

# IF CHILDREN SUFFER WHEN MOTHERS WORK, DO THEY WORK LESS?

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- **Higher** child mortality rates among **working mothers** in developing countries:
  - Medical literature: *Woodbury (1926), Titaley et al. (2008), Singh and Tripathi (2013), Nisar and Dibley (2014), Abir et al. (2015)*.
- Multiple determinants of female employment in the literature:
  - Availability of alternative caregivers: *Attanasio et al. (2008), Thévenon (2013)*.
  - Maternal health: *Albanesi and Olivetti (2016)*.
  - Knowledge of maternal work consequences: *Fogli and Veldkamp (2011), Fernández (2013)*.
  - Fertility: *Agüero (2008), Aaronson et al. (2017), Bloom et al. (2009)*.
- U-shaped relationship between economic development and female employment:
  - *Goldin (1994), Mammen and Paxson (2000), Luci (2009), Tam (2011), Olivetti (2013)*.

## 4. EMPIRICAL STRATEGY

1. Estimate the child mortality gradient between working and non-working mothers.
  - Variable not readily available.
  - Recovers the mortality differential for each region in the DHS.
  - Considers the endogeneity caused by poverty:
    - Poor households require a working mother and often suffer higher child mortality.

$$deaths_i = \Delta works_i + X_i\beta + \epsilon_i \quad \forall r, \forall i \in r$$

2. Regress maternal employment on the gradient, and other co-variates:

$$works_{i,r,c} = \alpha\Delta_{r,c} + X'_{i,r,c}\beta + \gamma_c + \omega_{i,r,c} \quad \forall i$$

## 2. RESEARCH QUESTION and CONTRIBUTION

### Research question:

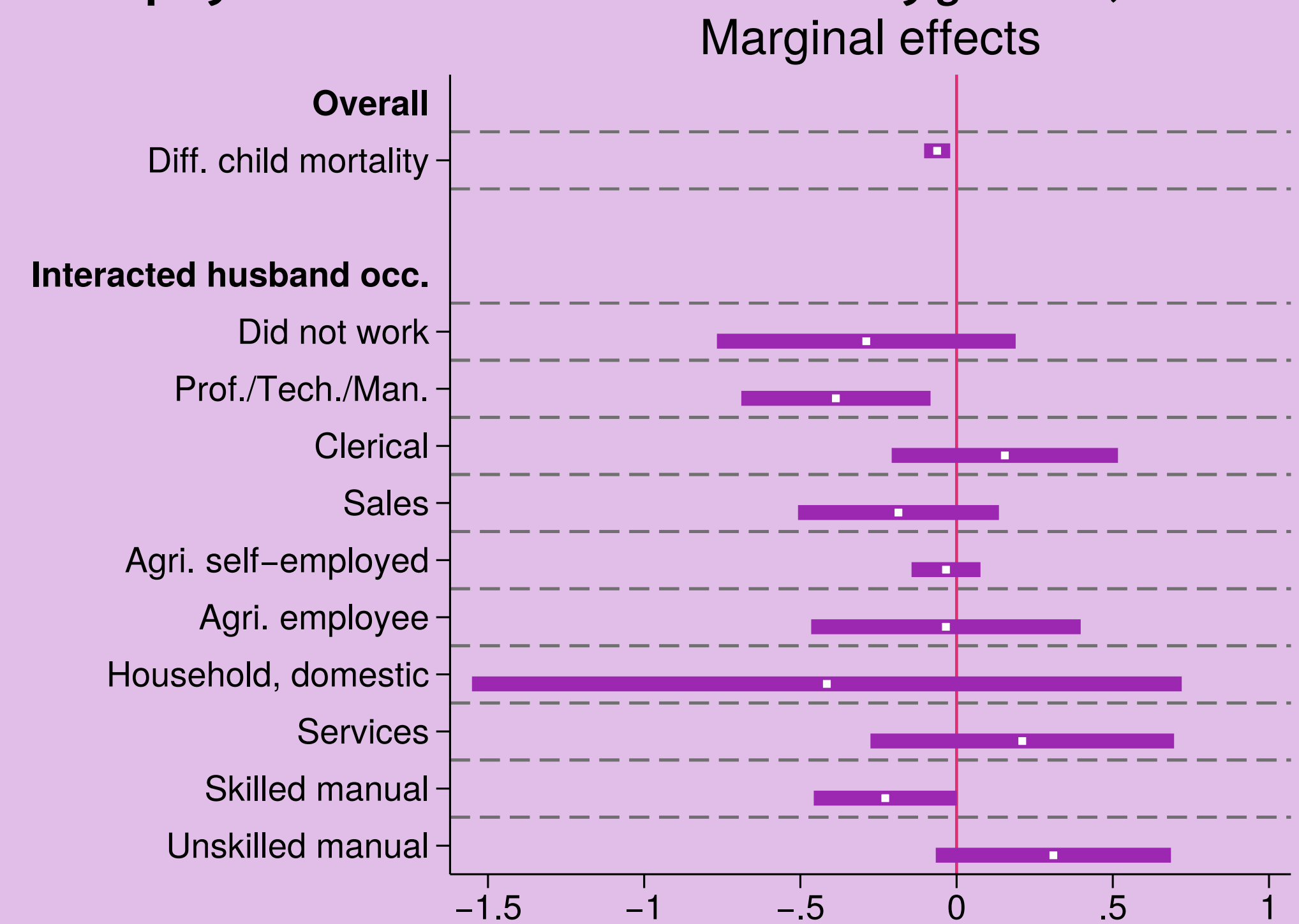
- Does maternal employment vary with the risk it poses to children?

### Contribution:

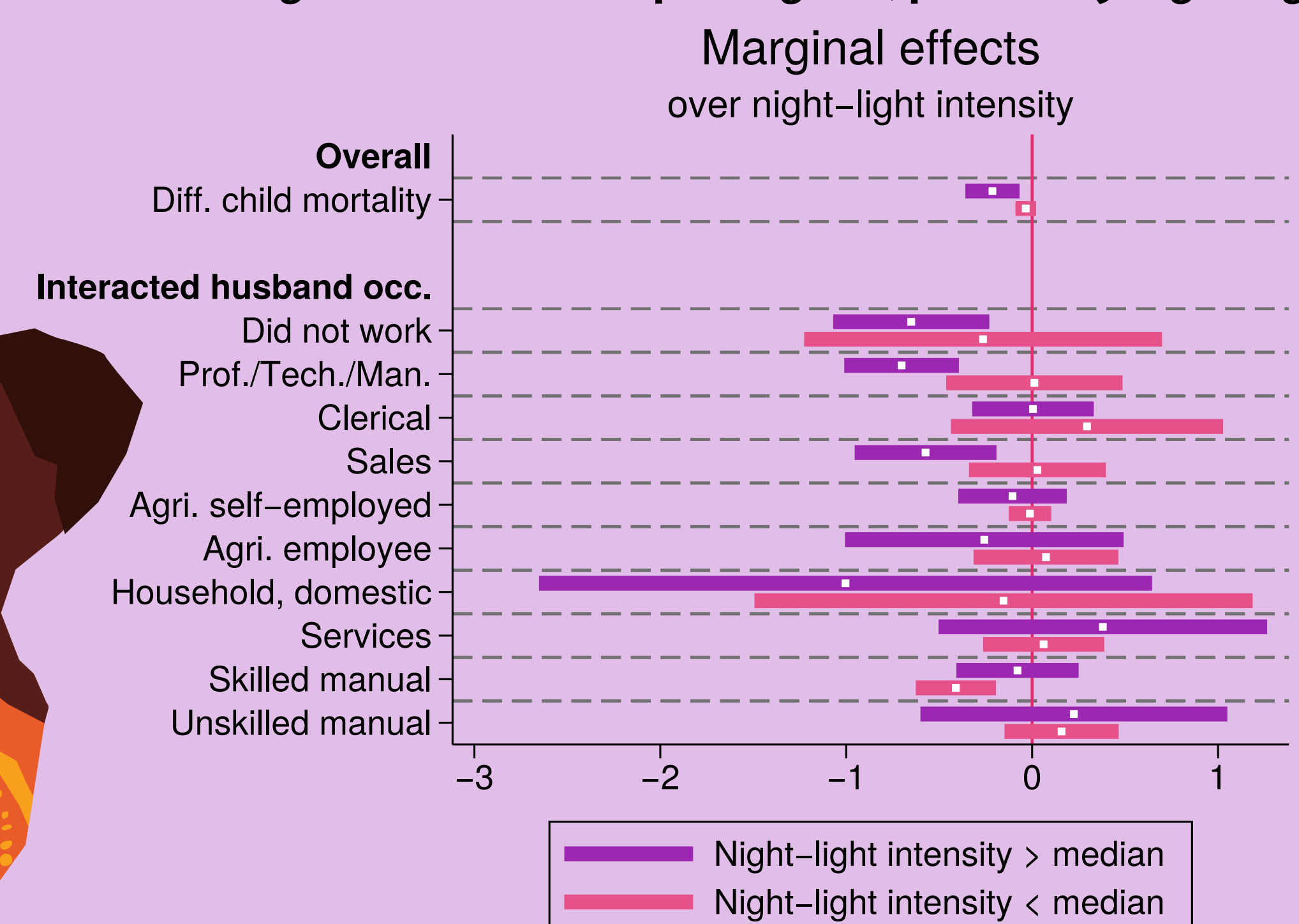
- **New determinant of maternal employment in developing countries:**  
*child mortality gradient over maternal employment*
- **Operates through economic prosperity.**
- *Theoretical model rationalising it*
- *Generates a U-shaped pattern between development and maternal employment*

## 5. RESULTS

1. Maternal employment decreases with the mortality gradient,  $\Delta$ .



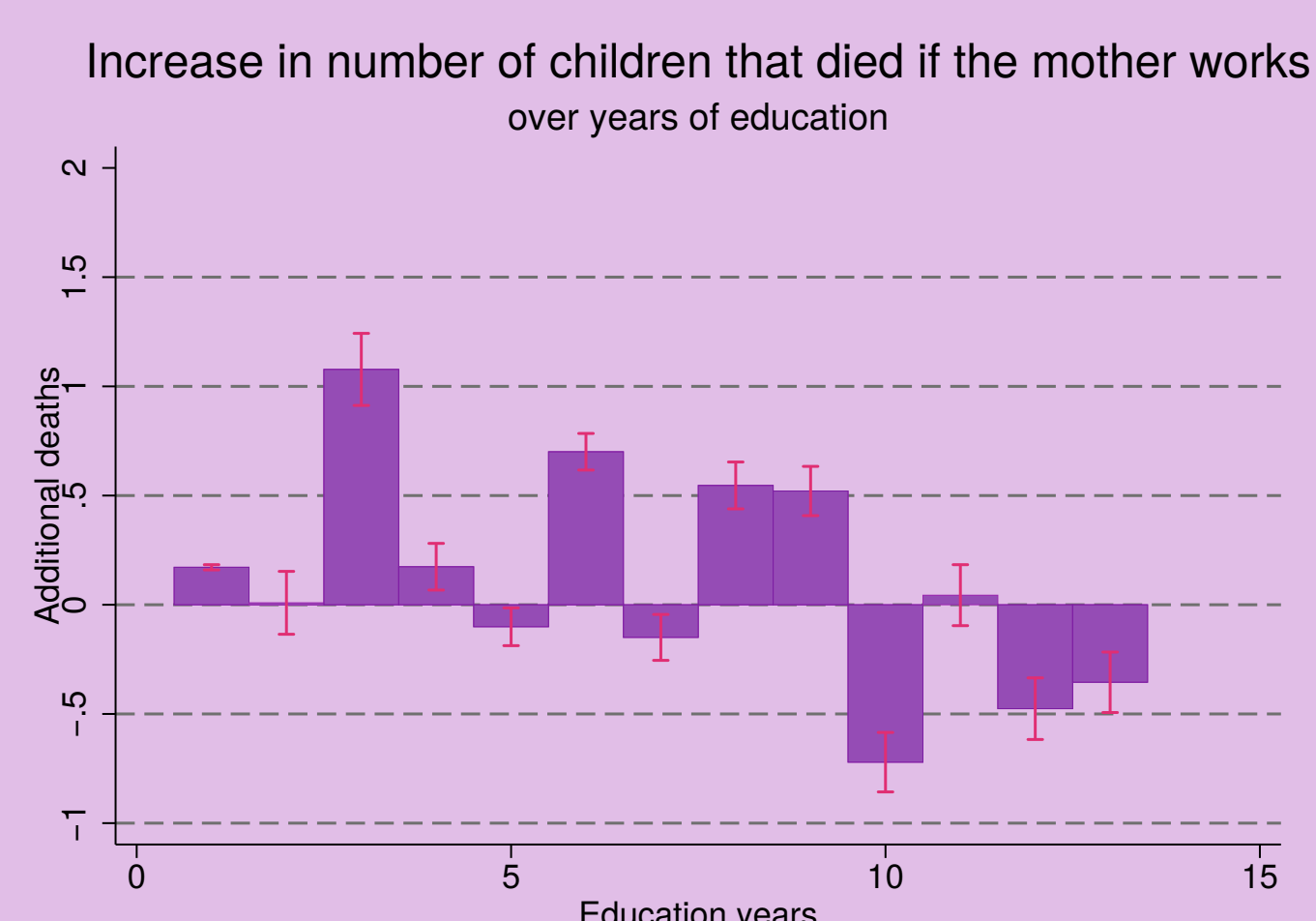
2. The reduction is larger in more developed regions, proxied by night-light intensity.



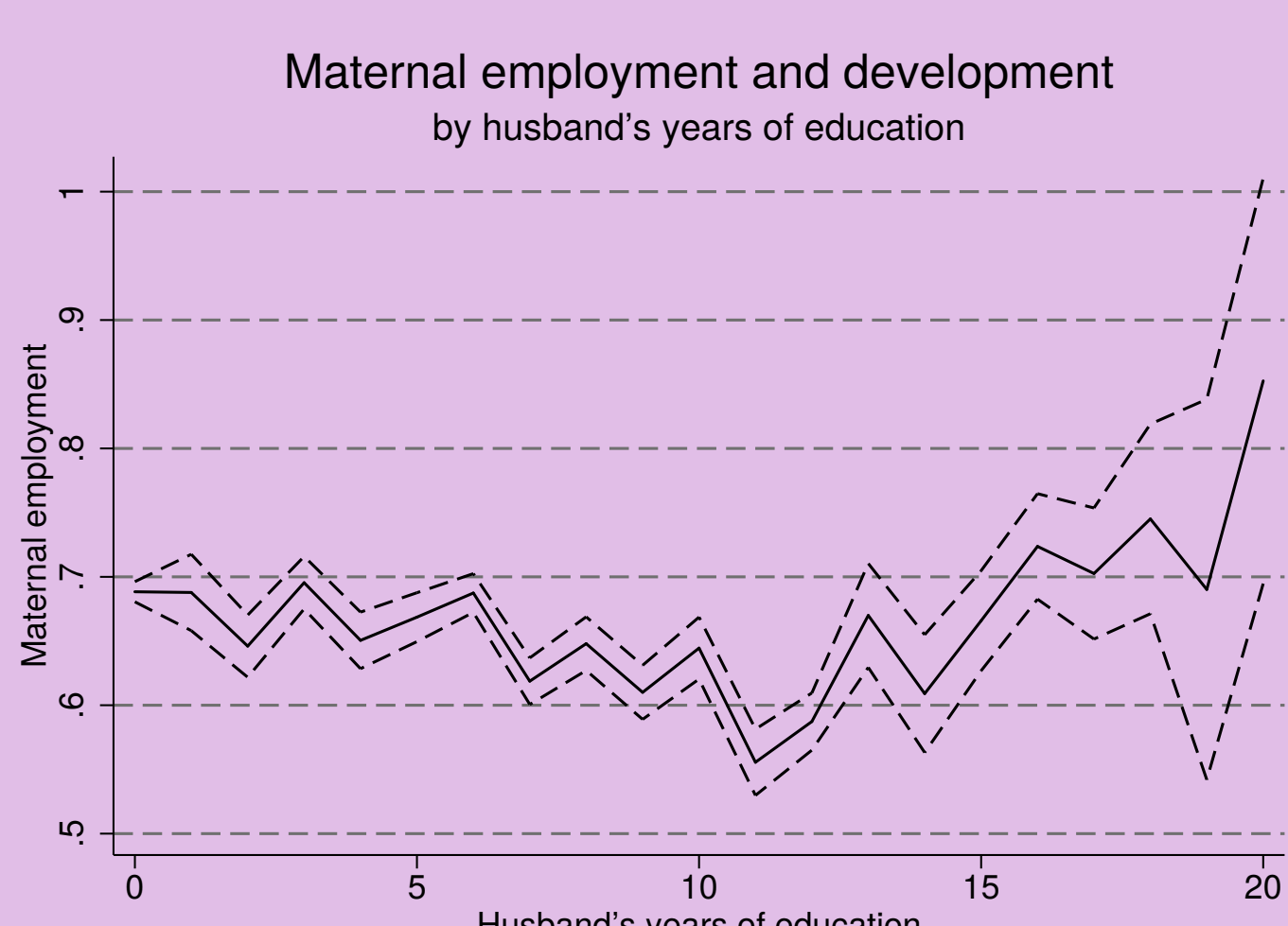
## 3. DATA and STYLISED FACTS

- Context:
  - Sub-Saharan Africa: high informality.
- Data: Demographic and Health Survey (DHS)
  - Considers all types of income-generating activities.
  - Includes individuals informally employed.
  - Socio-demographic information, data on children.

1. Higher child mortality among working mothers



2. U-shaped pattern between development and maternal employment



## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- **Maternal employment varies with the mortality risk it poses to children.**
  - Reductions are sizeable, but mostly **confined among well-off households and more developed areas.**
  - **0.5 pp** decrease in general,
  - **1.7 pp** in well-lit areas,
  - **3 pp** among affluent households, in general,
  - **5.6 pp** among affluent households, in well-lit areas.
- *Robustness: No effect in families without infants, (not in this poster).*

