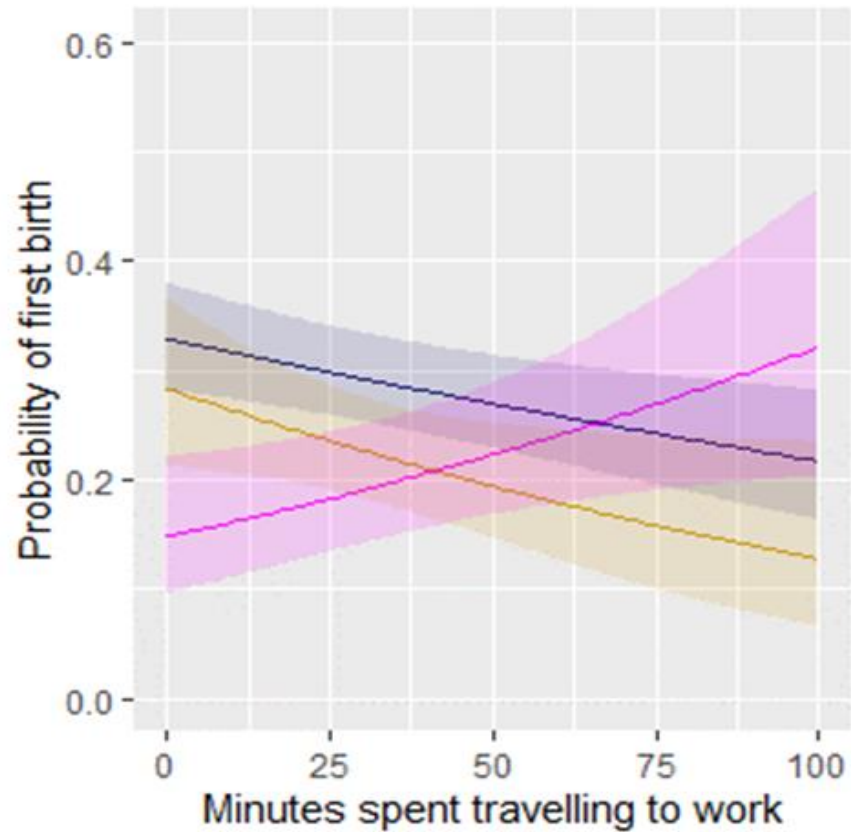
HBW-fertility association

Basic model	First birth		Second birth	
<i>Predictors</i>	<i>Odds Ratios</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Odds Ratios</i>	<i>p</i>
HBW: access / non-regular use	0.700	0.015	0.856	0.325
HBW: regular use	0.626	0.022	1.115	0.553

Birth risk is higher when HBW frees from long commuting?

FIRST BIRTH +

SECOND BIRTH +



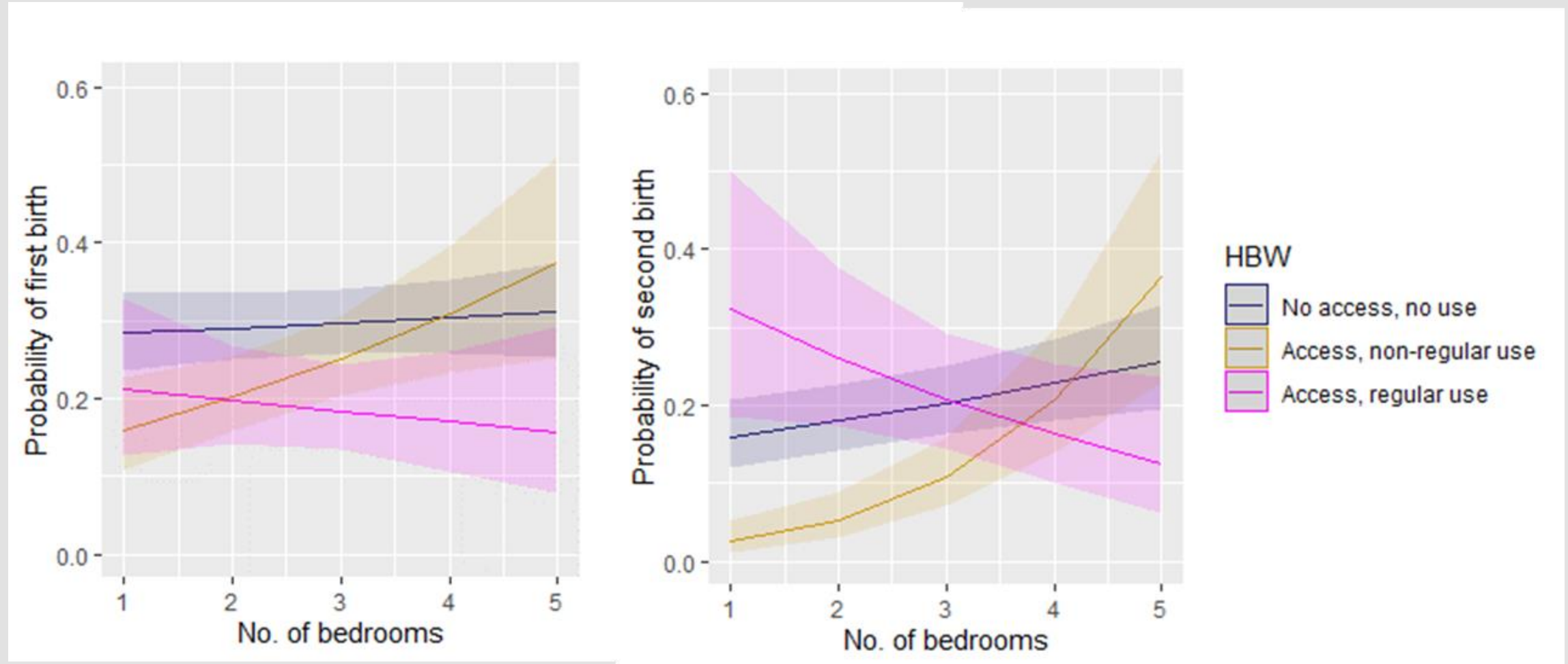
HBW

- No access, no use
- Access, non-regular use
- Access, regular use

Birth risk is higher for women with larger apartments?

FIRST BIRTH : 0

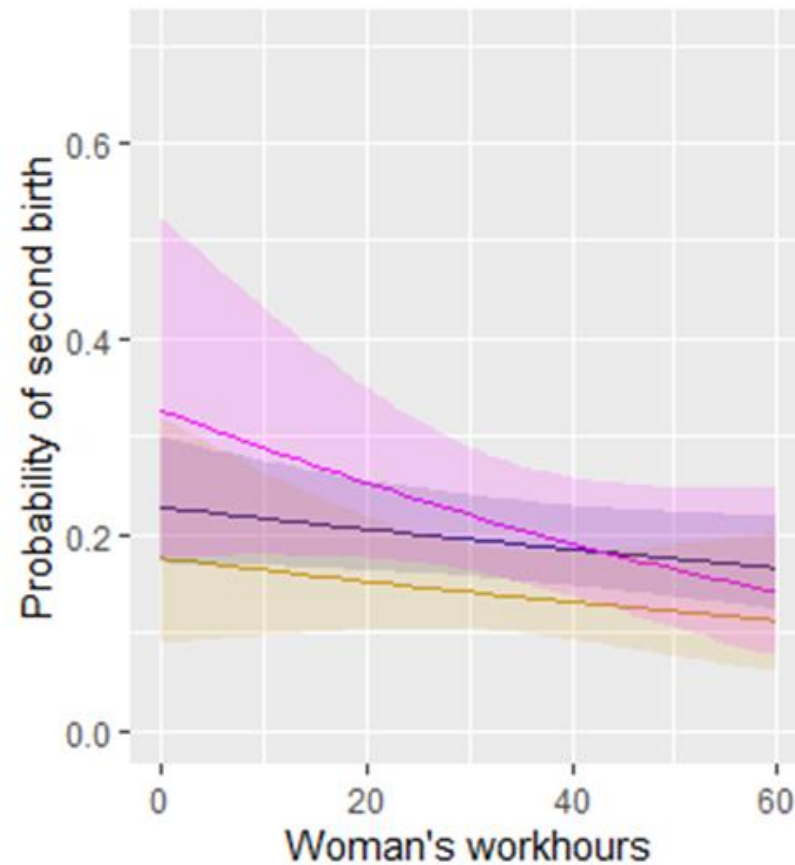
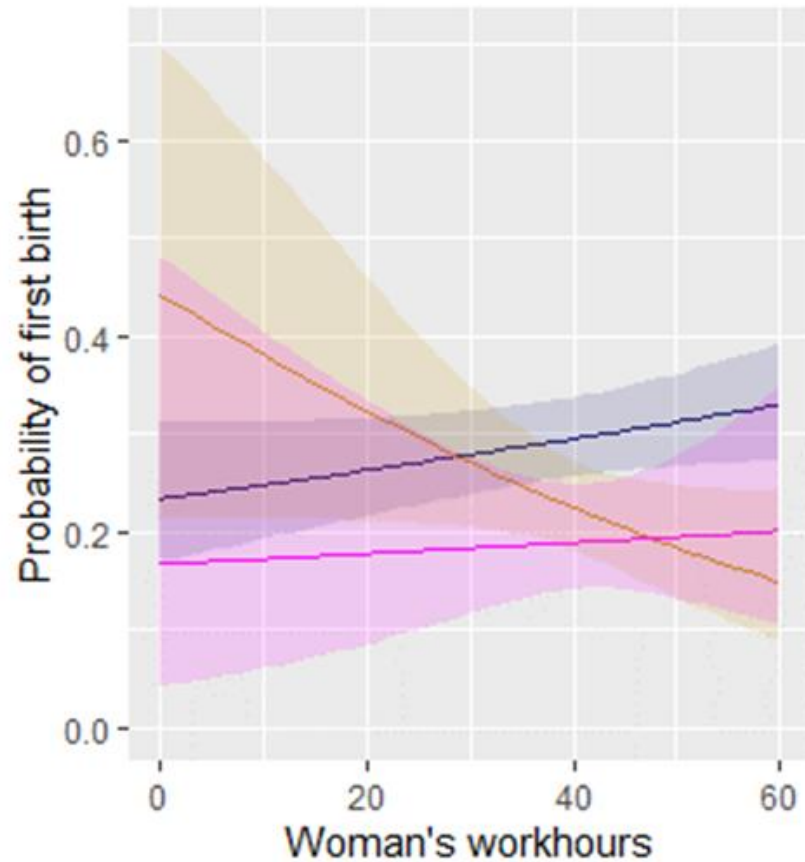
SECOND BIRTH: +



Birth risk is lower when HBW is accompanied by long work hours?

FIRST BIRTH: 0

SECOND BIRTH: 0

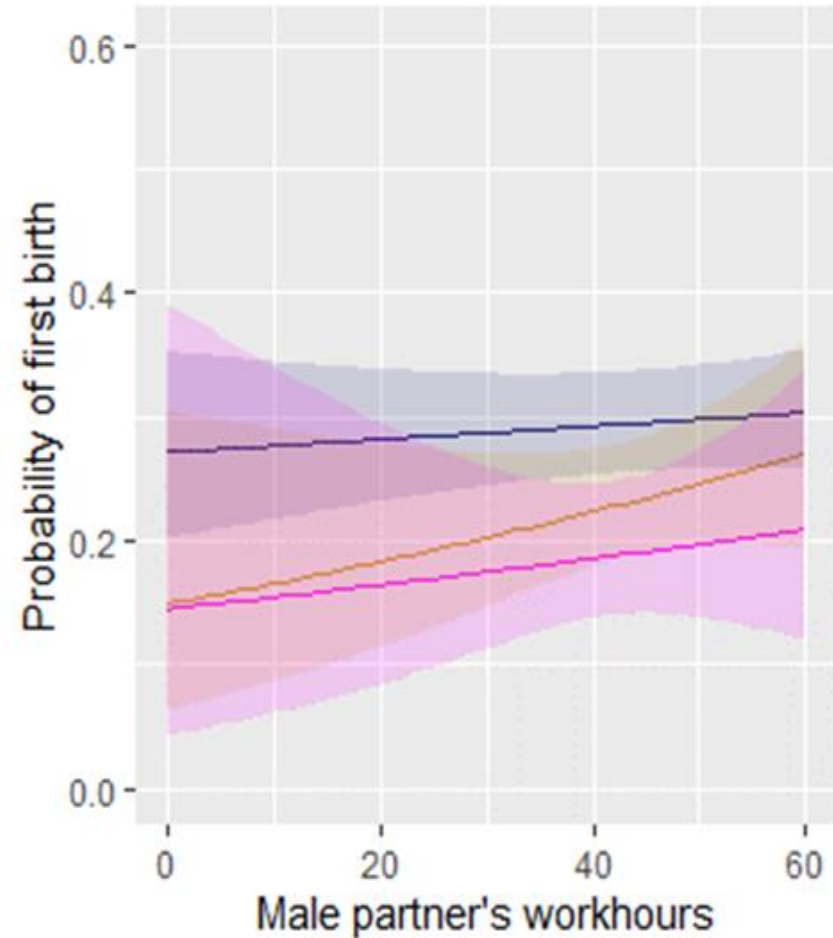


HBW

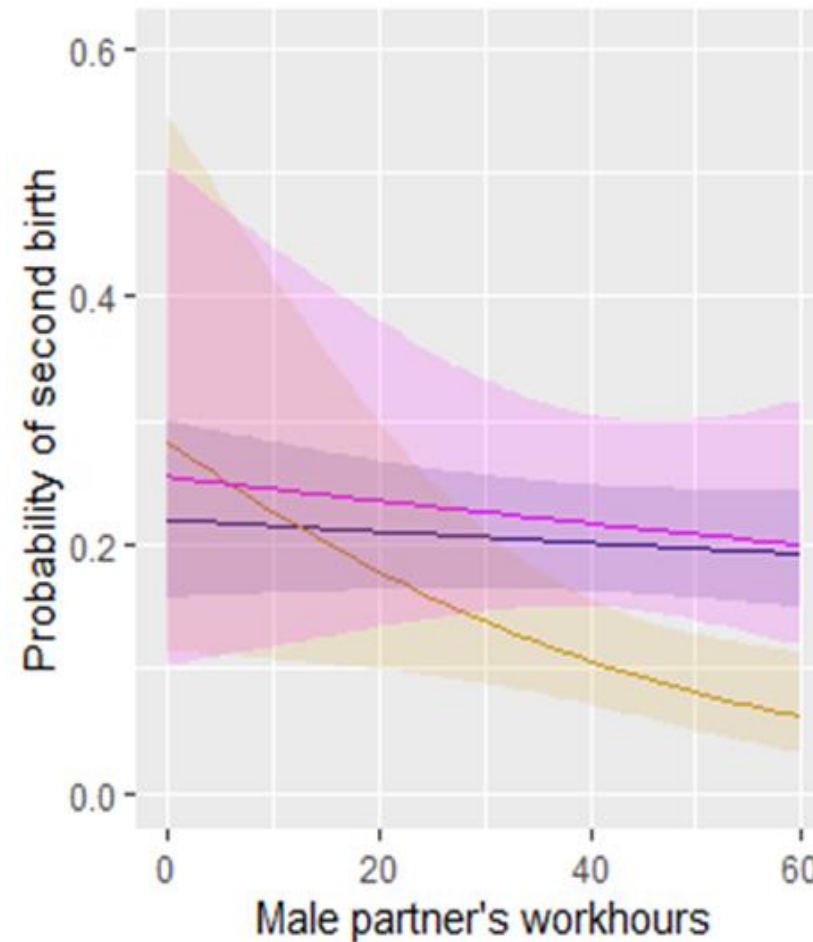
- No access, no use
- Access, non-regular use
- Access, regular use

HBW helps childbearing when partner strongly involved in paid work?

FIRST BIRTH: 0



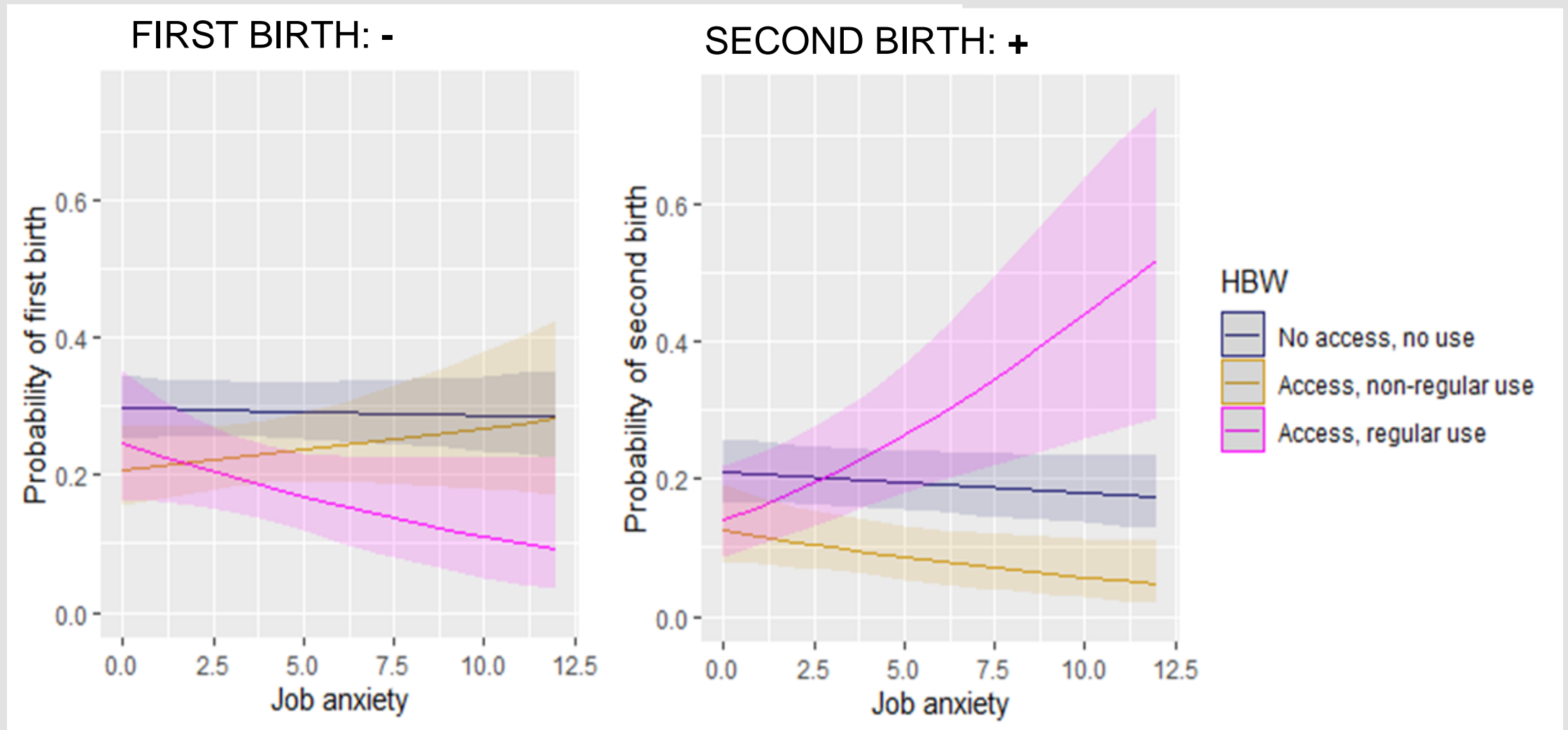
SECOND BIRTH: 0



HBW

- No access, no use
- Access, non-regular use
- Access, regular use

Birth risk is lower when HBW entails job-related anxiety ?



Conclusions

- No universal relationship between woman's HBW and fertility
- **Use of HBW** is positively related to **first birth**, but only among women who:
 - would have to commute long
 - do not experience anxiety at work
- is positively related to **second birth**, but only for women who:
 - would have to commute long
 - feel job-related anxiety.
- Findings on **access to HBW** inconsistent (unclear category)

Limitations

- Selection (especially among mothers)
- Women may not know whether HBW available till they ask for it



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