

SWAA June 2022 Updates

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Latest survey wave included: May 2022

To sign up for regular results updates, please sign up [here](#).

- **Source of all data (unless noted):** Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes (SWAA), see www.wfhresearch.com

- **When referring to these results please cite:**

Barrero, Jose Maria, Nicholas Bloom, and Steven J. Davis, 2021. “Why working from home will stick,” National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 28731.

www.wfhresearch.com

The Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes

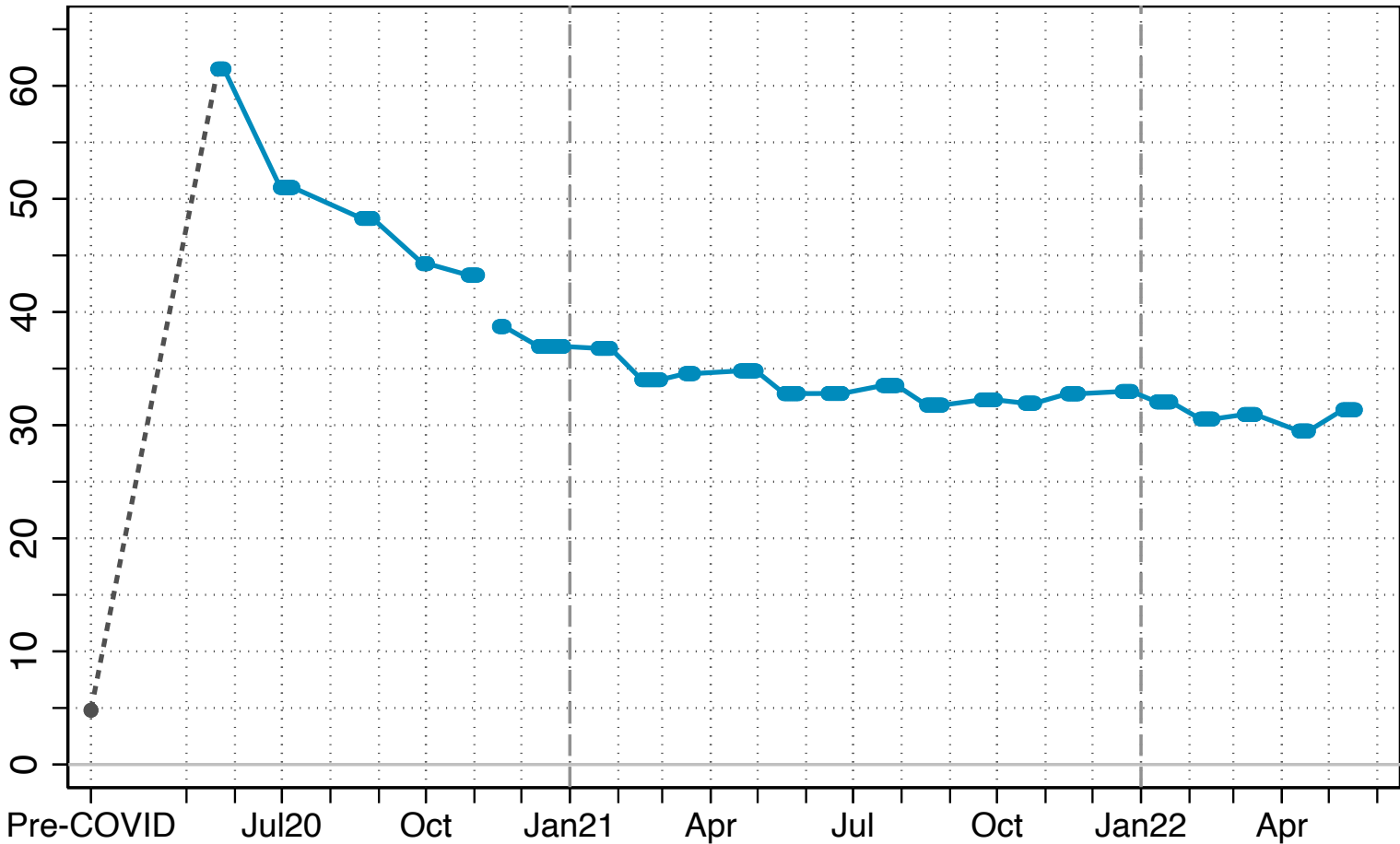


- Monthly online survey since May 2020, >100,000 observations to date.
- We design the survey instrument.
- Target population: U.S. residents, 20-64, who earned \geq \$10K in 2019 (\geq \$20K in early survey waves). From January to March 2022, we transitioned to earned \geq \$10K in prior year.
- The SWAA is fielded by market research firms that rely on wholesale aggregators (e.g., [Lucid](#)) for lists of potential survey participants.
- After dropping “speeders” (~16% of sample), we re-weight to match 2010-2019 CPS worker shares in age-sex-education-earnings cells. Dropping those who fail attention checks (roughly another 12%) sharpens some results.
- Median response time: 7 to 12 minutes, after dropping speeders
- Results, micro data, survey instruments, and more are freely available at www.WFHresearch.com.

Representativeness

- By design, we focus on persons who exhibit some attachment to the workforce, as evidenced by prior earnings.
- No respondents are recruited based on an interest in our topics.
- Since respondents take the survey using a computer, smartphone, iPad or like device, we miss people who never use such devices.
- Before re-weighting, the SWAA under samples the less educated, particularly those who did not finish high school.
- Even after re-weighting, we may over sample those who are more tech and internet savvy, especially among the least educated.

Percentage of Paid Full Days Worked from Home, May 2020 to May 2022



*Pre-COVID estimate taken from the 2017-2018 American Time Use Survey

*The break in the series in November 2020 reflects a change in the survey question.

- Source:** Responses to the questions:
- **Currently (this week) what is your work status?**
 - **For each day last week, did you work a full day (6 or more hours), and if so where?**

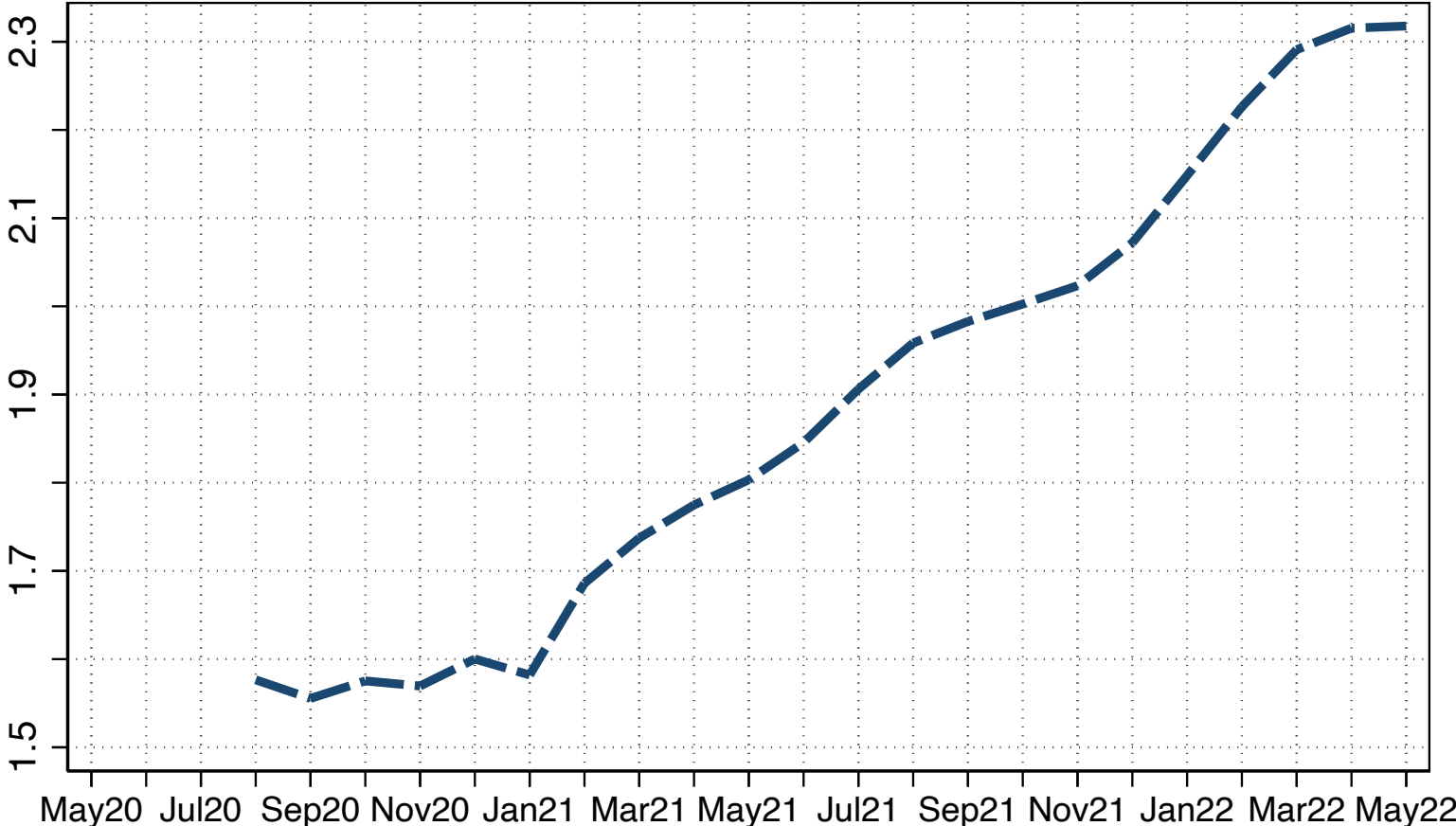
Notes: For each wave, we compute the percent of paid full days worked from home and plot it on the vertical axis. The horizontal-axis location shows when the survey was in the field. Before November 2020, we asked the first question above. Since November 2021, we have asked the second question. From November 2020 to October 2021, we back-cast responses to the current question using a regression model that relates the current-question responses to the responses to another question (not shown). The pre-COVID figure is from the 2017-2018 American Time Use Survey. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match CPS shares by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

N = 70,770

Employer plans for WFH post-COVID are stabilizing at 2.3 days per week (for persons able to work from home)



Average Days per Week Working From Home After the Pandemic Ends: Employer Plans



Sample: Workers able to work from home

Responses to the question:
- *After the pandemic ends, how often is your employer planning for you to work full days at home?*

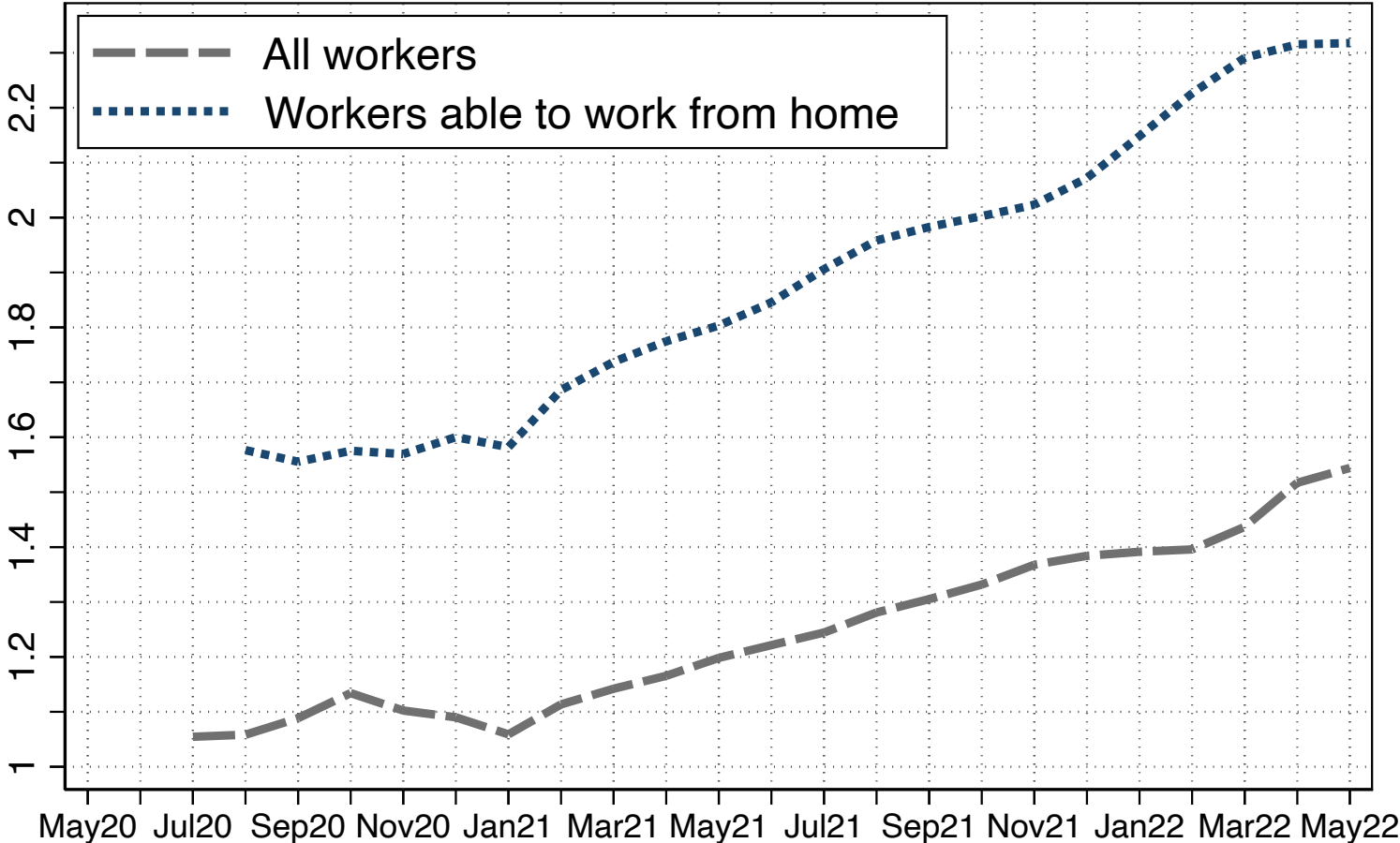
Sample: Data are from all SWAA waves, covering August 2020 to May 2022. The sample includes all respondents who reported their employer’s plans for post-COVID WFH and who have work-from-home experience during the pandemic (thus able to work from home). We exclude respondents who report having no employer. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings.

N = 54,231 (able to work from home)

Employer plans for Full Paid Days Worked from Home after the Pandemic



Average Days per Week Working From Home
 After the Pandemic Ends: Employer plans



Responses to the question:

- *After the pandemic ends, how often is your employer planning for you to work full days at home?*

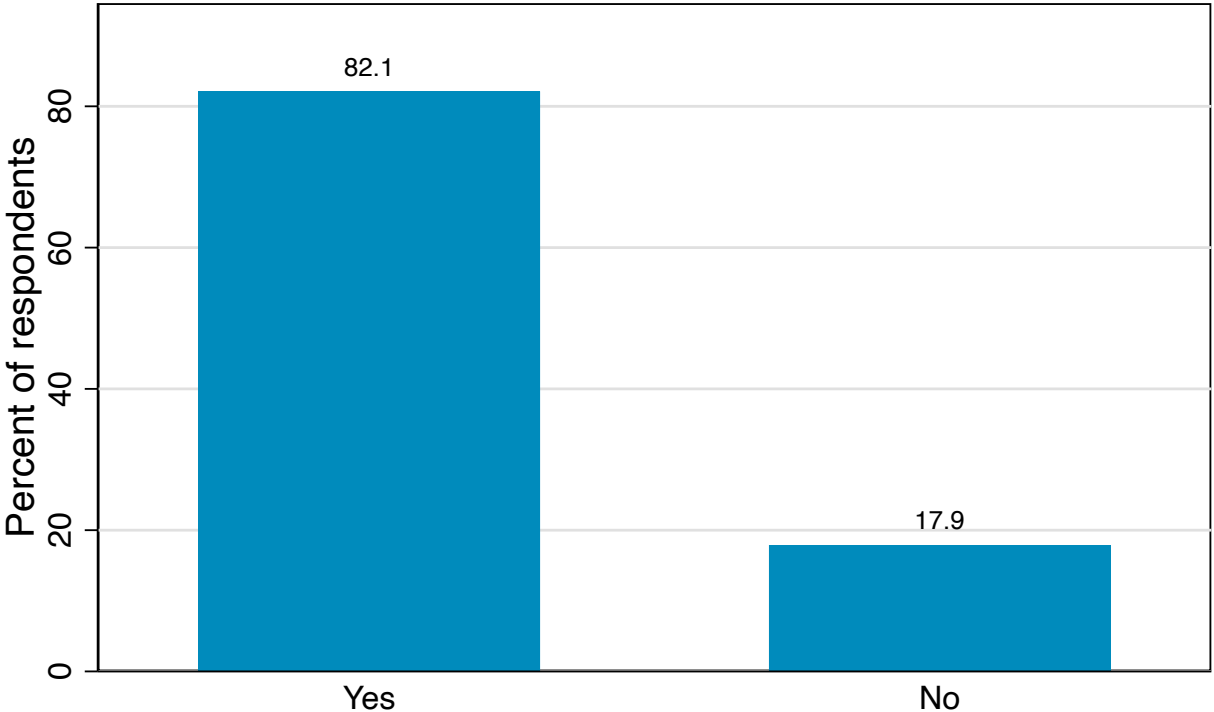
Sample: Data are from all SWAA waves, covering July 2020 to April 2022. The sample includes all respondents who reported their employer’s plans for post-COVID WFH (“All workers” series), restricting attention to workers who have work-from-home experience during the pandemic for the series labeled “Workers able to work from home.” In particular, we exclude respondents who report having no employer. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings.

N = 77,449 (all respondents) and 54,231 (able to work from home)

82% of respondents came to the worksite as much as their employer wants. But 43% say their employer does not punish those who come in less than employer wants.

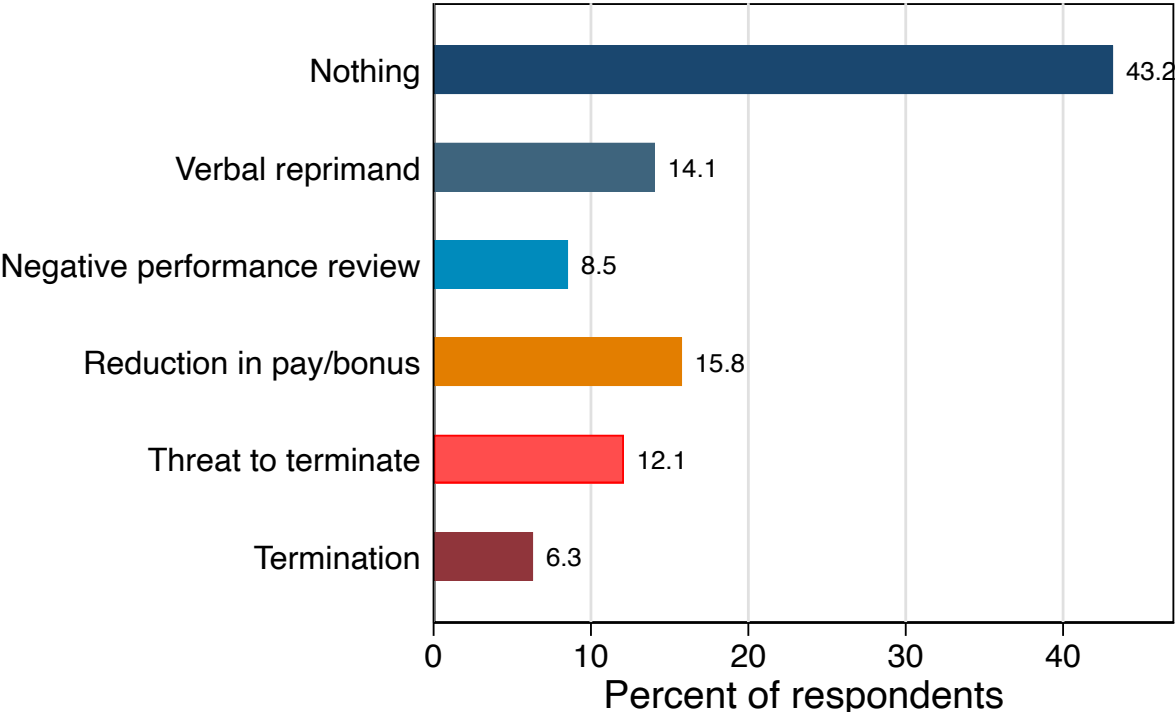


Last week, did you come into work as many days as your employer wanted you to come in?



Sample: Respondents working from home 1 or more days per week.

How has your employer responded to employees who work on business premises fewer days than requested?



*Note: Excludes respondents who say 'I don't know' or 'Other'.

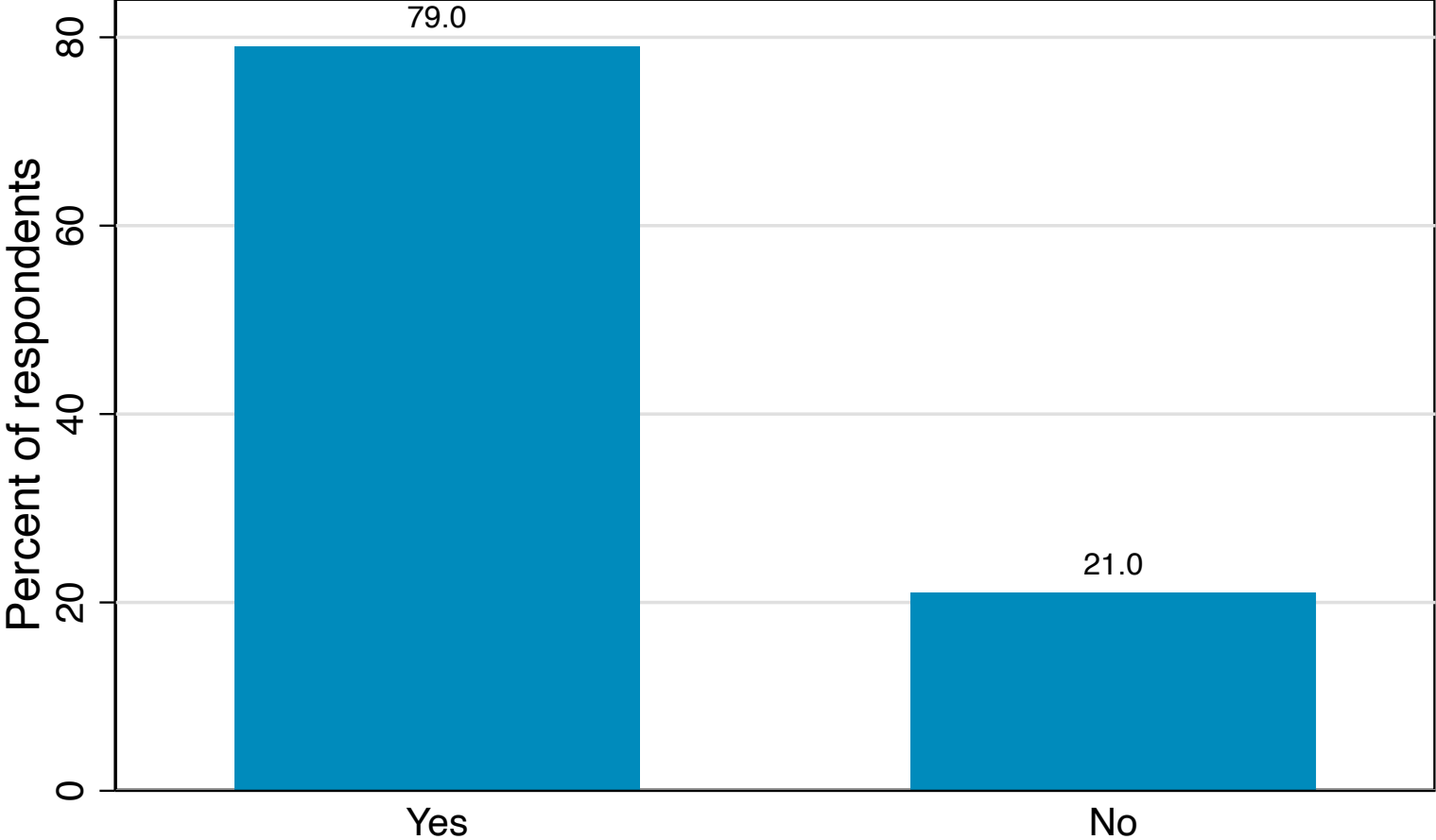
Responses to the questions: Last week, did you come into work as many days as your employer wanted you to come in? How has your employer responded to employees who work on business premises fewer days than requested?

Notes: The sample includes respondents to the May 2022 SWAA wave who are currently working as wage/salary workers. The left chart restricts attention to those who worked from home at least one day during the reference week, and the right chart excludes respondents who say “I don’t know” or “Other.” Both exclude respondents who fail one or more attention check questions. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings. **N = 1,766 (left). N = 2,177 (right)**

Nearly 80% of respondents say they are already following their employer's plans for post-COVID working arrangements.



Are you already following your employer's planned post-COVID working arrangements?



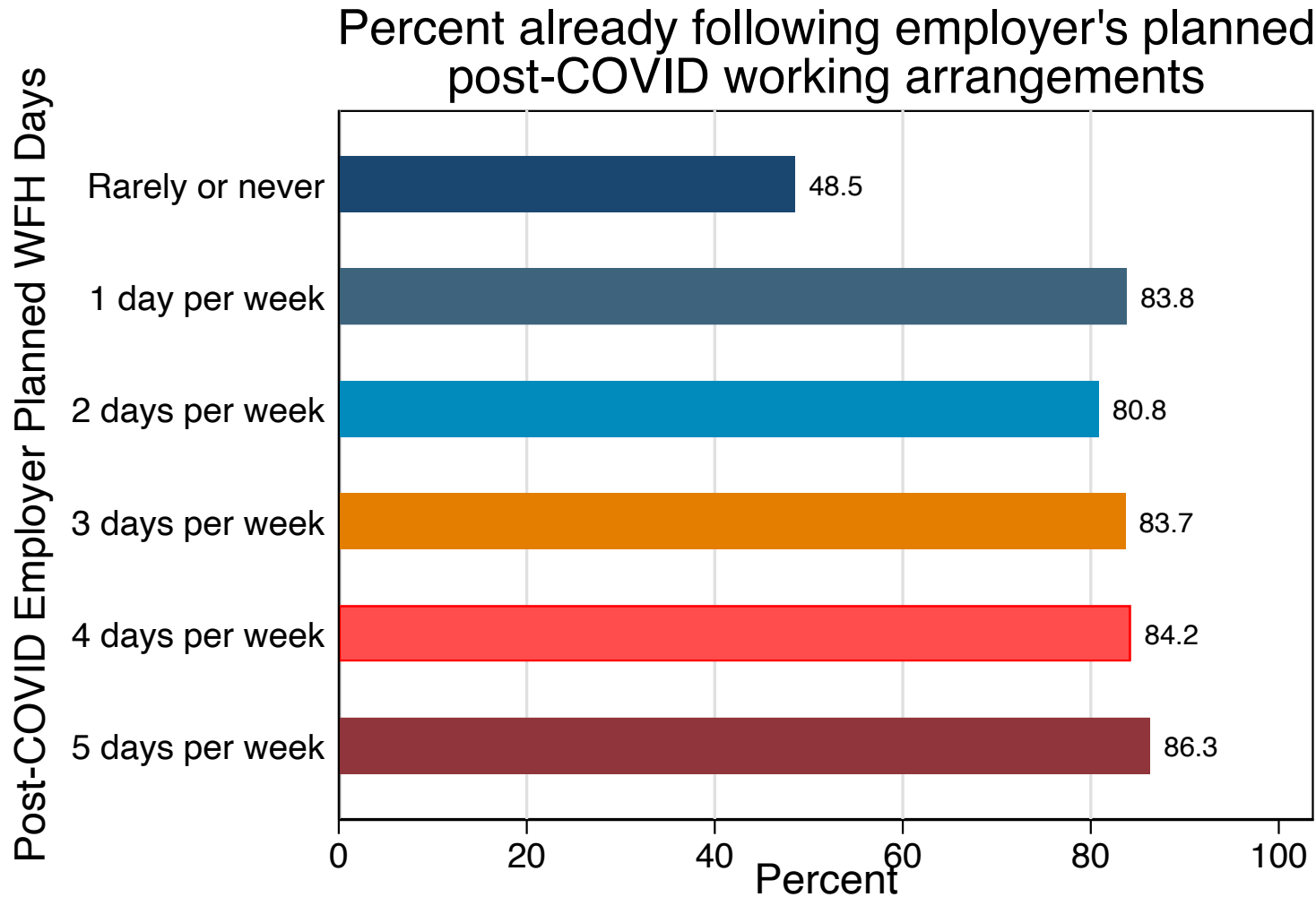
Sample: Respondents working from home 1 or more days per week.

Responses to the question:

- Are you already following your employer's plan [for post-COVID working arrangements]?

Notes: The sample includes respondents to the May 2022 SWAA wave who worked from home at least 1 day during the reference week and are not self-employed, contract, or gig workers. We also exclude respondents who say their employer has not given them clear plans about post-COVID working arrangements or who fail one or more attention check questions. The question text does not include the words in parentheses in the survey. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings. **N = 1,787.**

Among employees who currently WFH 1+ days per week, what percent already follow their employer's plans for post-pandemic working arrangements?



Sample: Respondents working from home 1 or more days per week.

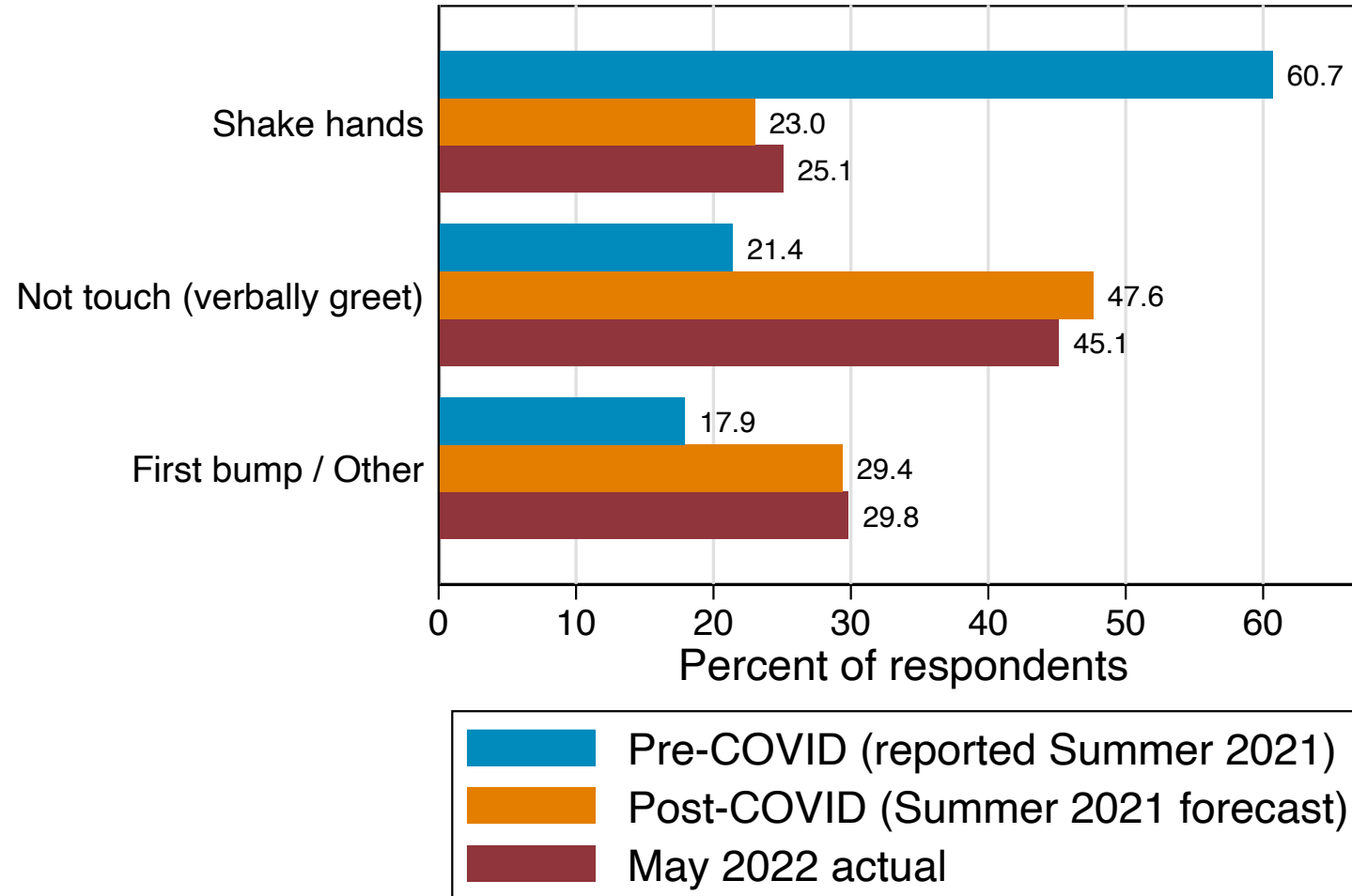
Responses to the questions:

- Last week, did you come into work as many days as your employer wanted you to come in?
- After the pandemic ends, how often is your employer planning for you to work full days at home?

Notes: The sample includes respondents to the May 2022 SWAA wave who worked from home at least 1 day during the reference week and are not self-employed, contract, or gig workers. The chart excludes respondents who say their employer has not given them clear plans about post-COVID working arrangements or who fail one or more attention check questions. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings. **N = 1,778**

Social norms for greeting people at work have undergone seemingly permanent shift

Greetings at work, pre- and post-COVID



Responses to the questions:

- **Before COVID (in 2019)**, when you were introduced to somebody at work what did you do?
- **When you return to work in person** and you are introduced to somebody [what] will you [do]?
- **Currently**, when you are introduced to somebody at work, what do you do?

Notes: The sample for the pre-COVID estimate and post-COVID forecast come from the July and August 2021 SWAA waves. The question about current behavior appeared in the May 2022 SWAA. The question text does not include the words in parentheses in the survey. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in 2019 or 2021 to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings. **N = 6,839** (pre-COVID and post-COVID forecast). **N = 3,959** (May 2022 actual).

References



- Barrero, Jose Maria, Nicholas Bloom, and Steven J. Davis, 2021. “Why working from home will stick,” National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 28731.

Appendix A: Sample Sizes and Survey Collection Over Time



- Each survey wave goes into the field on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, and data collection typically takes 10 to 12 days.
- During 2021, data collection began on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. We moved to the 2nd Tuesday to avoid collecting during major holidays (e.g., Thanksgiving, Christmas).
- As of mid-2022, we collect 5,000 responses per wave (before dropping speeders and responses that fail attention check questions).
- Before April 2021, we collected 2,500 responses per month in most months, with a few exceptions when we expanded the sample during key turning points (e.g. December 2020 and January 2021).
- We collected 7,500 responses per wave in January and February 2022 for the transition from a 2019-earnings threshold to a prior-year earnings threshold.

Appendix B: More Information about the Transitions to New Earnings Thresholds

- From May 2020 to March 2021, we sampled persons aged 20 to 64 who earned \geq \$20,000 in 2019.
- From April to September 2021, we transitioned to an earnings threshold of \geq \$10,000 in 2019, as follows:
 - Starting in April 2021, we relax our sample selection criteria to include persons who earned \$10,000 and \$20,000 in 2019.
 - When performing statistical analyses on data for the transition period, we down weight respondents who earned \$10,000 and \$20,000 in 2019 as follows:
 - By a factor of (1/6) in April 2021
 - By a factor of (2/6) in May 2021
 - ... a factor of (5/6) August 2020, with no down weighting from September 2021 onwards.
 - We apply this down weighting in addition to our usual reweighting to match CPS shares by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

- From January to April 2022, we transitioned to an earnings threshold of \$10,000 in the prior year, as follows:
 - January: 75% of respondents were required to earn at least \$10,000 in 2019 and 25% to earn at least \$10,000 in the prior year (2021).
 - February: 50% of respondents were required to earn at least \$10,000 in 2019 and 50% to earn at least \$10,000 in the prior year.
 - March: 75% of respondents were required to earn at least \$10,000 in 2019 and 25% to earn at least \$10,000 in the prior year.
 - April: 100% of respondents were required to earn at least \$10,000 in the prior year.