



Work Autonomy,
Flexibility and
Work-Life Balance

Labour market intensity of mothers after childbirth on use and access to flexible working arrangements

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Introduction

- Reduction in working hours in the UK of women after childbirth
- Flexible work as alternative?
- Different types of flexible work

Hypotheses

1. Access to (Use of) flexible working will decrease the likelihood of mothers leaving their jobs after childbirth
2. (Access to) Use of flexible working will decrease the likelihood of mothers reducing their working hours after childbirth

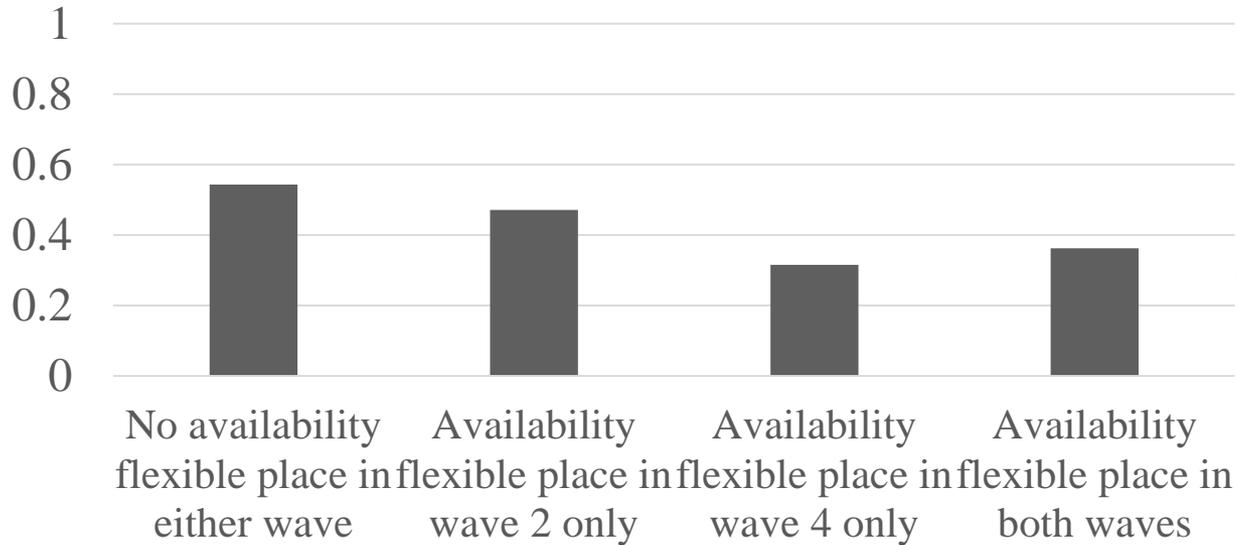
Data & Method

- Understanding Society
- Waves 2 and 4
- Logistic regression analyses
 - Likelihood of (still) being employed
 - Likelihood of having reduced working hours if (still) employed
- 335 women in full sample, 131 first-time mothers

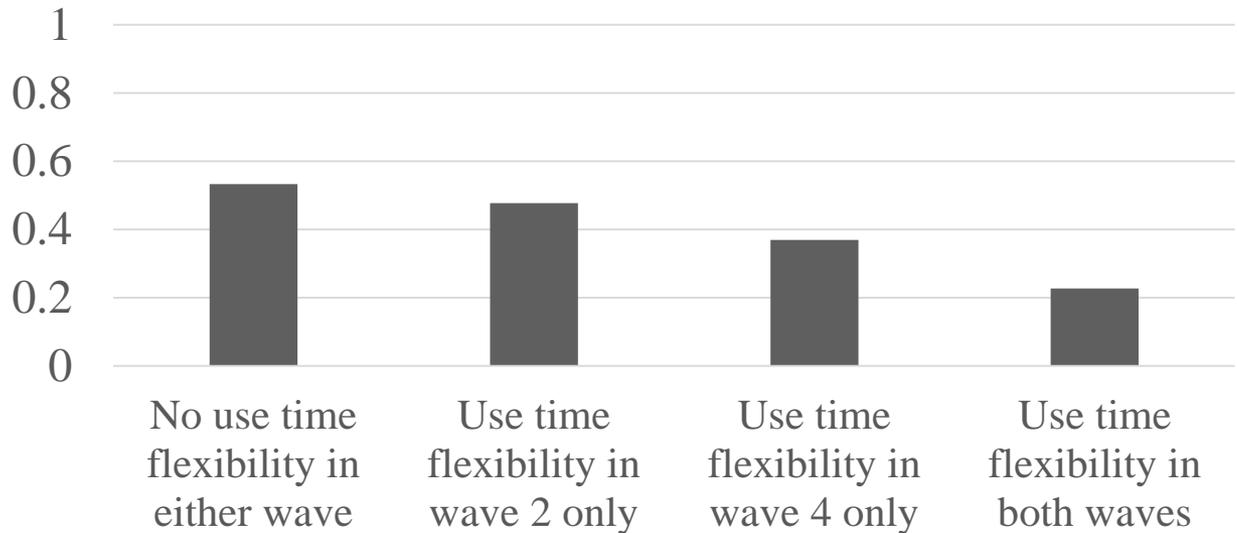
Results

- No support for first hypothesis
- Some support for second hypothesis
 - Able to work from home → lower likelihood to reduce hours
 - (Not true for actual use!)
 - Use flexitime → lower likelihood to reduce hours
- Analyses controlled for: working hours wave 2, age, age youngest child, total number of children in household, gender attitude, education, working in private sector, union present, occupational level, wage, living with partner, whether partner is employed or self-employed, working hours and earnings of partner, and whether the partner uses flexible work.

Likelihood reducing hours



Predicted probabilities availability flexible place

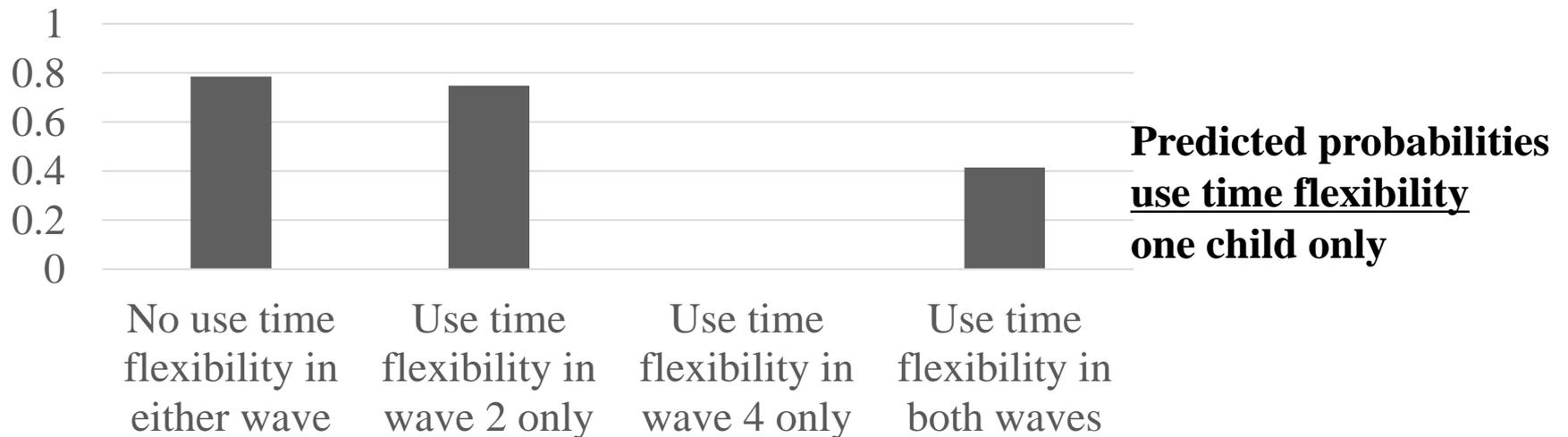
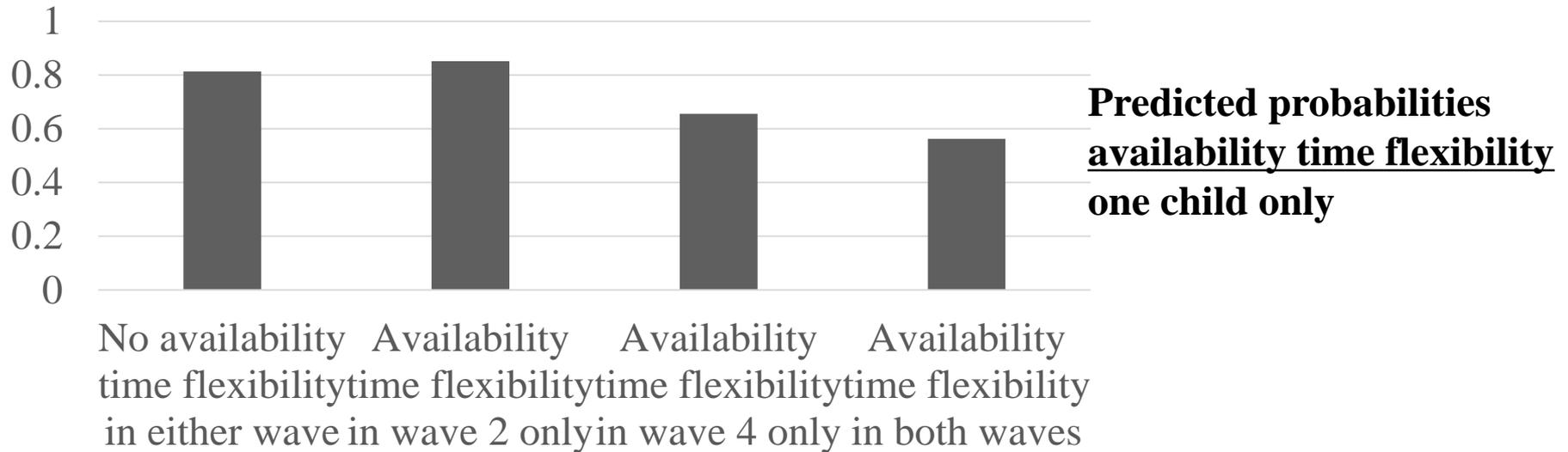


Predicted probabilities use time flexibility

Repeated for first-time mothers

- Still no support for first hypothesis
- Again some support for second hypothesis
 - Availability flexitime → lower likelihood to reduce hours
 - (No longer relationship for availability flexiplace!)
 - Use flexitime → lower likelihood to reduce hours
- Some problems due to small sample sizes for these models
- Analyses controlled for: working hours wave 2, age, age youngest child, gender attitude, education, working in private sector, union present, occupational level, wage, living with partner, whether partner is employed or self-employed, working hours and earnings of partner, and whether the partner uses flexible work.

Likelihood reducing hours – one child only



Conclusions

- Availability and use of flexible working decreases the likelihood of women to reduce their working hours
 - Especially strong and stable result for use of time flexibility.
- Hence: to some degree flexible work can function as alternative for reduction of working hours.
But: does not increase likelihood of women to stay in employment after childbirth

Questions we still have for this paper...

- Why does it matter so much women had access in *both* waves?
- Why does it clearly matter for working hours, but not for whether mother is employed?

Implications and further research

- Giving women genuine access to flexible work may reduce the motherhood penalty
- Next steps:
 - Looking at possible increase in working hours of flexible work as well as consequences for childcare and domestic tasks
 - Looking at long-term career consequences of flexible work
 - Looking at these relationships for men
 - Investigating how these relationships look like for various subgroups in society as well as for different countries



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**Any questions
(or answers to our questions)
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