

SWAA December 2024 Updates*

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8 December 2024



Latest survey wave included: November 2024

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

* Many thanks to Mert Akan and Diego Álvarez for excellent research assistance.

- **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, >200,000 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 the prior year. As of July 2023, we also now developed a dataset for 2022 and later that does not impose an earnings requirement.
- 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.

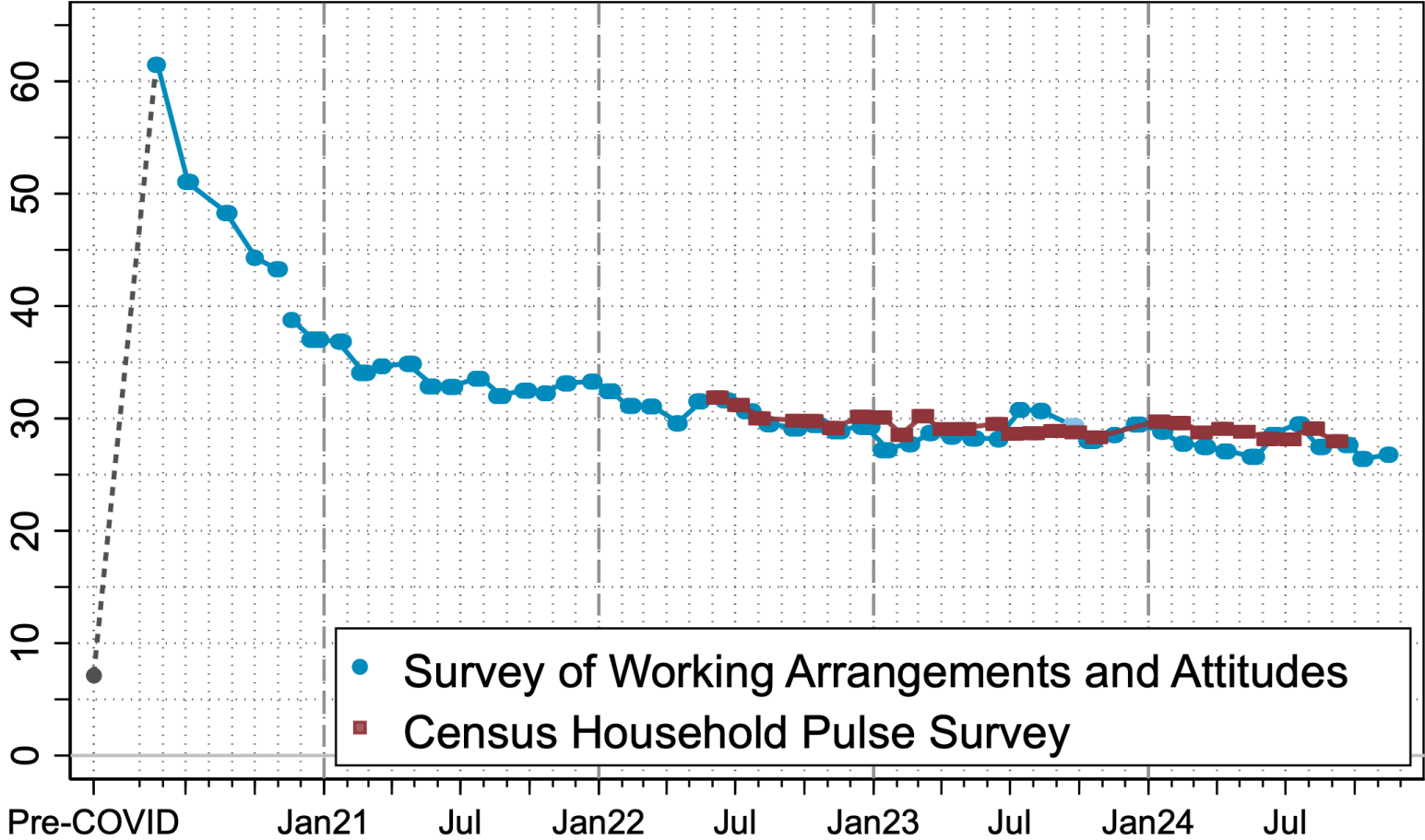
Representativeness

- By design, we focus on persons who exhibit some attachment to the workforce, as evidenced by prior earnings. When noted, some results using 2022 and later data do not impose an earnings requirement.
- 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.

About 28% of Paid Days in the US in September 2024 Were Work-From-Home Days



Percentage of paid full days worked from home



Source: Responses to the questions:

- **Currently (this week) what is your work status?** (SWAA)
- **For each day last week, did you work a full day (6 or more hours), and if so where?** (SWAA)
- **In the last 7 days, have you...teleworked or worked from home?** (HHP)

Notes: For each wave, we compute the percent of paid full days worked from home in the SWAA and Household Pulse Survey (HHP) and plot it on the vertical axis. The horizontal-axis location shows when the survey was in the field. The pre-COVID figure is from the 2017-2018 American Time Use Survey. SWAA: 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 based on current-question responses and another question (not shown). We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in a prior year to match CPS shares by age-sex-education-earnings cells. HHP: We focus on individuals aged 20 to 64 with household incomes above \$25,000 per year. We assign 30% of days WFH if the respondent did so for “for 1-2 days;” 70% if they did so “for 3-4 days;” 100% if “5 or more days;” and 0 for “No.”

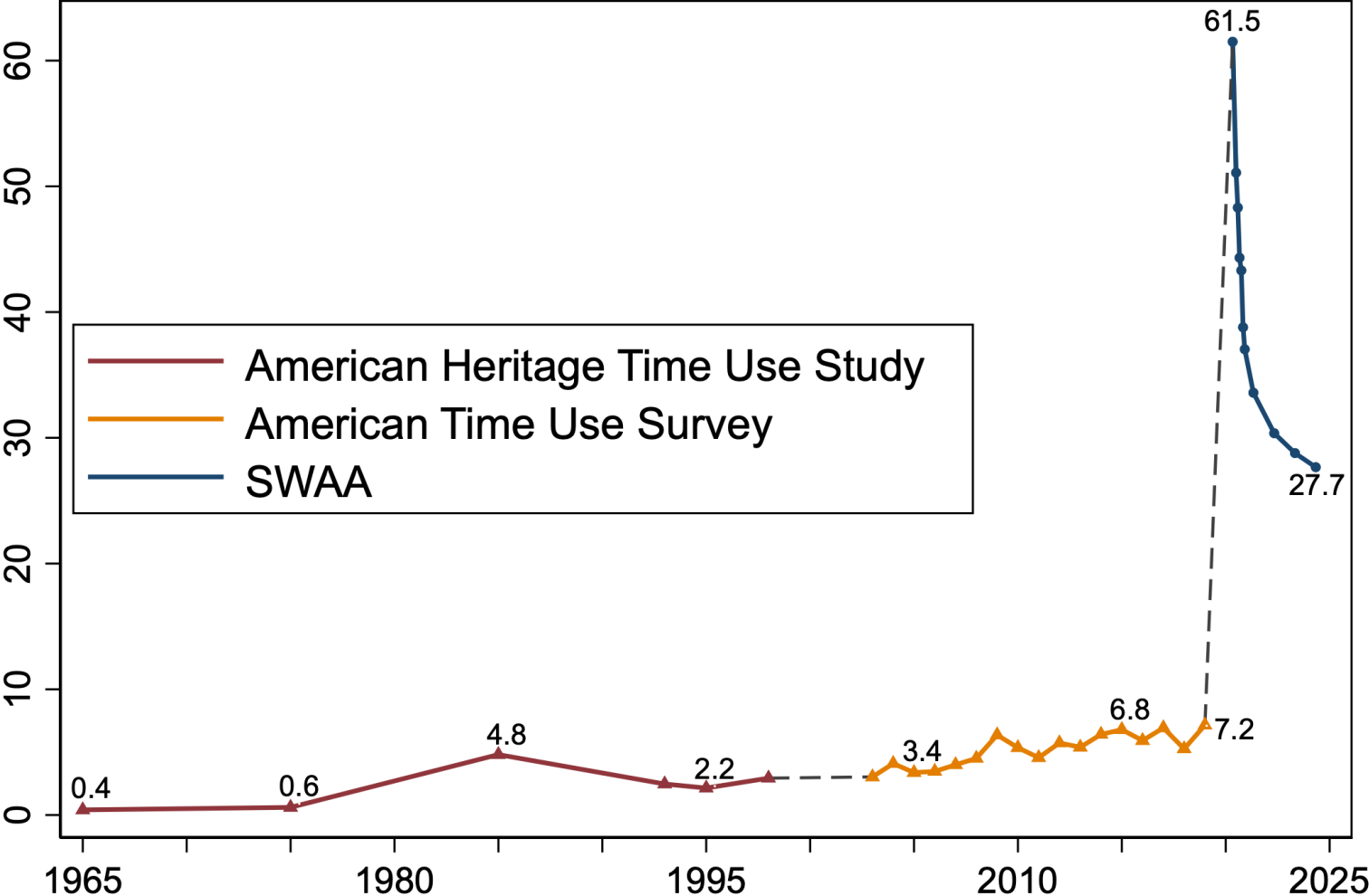
*We estimate the pre-COVID rate using the 2019 American Time Use Survey
 *The break in the series in November 2020 reflects a change in the survey question.
 *The SWAA Sept. 2023 estimate averages August and October due to data quality issues in September.

N = 212,533 (SWAA) N = 923,587 (HHP)

The Pandemic Permanently Increased WFH, Equivalent to Almost 40 Years of Pre-Pandemic Growth



Full Days Worked at Home, Percent of Paid Workdays



Source: Responses to the questions:

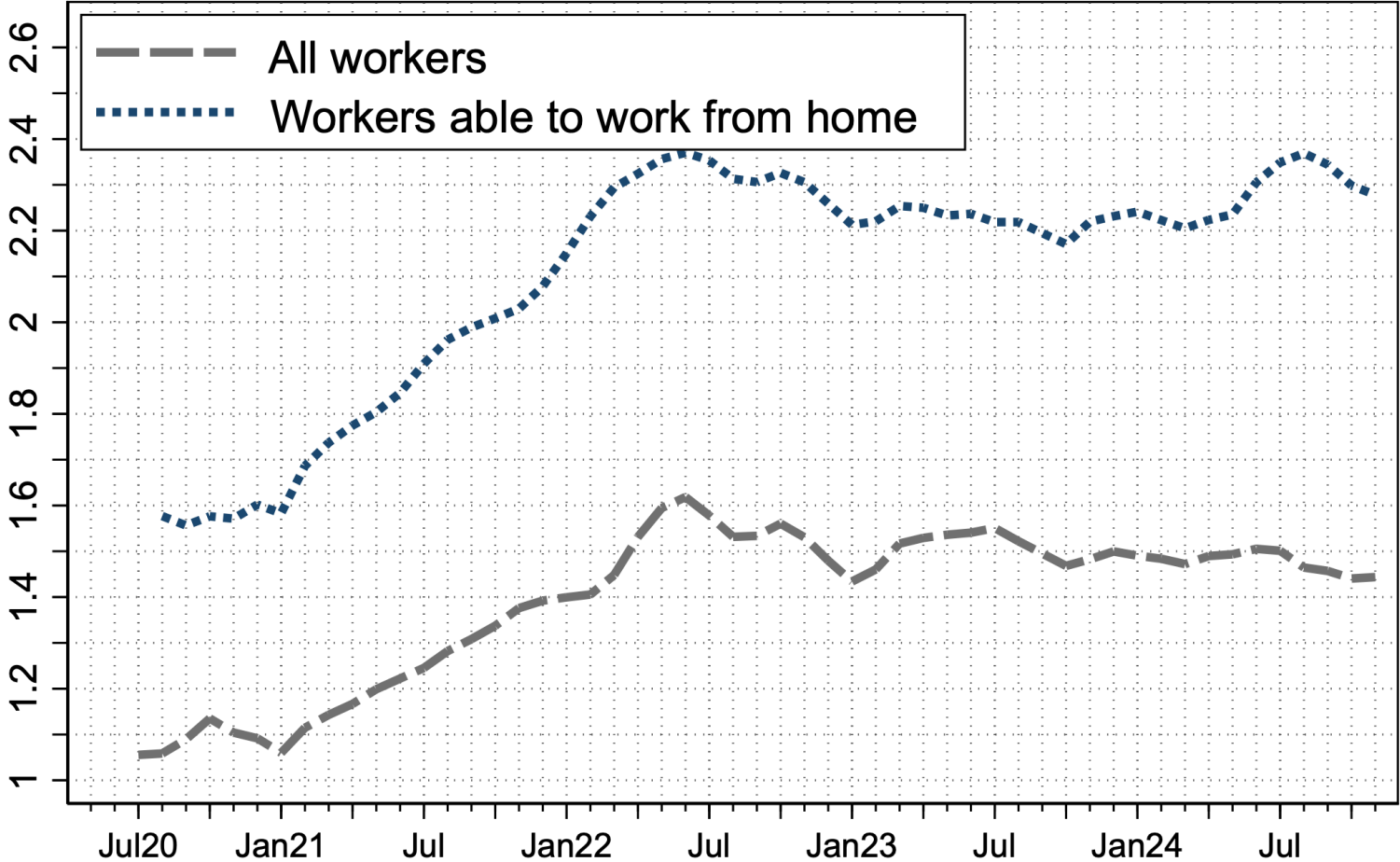
- In their time diary the respondent listed the activity "Paid work at home" for **6 or more hours**. (AHTUS)
- How did this person **usually** get to work last week? (ACS)
- For each day last week, did you work a full day (6 or more hours), and, if so, where? (SWAA)

Notes: For each dataset, we compute the percent of working individuals who worked full days at home during the survey's reference period. For the AHTUS and ACS, if an individual reports usually working from home, we mark them as working from home 100% of the time. In SWAA we compute the percent of full paid days at home to account for a hybrid work schedule, and calculate monthly averages. We report those monthly values in 2020 and combine them into yearly averages from 2021 onwards. Then we plot each percentage on the vertical axis. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$20,000 or more in 2019 dollars to overall population shares. We impute the September 2023 data value as the average of August and October due to data quality issues.

Employer Plans for WFH Trend Near 2.3 Days per Week for Persons Able to Work From Home



Average Days per Week Working From Home
Looking 1+ Years Ahead: Employer plans



Responses to the question:

- *Looking one year ahead, how often is your employer planning for you to work full days at home?*

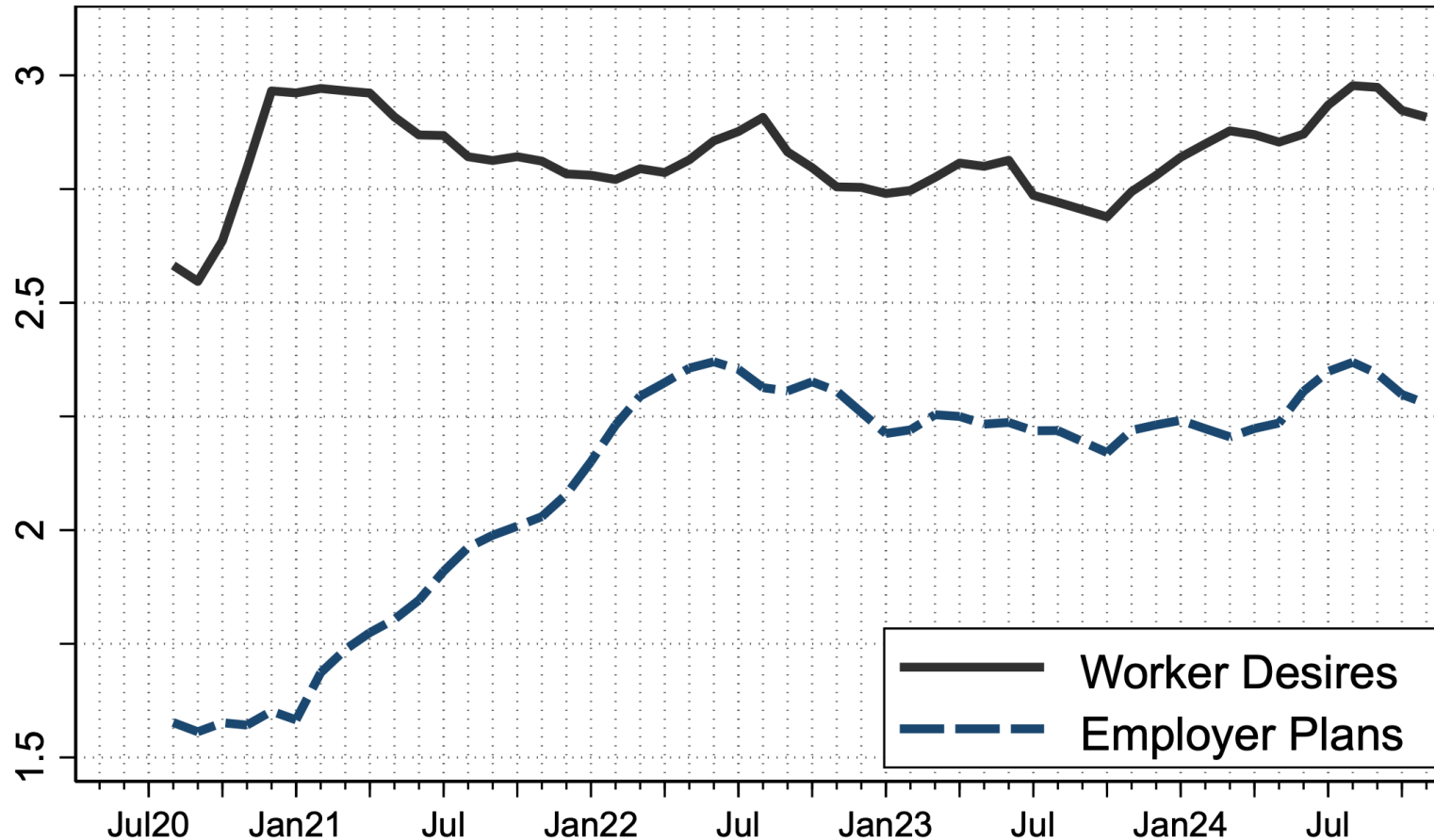
Sample: Data are from all SWAA waves, covering July 2020 to November 2024. The sample includes all respondents who reported their employer’s plans for WFH as the pandemic ends (“All workers” series), but the series labeled “Workers able to work from home” restricts attention to workers who have work-from-home experience during the pandemic. In both cases, 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 a prior year to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings. We impute September 2023 data as the average between August and October due to data quality issues.

N = 250,634 (all respondents) and 177,855 (able to work from home)

The Gap Between How Much Employees Want to Work from Home and Employer Plans Fluctuates Near 0.6 Days



Average Days per Week Working From Home After the Pandemic Ends: Workers Able to WFH



Sample: Workers able to work from home

Responses to the questions:

- Looking one year ahead, how often would you like to have full paid days at home?
- Looking one year ahead, 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 November 2024. The sample includes all respondents who responded to the relevant survey and have work-from-home experience during the pandemic. For the employer plans series, we exclude respondents who report having no employer. We impute September 2023 data as the average between August and October due to data quality issues.

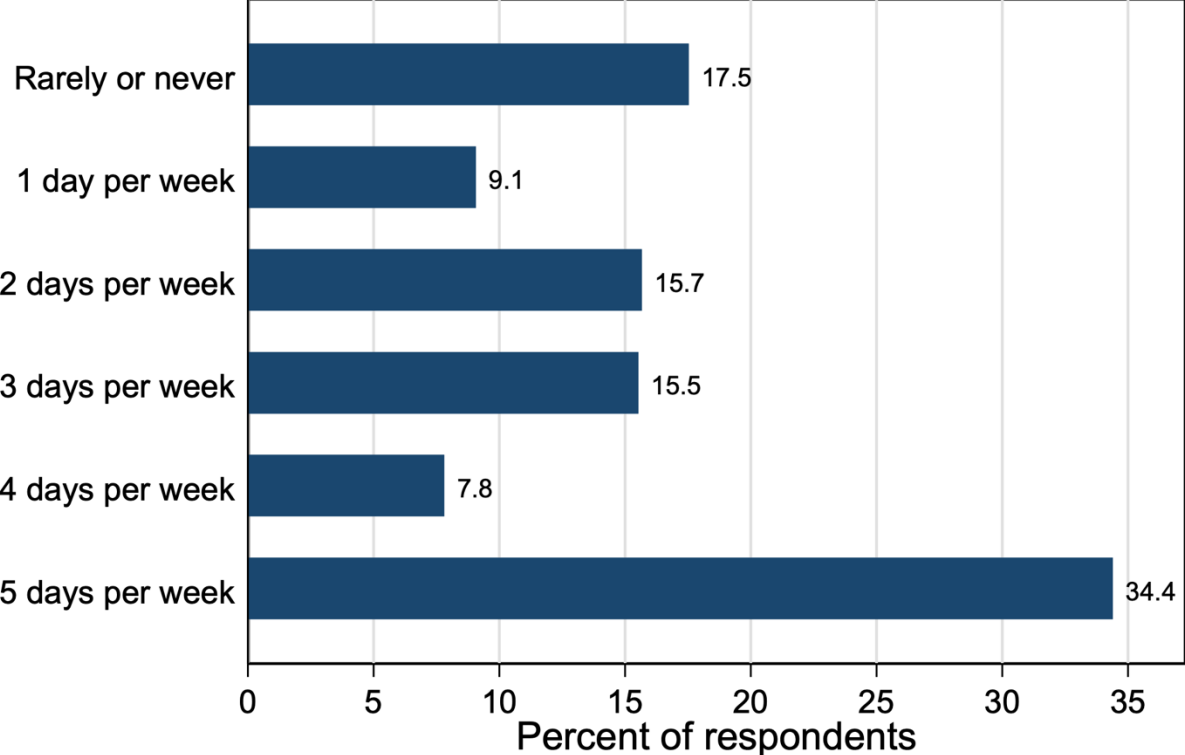
N = 177,855 (employer plans, able to work from home)

N = 191,741 (worker desires, able to work from home)

Employers Offer Fewer Fully Remote Jobs and More Fully Onsite Jobs Than Employees Want

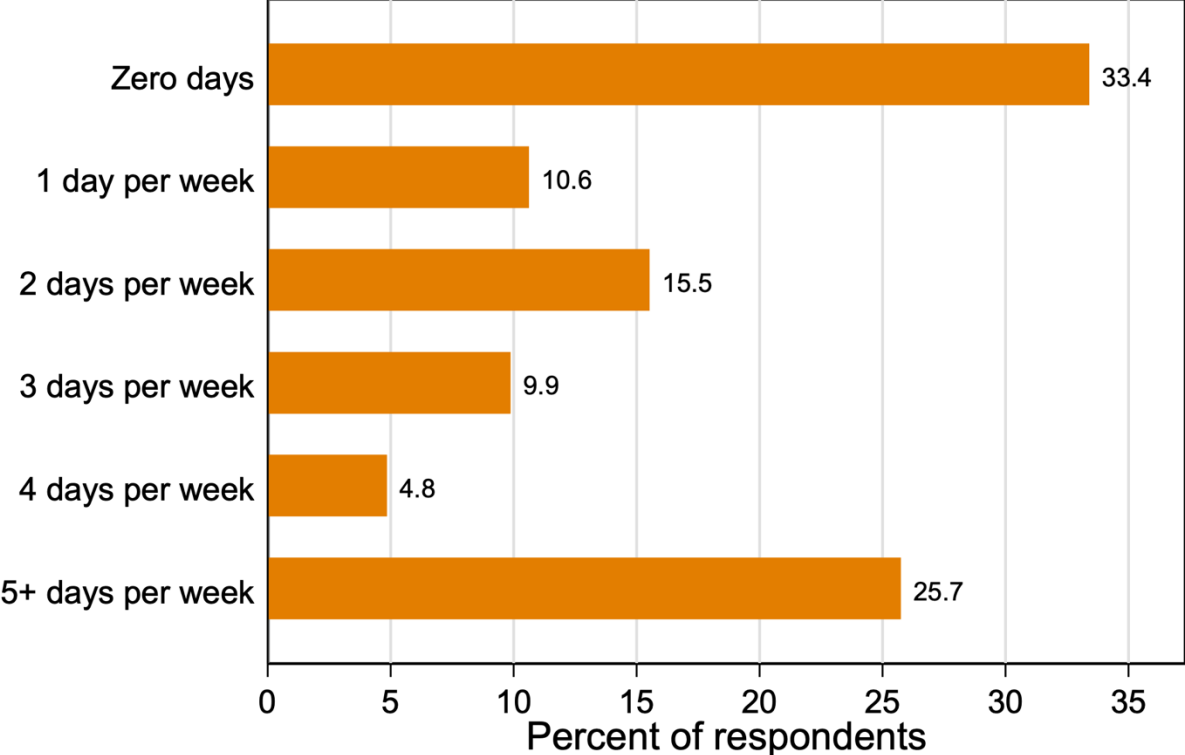


Worker desired amount of post-COVID WFH days



Sample: Full-time wage and salary employees who are able to WFH. N = 8024

Current amount of WFH days



Sample: Full-time wage and salary employees who are able to WFH. N = 7687

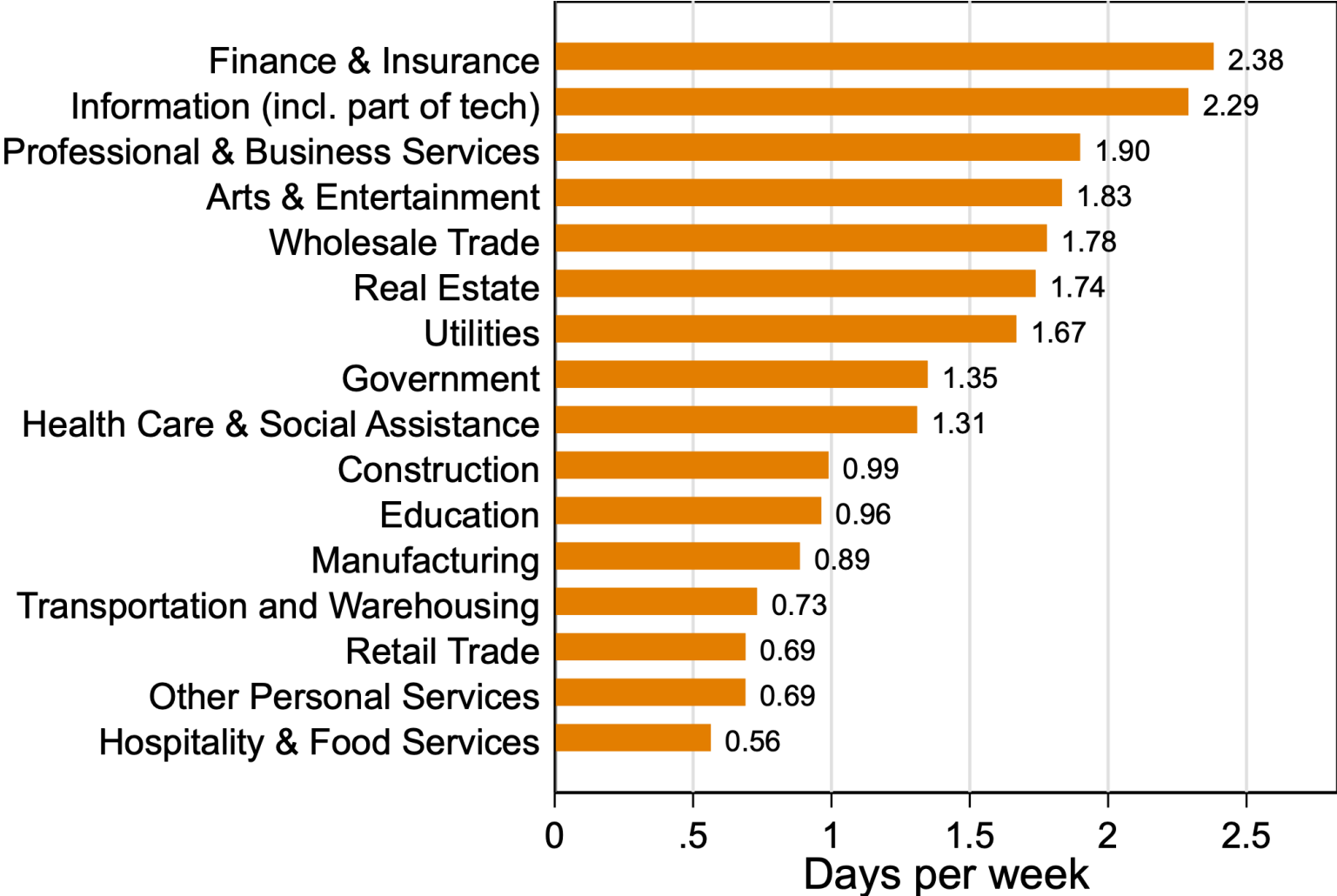
Responses to the questions: *As the pandemic ends*, how often would you **like to** have paid workdays at home? *For each day last week*, did you **work a full day (6 or more hours)**, and if so **where**?

Sample: Data are from the August to November 2024 SWAA waves. The sample includes full-time wage and salary employees (i.e. who worked 5 or more days during the survey reference week) who have work-from-home experience during the pandemic and pass the attention-check questions. Numbers for “5 days per week” in the right chart include responses for 6 or 7 full days worked from home. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in a prior year to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings.

Working from Home is Most Prevalent in Finance, Tech, and Professional and Business Services Sectors



Current working from home: All wage and salary employees



Responses to the question:

- For each day last week, did you **work a full day (6 or more hours), and if so where?**

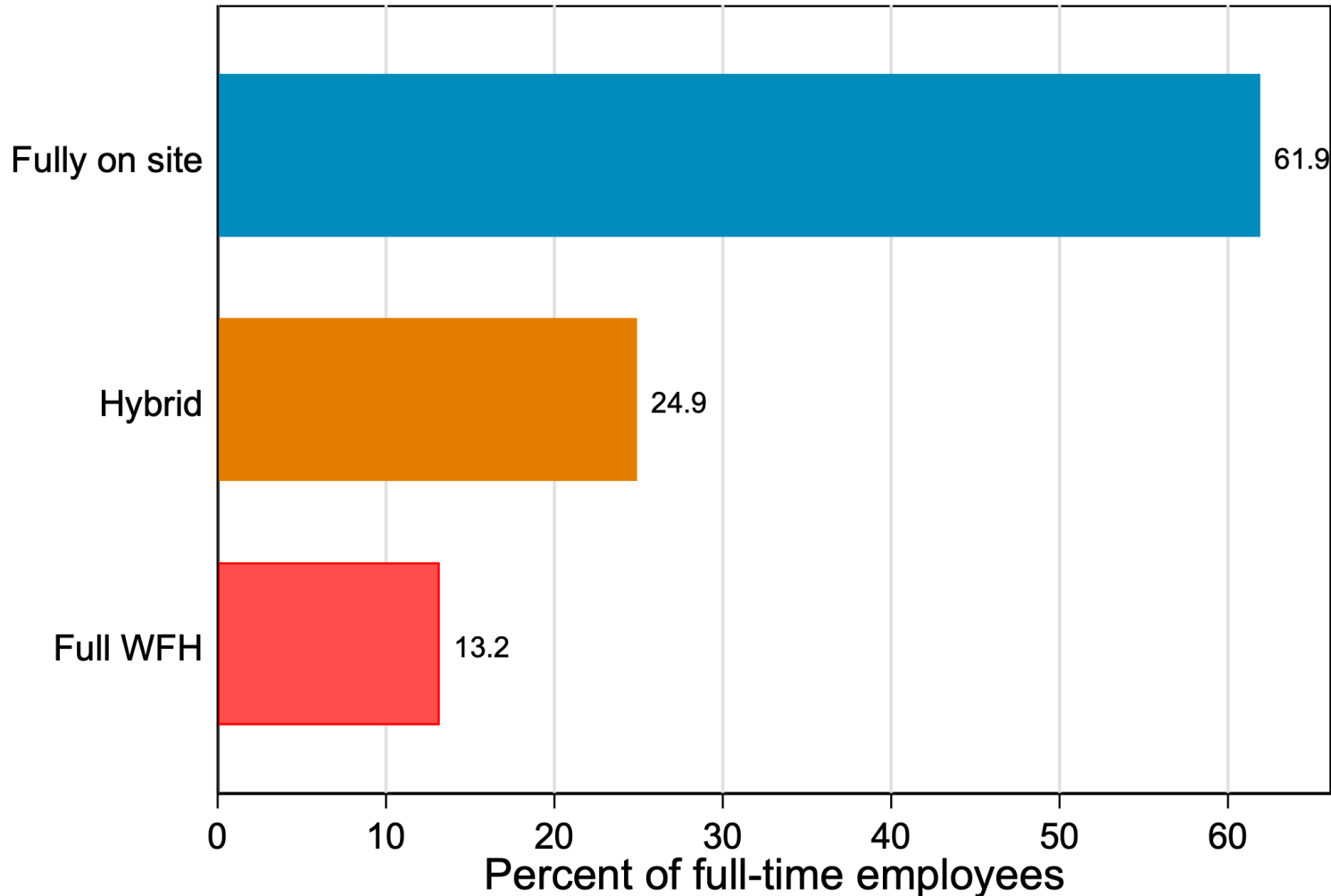
Sample: Data are from the June to November 2024 SWAA waves. The sample includes all wage and salary employees who pass the attention-check questions. We exclude mining due to insufficient observations and agriculture to focus on non-farm jobs. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in a prior year to match Current Population Survey on age, sex, education, and earnings.

N = 21,216

By Mid-2024: 12% of Full-Time Employees Were Fully Remote, 61% Were Full-Time on Site, and 27% Were in a Hybrid Arrangement



Working Arrangements



Source: Responses to the questions:

- *For each day last week, did you work a full day (6 or more hours), and if so where?*

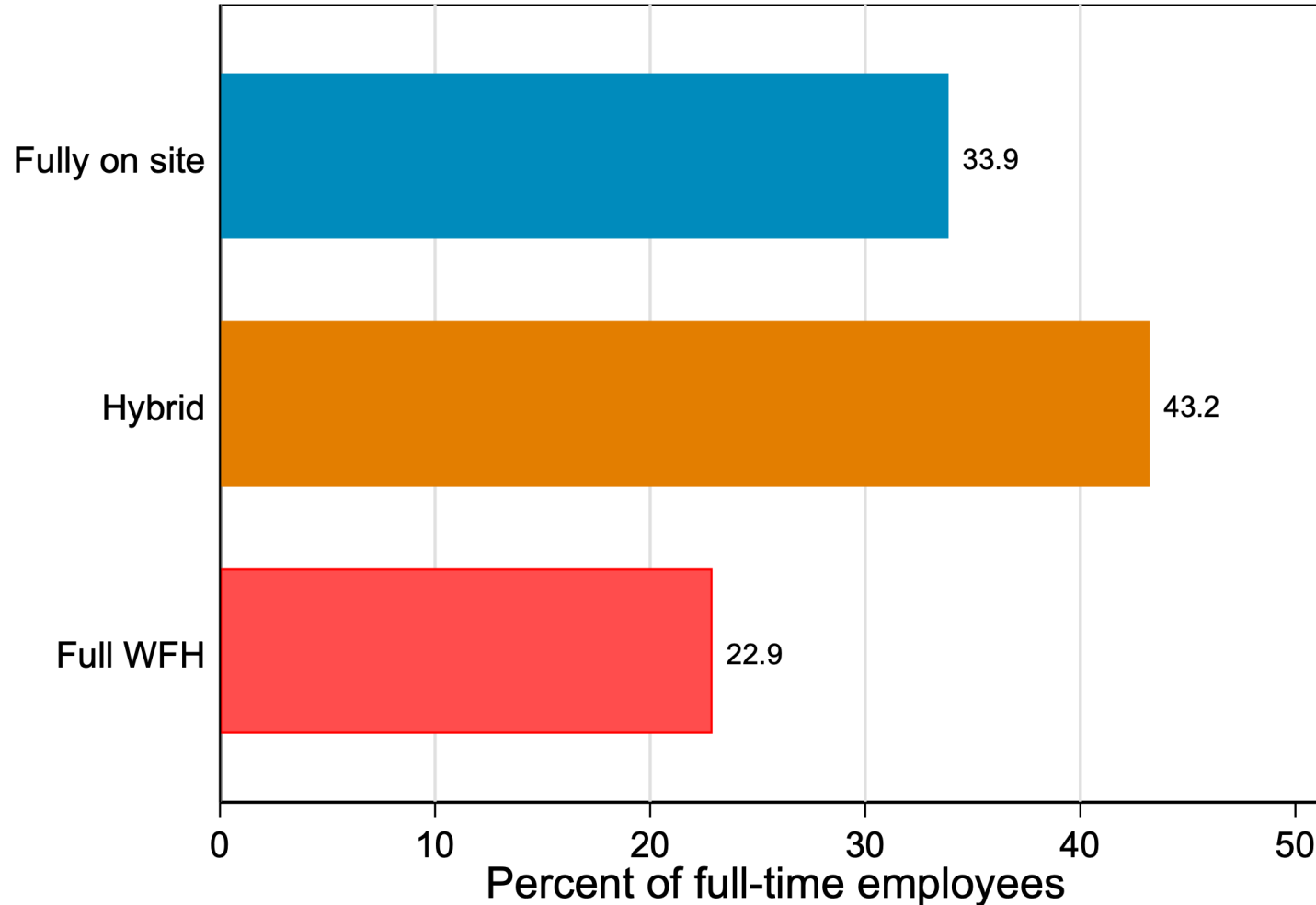
Notes: We compute the percent of full-time (i.e. work 5+ days/week) wage and salary employees who either i) worked all their days on business premises; ii) worked some days on business premises and some days at home; or iii) worked all all days at home during the survey's reference week. Then we show the percentage for each group. The sample covers the August to November 2024 waves of the SWAA. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in a prior year to match CPS shares by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

N = 13,586

For Employees that Can Work from Home, the Most Common Practice is Hybrid, with Fully On Site Close Behind



Working Arrangements of Those Able to WFH August to November 2024



Source: Responses to the questions:

- *For each day last week, did you work a full day (6 or more hours), and if so where?*

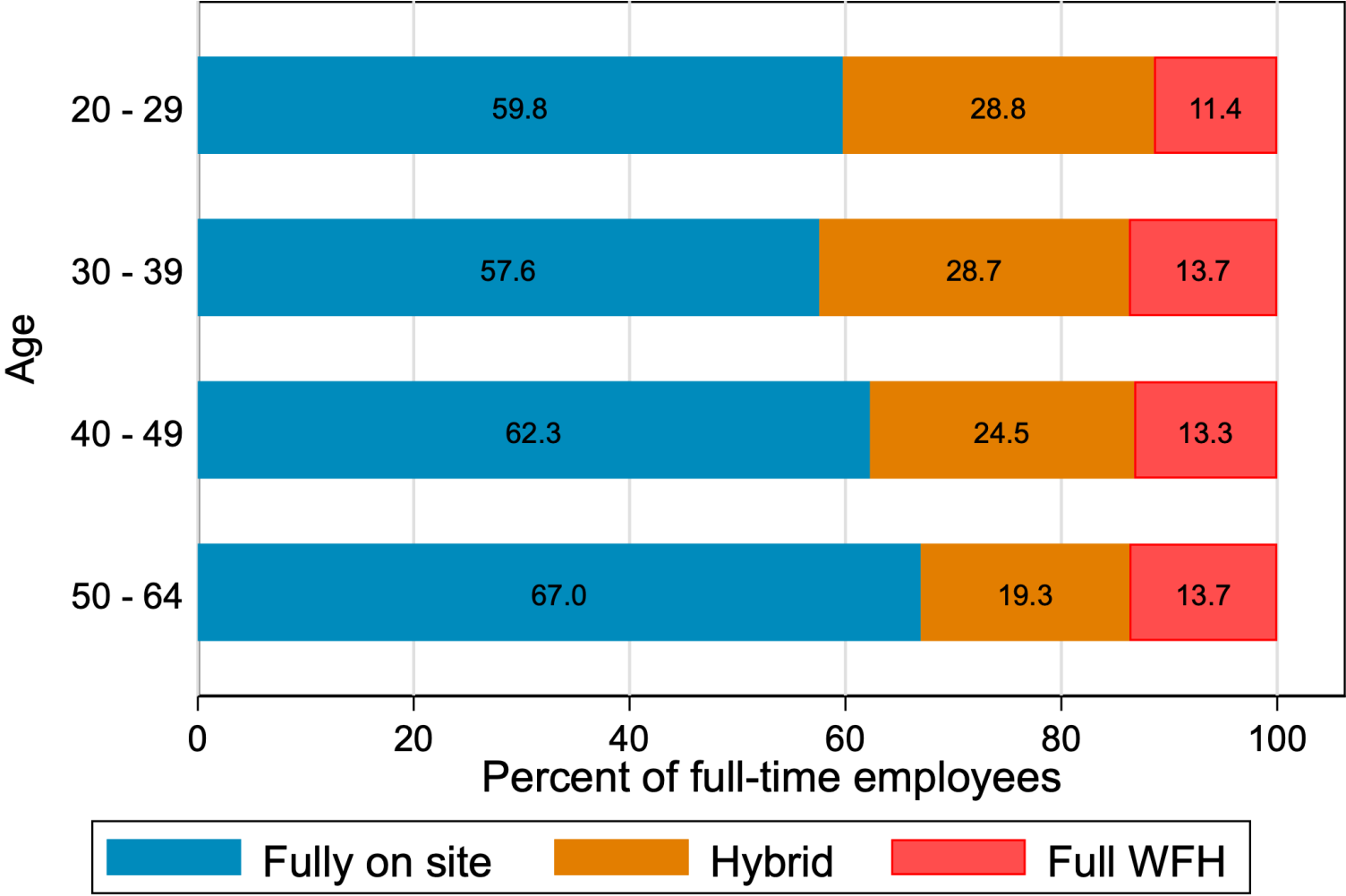
Notes: We compute the percent of full-time (i.e. work 5+ days/week) wage and salary employees who are able to work from home and either i) worked all their days on business premises; ii) worked some days on business premises and some days at home; or iii) worked all all days at home during the survey's reference week. Then we show the percentage for each group. We infer that somebody is able to work from home if they currently do so 1+ days per week, or did so at some point since the start of COVID. The sample covers the August to November 2024 waves of the SWAA. 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 = 8,816

Workers In Their 50s and 60s Are Fully On Site and Fully Remote More Often Than Younger Workers



Working Arrangements by Age August to November 2024



Source: Responses to the questions:

- For each day last week, did you work a full day (6 or more hours), and if so where?

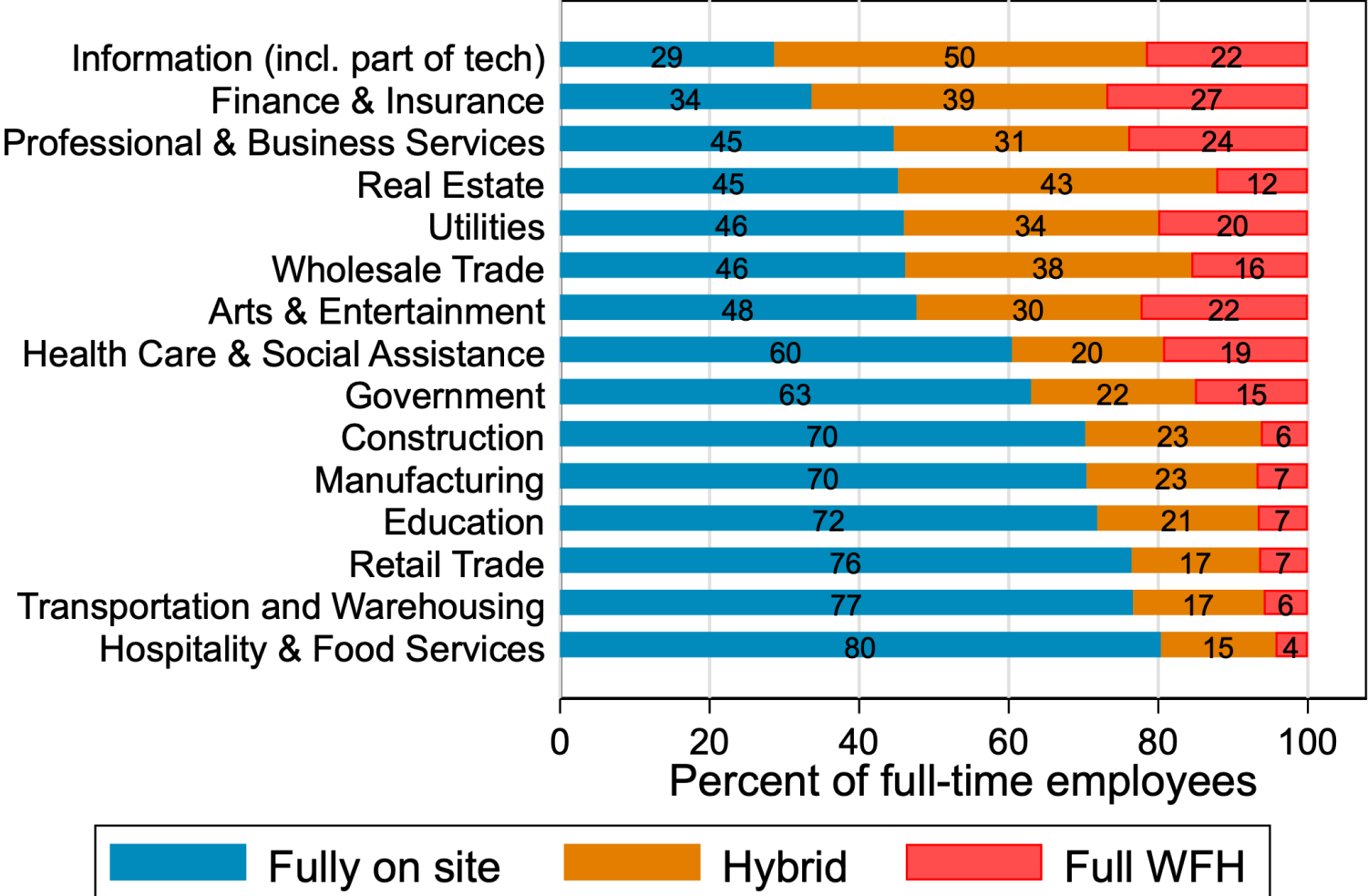
Notes: For each age group, we compute the percent of full-time (i.e. work 5+ days/week) wage and salary employees who either i) worked all their days on business premises; ii) worked some days on business premises and some days at home; or iii) worked all all days at home during the survey’s reference week. Then we show the percentage for each group. The sample covers the August to November 2024 waves of the SWAA. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in a prior year to match CPS shares by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

N = 12,461

Information, Finance & Insurance, and Prof. & Business Services Have The Largest Share of Hybrid and Remote Workers



Working Arrangements by Industry August to November 2024



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

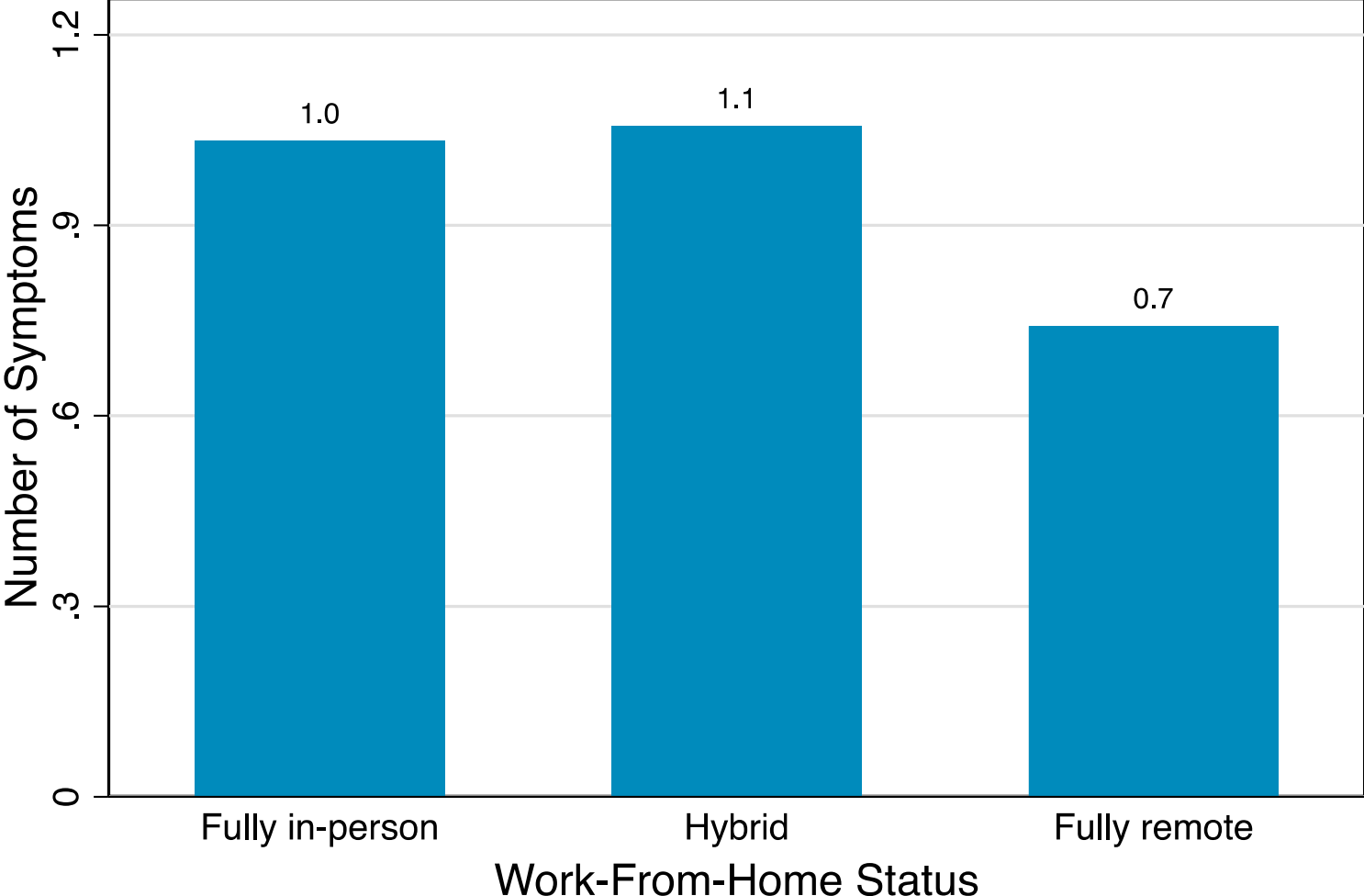
Notes: For each industry group, we compute the percent of full-time (i.e. work 5+ days/week) wage and salary employees who either i) worked all their days on business premises; ii) worked some days on business premises and some days at home; or iii) worked all all days at home during the survey’s reference week. Then we show the percentage for each group. The sample covers the August to November 2024 waves of the SWAA. We re-weight the sample of US residents aged 20 to 64 earning \$10,000 or more in a prior year to match CPS shares by age-sex-education-earnings cells. We exclude agriculture, construction, mining, and other personal services, the latter two due to insufficient observations.

N = 9,920

Full-Time Workers Who Work Fully Remotely (WFH 5+ days/week) Report Fewer Burnout Symptoms



Average Burnout Symptoms by Work-From-Home Status



Responses to the Question:

In your current job, do you currently feel any of the following?

- Low energy or exhaustion
- Negative feelings about your job
- Anxiety about going to work (e.g. the "Sunday scaries")
- Disappointment with your job performance
- Disappointment with your career prospects
- None of the above

(Respondents able to select all that apply)

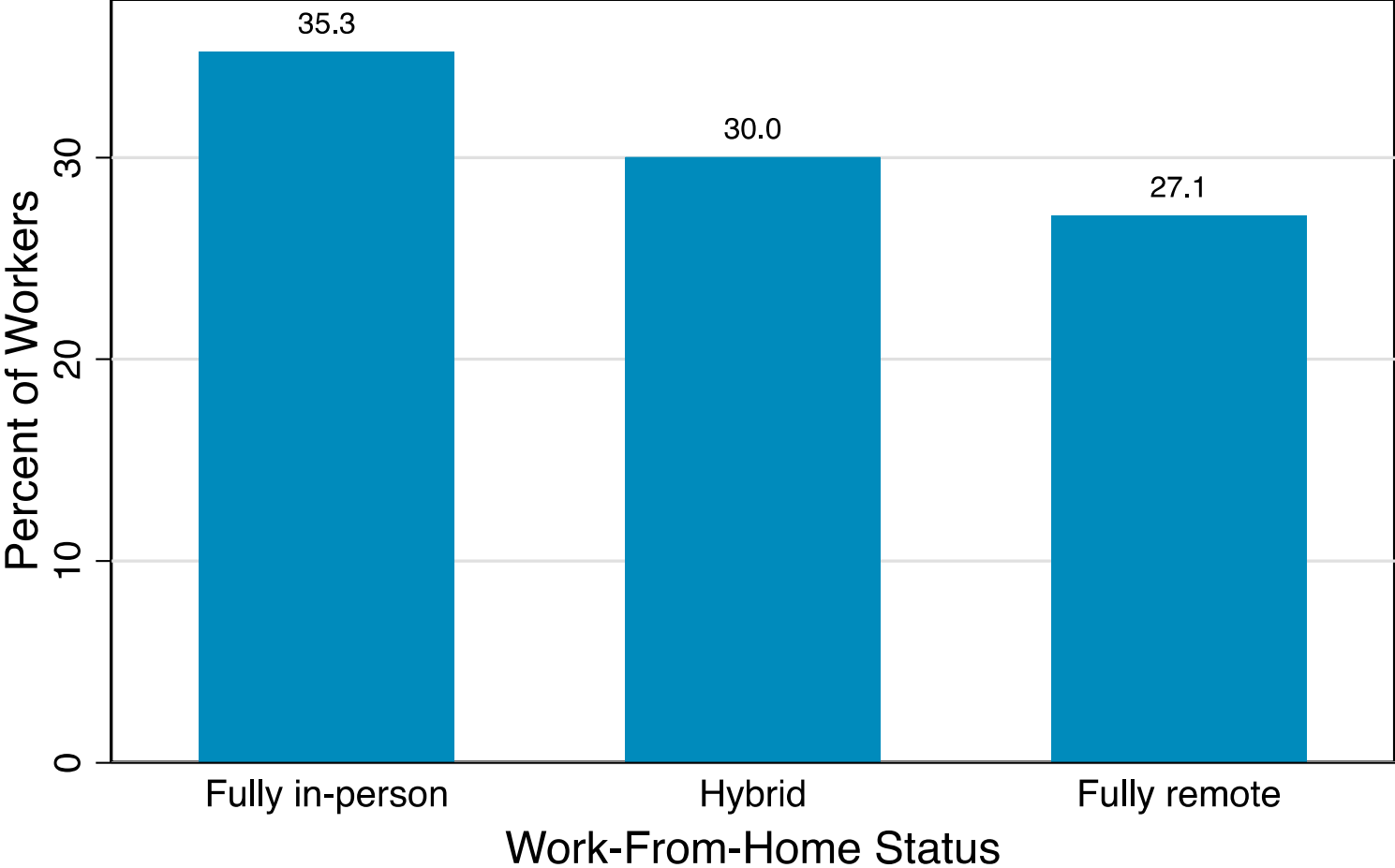
Notes: The sample includes full-time employed respondents from the November 2024 SWAA wave (i.e., who worked five or more days in the week prior to the survey). The vertical axis shows the average number of burnout symptoms selected, conditional on the working arrangements provided on the horizontal axis. We reweight the raw sample of US residents earning \$10,000 or more in the prior year to match the 2010-2019 CPS by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

N = 3,192

The Most Common Burnout Symptom is Low Energy – And Fully Remote Workers Are Least Likely To Report it



Prevalence of Job-Related Low Energy or Exhaustion by Work-From-Home Status



Responses to the Question:

In your current job, do you currently feel any of the following?

- Low energy or exhaustion
- Negative feelings about your job
- Anxiety about going to work (e.g. the "Sunday scares")
- Disappointment with your job performance
- Disappointment with your career prospects
- None of the above

(Respondents able to select all that apply)

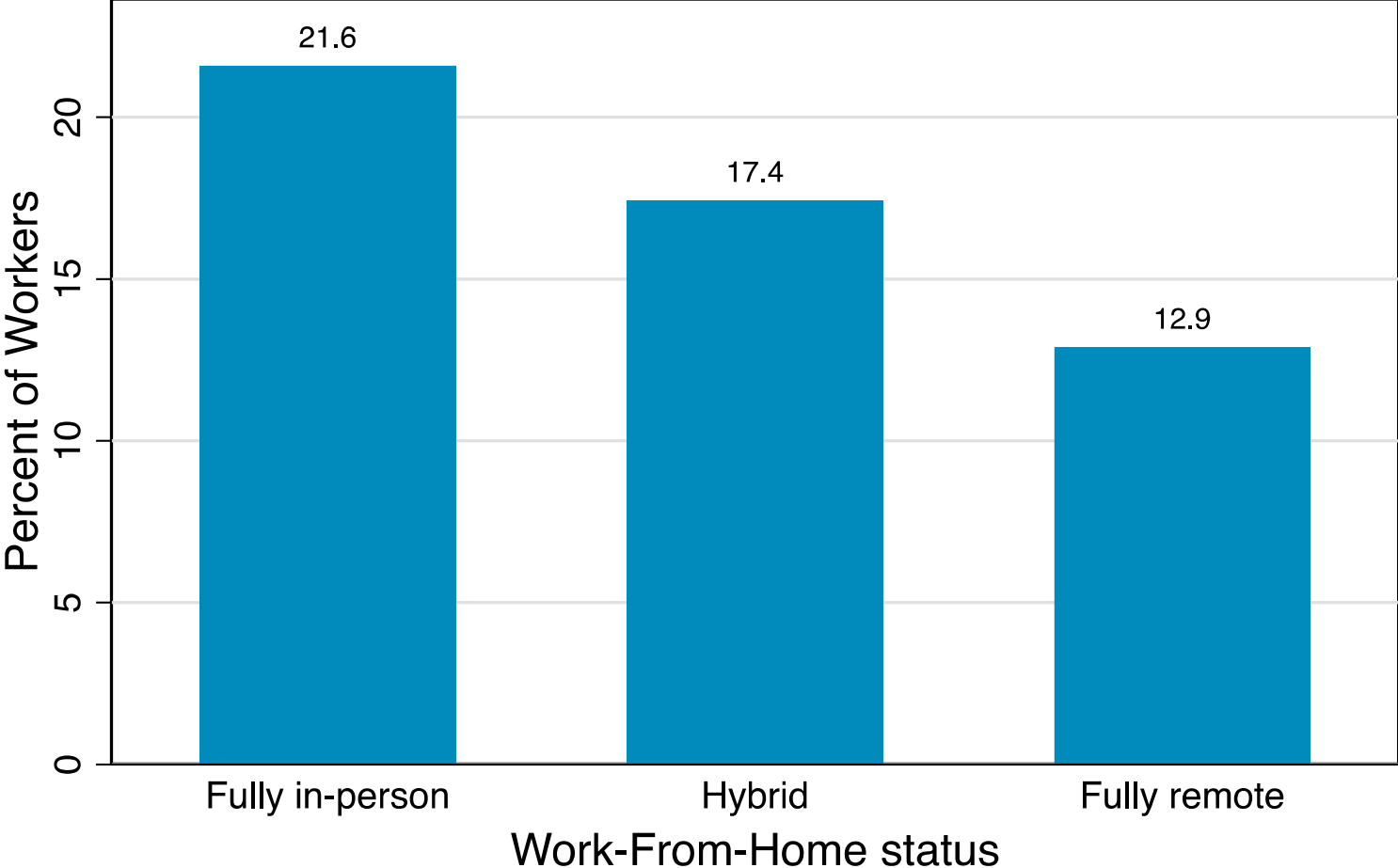
Notes: The sample includes full-time employed respondents from the November 2024 SWAA wave (i.e., who worked five or more days in the week prior to the survey). The vertical axis shows the percent of respondents reporting work-related low energy or exhaustion, conditional on working arrangements. We reweight the raw sample of US residents earning \$10,000 or more in the prior year to match the 2010-2019 CPS by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

N = 3,192

Hybrid and Fully Remote Workers Are Also Less Likely to Express Negative Feelings About Their Job



Prevalence of Negative Feelings About Your Job by Work-From-Home Status



Responses to the Question:

In your current job, do you currently feel any of the following?

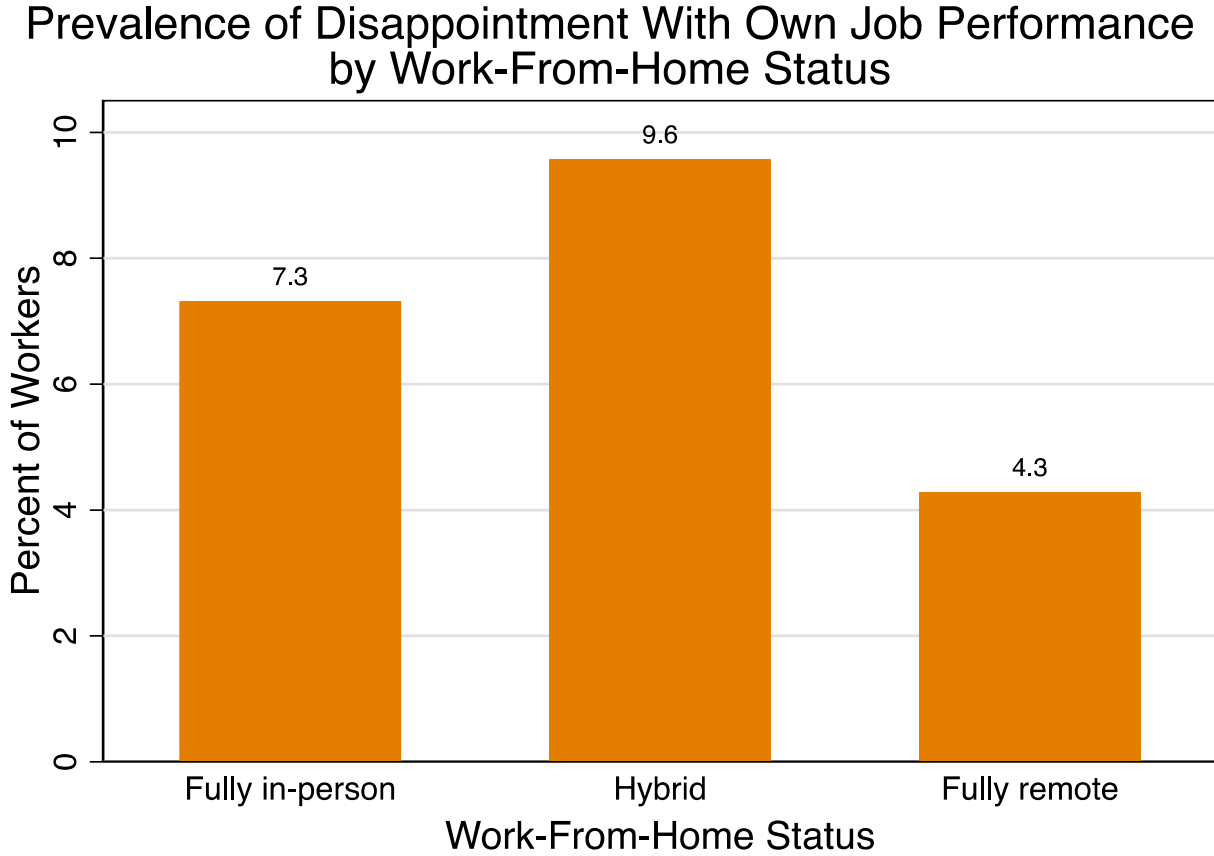
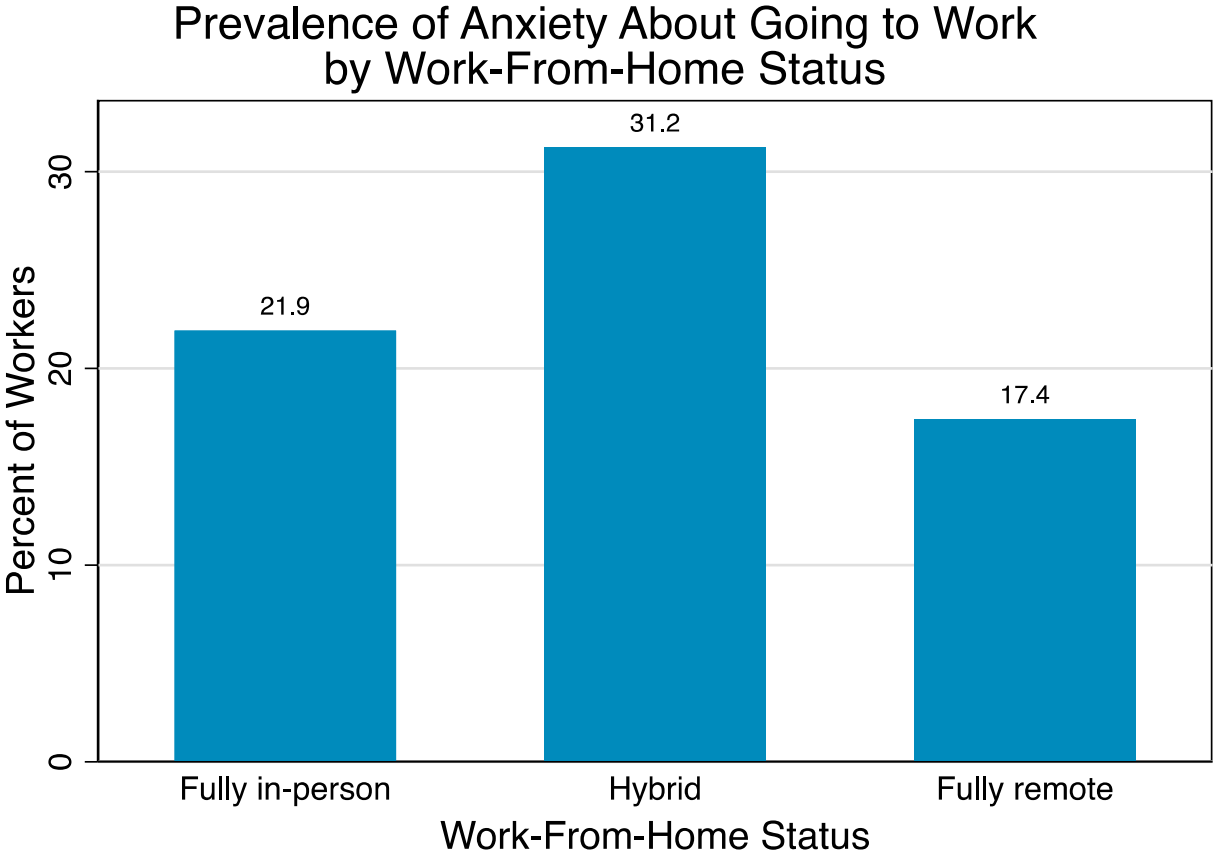
- Low energy or exhaustion
- Negative feelings about your job
- Anxiety about going to work (e.g. the "Sunday scares")
- Disappointment with your job performance
- Disappointment with your career prospects
- None of the above

(Respondents able to select all that apply)

Notes: The sample includes full-time employed respondents from the November 2024 SWAA wave (i.e., who worked five or more days in the week prior to the survey). The vertical axis shows the percent of respondents reporting negative feelings about their job, conditional on working arrangements. We reweight the raw sample of US residents earning \$10,000 or more in the prior year to match the 2010-2019 CPS by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

N = 3,192

Hybrid Workers in Report Higher Levels of Anxiety About Going To Work, And Concerns About Their Job Performance



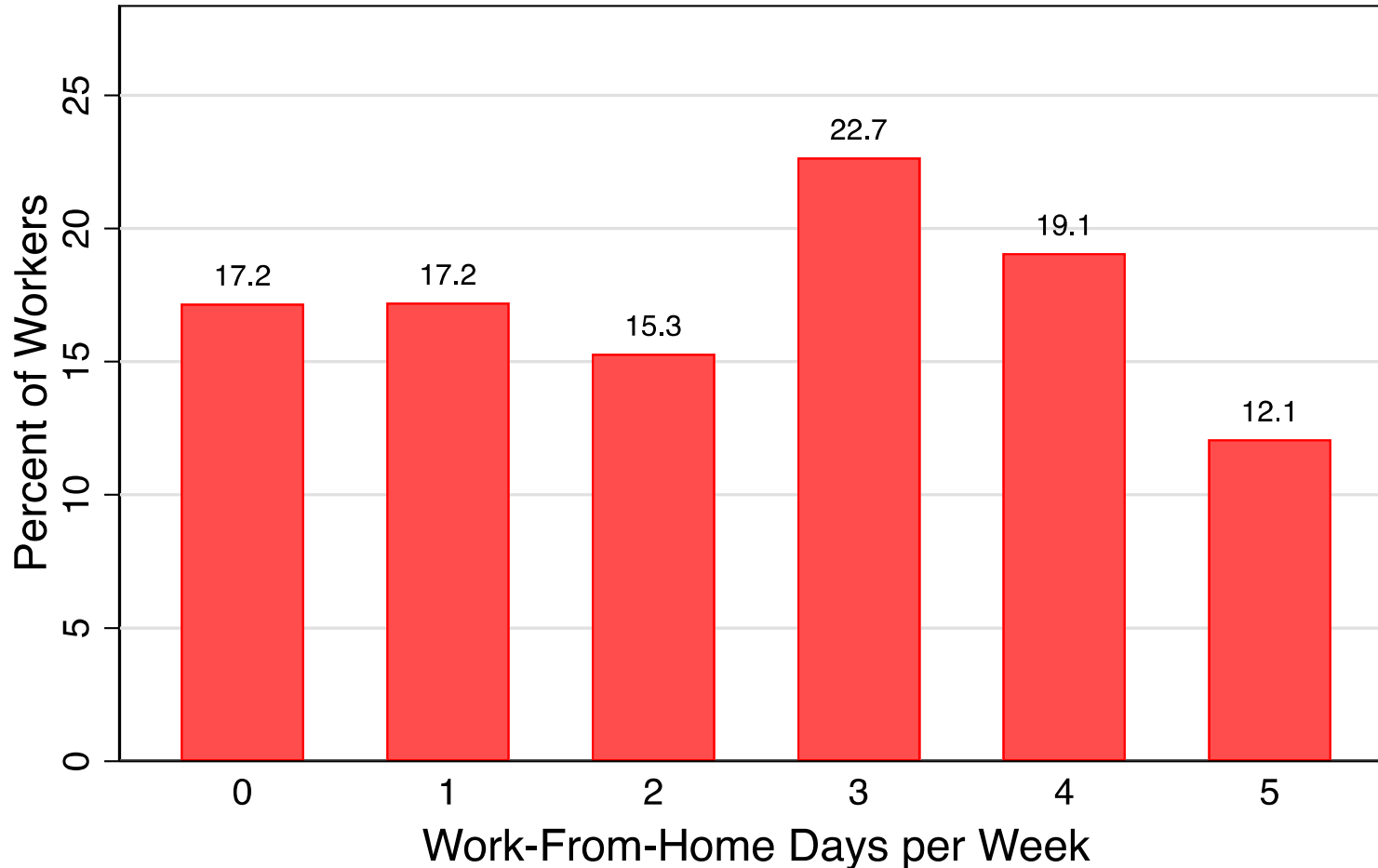
Responses to the Question: *In your current job, do you currently feel any of the following? Low energy or exhaustion Negative feelings about your job Anxiety about going to work (e.g. the "Sunday scaries") Disappointment with your job performance Disappointment with your career prospects None of the above* (Respondents able to select all that apply)

Notes: The sample includes full-time employed respondents from the November 2024 SWAA wave (i.e., who worked five or more days in the week prior to the survey). The vertical axis shows the percent of respondents reporting anxiety(left) and disappointment with job performance (right), conditional on working arrangements. We reweight the raw sample of US residents earning \$10,000 or more in the prior year to match the 2010-2019 CPS by age-sex-education-earnings cells. **N = 3,192**

Hybrid Workers Who Spend 3 or 4 Days/Week at Home Are Also More Likely to Be Disappointed With Their Career Prospects



Prevalence of Disappointment with Career Prospects by Work-From-Home Status



Responses to the Question:

In your current job, do you currently feel any of the following?

- *Low energy or exhaustion*
- *Negative feelings about your job*
- *Anxiety about going to work (e.g. the "Sunday scaries")*
- *Disappointment with your job performance*
- *Disappointment with your career prospects*
- *None of the above*

(Respondents able to select all that apply)

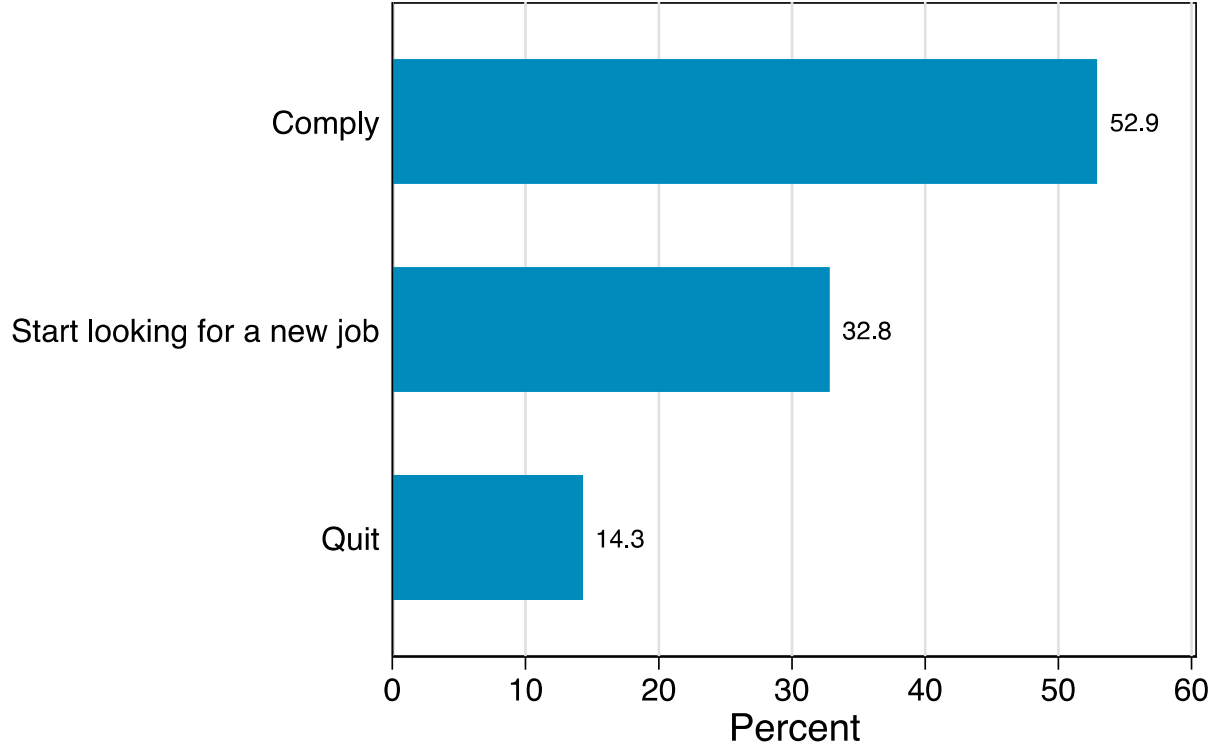
Notes: The sample includes full-time employed respondents from the November 2024 SWAA wave (i.e., who worked five or more days in the week prior to the survey). The vertical axis shows the percent of respondents reporting disappointment with career prospects, conditional on working arrangements. We reweight the raw sample of US residents earning \$10,000 or more in the prior year to match the 2010-2019 CPS by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

N = 3,192

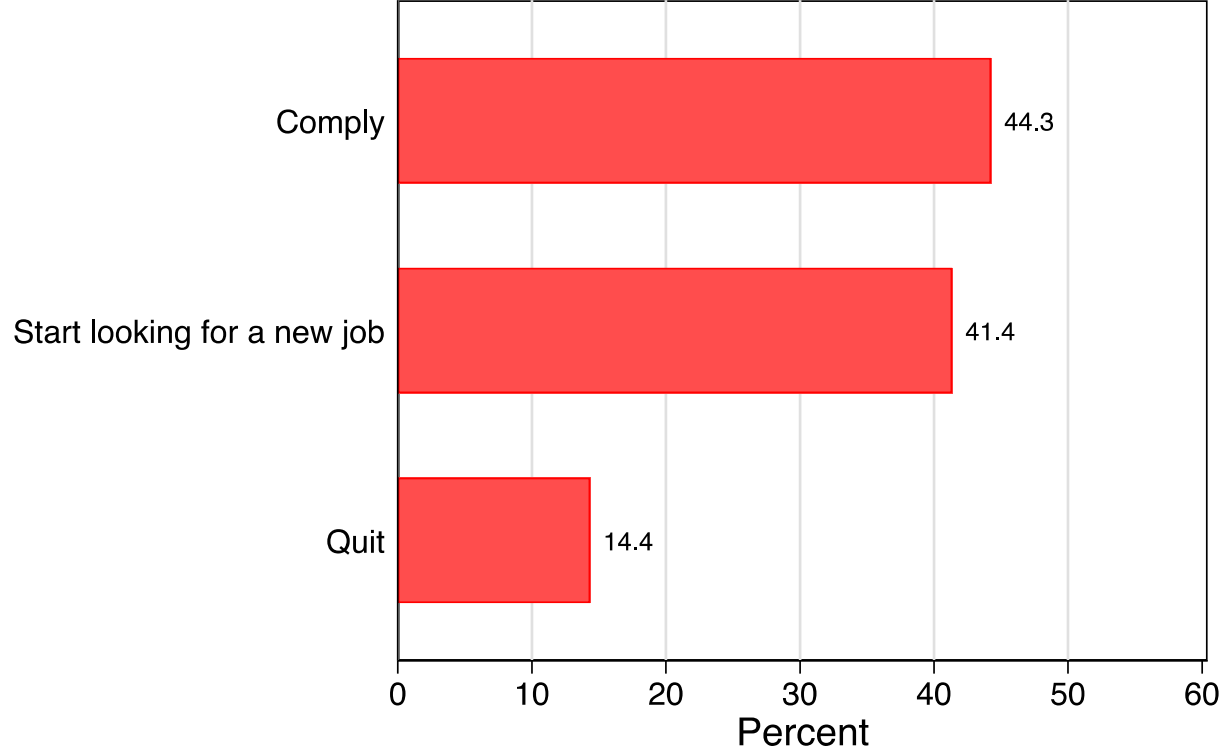
Compared to Fall 2022, Persons Who WFH 1+ Days/Week Are Less Willing to Comply With RTO Mandates



Response if your employer announced an RTO requiring all employees to come into work 5+ days/week from Dec 2022?



Response if your employer announced an RTO requiring all employees to come into work 5+ days/week from Jan 2025?



Responses to the questions: *How would you respond if your employer announced that all employees must return to the worksite 5+ days a week starting on December 1, 2022? How would you respond if your employer announced a return-to-office (RTO) or return-to-work policy **requiring all employees to come into work 5+ days a week starting in January 2025?***

Notes: The sample includes SWAA respondents who worked from home 1 or more days in the week prior to the survey per week in October 2022 and November 2024. We randomly selected 50% of eligible respondents to see the question in the November 2024 wave. We reweight the raw sample of US residents earning \$10,000 or more in the prior year to match the 2010-2019 CPS by age-sex-education-earnings cells.

N = 3366 (left) 977 (right).

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.