

This paper in a nutshell

Methodology:

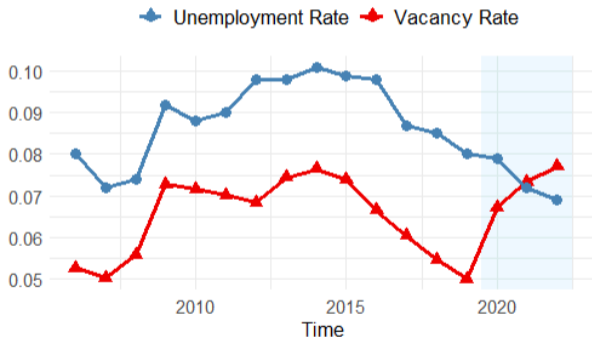
- ▶ build a municipality- level WFH exposure indicator
- ▶ implement a **diff-in-diff** taking advantage of the pandemic as a natural experiment for WFH

A one std deviation ↗ in WFH exposure yields, compared to pre-Covid:

- ▶ an ↗ **in office vacancy** by 15%
- ▶ stronger in areas (i) further from the city center, (ii) with longer commuting distances (iii) with larger firms
→ firms use downsizing to relocate to the best locations
→ large firms + longer commuting = more WFH
- ▶ a ↘ **in office prices and investment** by 3% and 25%
→ anticipation of enduring changes in the office market
- ▶ a ↘ **in retail employment and businesses** by 1.5%
→ wide-reaching effects of WFH

Recent divergence between office and labour markets

Figure: Office occupier market vs labour market in the Paris region



Notes: This figure plots the aggregate office vacancy rate and the unemployment rate in the Paris region. Sources: BNP Paribas Real Estate, INSEE.

Measuring WFH

I develop and test the effect of a **WFH indicator**:

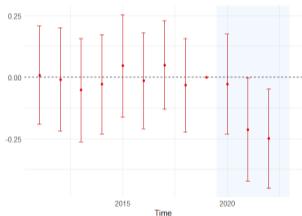
- ▶ At the municipality level
- ▶ Throughout the Paris region

I build the '**WFH-Occupation**' indicator

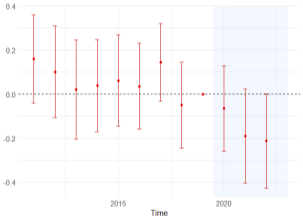
- ▶ Using [Dingel and Neiman \(2020\)](#) teleworkability index for each occupation according to the US O-Net/SOC classification... [Unteleworkable=0, Teleworkable=1]
- ▶ ... and a crosswalk from the ISCO classification of occupations to the french PCS following [Le Barbanchon and Rizzotti \(2020\)](#) similarly to [Bergeaud et al. \(2023\)](#)
- ▶ Combining this index with the weight of each occupation category (PCS 29) at the municipality level in France [Chart PCS](#)

$$invest_{it} = \exp(\alpha_i + \gamma_t + \sum_t \beta_t WFH_i + Urate_t \times \log(dens_i)) + \epsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

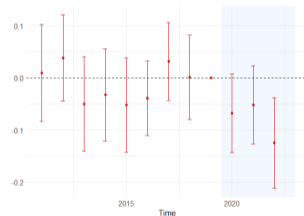
Figure: Marginal effect of WFH on office investment



(a) Value



(b) Volume



(c) Number of transactions

Notes: Point estimates of β_t and the 95% confidence interval. Dependent variable: municipality-level office investment (a) value, (b) volume, (c) number of transactions. Treatment variable is 'WFH-Occupation'. Estimated by PPML. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

Estimate the effect of WFH on office prices: a linear regression at the transaction level

► A hedonic price model

$$\log(\text{price}/\text{sqm}_{jtm}) = \alpha_{tm} + \gamma \text{WFH}_i + \beta \text{Post}_{tm} \times \text{WFH}_i + \theta \text{Post}_{tm} + Z_{jtm} \delta + \mu_{jtm} \quad (3)$$

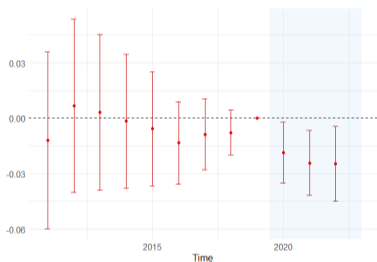
i : municip./neighbor., j : transaction, t : year, m : month.

	log(price/sqm)	
	(1)	(2)
WFH	0.138*** (0.006)	0.138*** (0.006)
WFH × Post	-0.020* (0.010)	
WFH × 2020		0.003 (0.013)
WFH × 2021		-0.031* (0.013)
WFH × 2022		-0.032* (0.015)
Post	0.078 (0.117)	0.055 (0.117)
log(distance.to.center)	-0.317*** (0.013)	-0.316*** (0.013)
log(sqm)	-0.298*** (0.004)	-0.298*** (0.004)
log(land.area)	0.080*** (0.002)	0.080*** (0.002)
log(distance.closest.station)	-0.071*** (0.007)	-0.071*** (0.007)
log(number.stations.800m.radius + 1)	0.156*** (0.008)	0.156*** (0.008)
sale in state of future completion	0.366*** (0.079)	0.305*** (0.059)
...		
Year-Month fixed effects ✓	✓	✓
Num. obs.	26,932	26,932
R ²	0.549	0.550

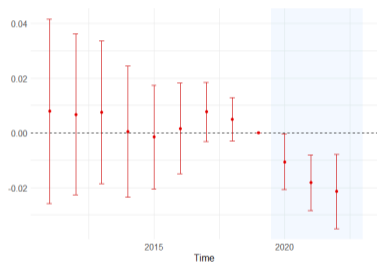
Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; $p < 0.1$. Std errors clustered at the municipality/neighborhood level.

$$retail_{it} = \exp(\alpha_i + \gamma_t + \sum_t \beta_t WFH_i + \delta hotelshare_i \times \log(hotelnights_t) + X_{it}\lambda) + \epsilon_{it} \quad (4)$$

Figure: Effect of WFH-Occupation on the retail industry



(a) Employment



(b) Number of businesses

Notes: Point estimates of β_t from model (2) and the 95%. Dependent variable: Number of employees or businesses in the retail sector. Treatment is 'WFH-Occupation'. Estimated by Poisson pseudo-maximum-likelihood. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

Policy Implications

- ▶ Strategic shift towards premium locations creating a novel form of office vacancy → **emerging mismatch** between the current office supply and the evolving demand
- ▶ **Exacerbated spatial disparities** at the expense of suburban areas, affecting local CRE and labor markets, amenities and public finances → raises the needs of a **strategic revitalization** of these suburban districts.
- ▶ Important risk for CRE investors due to the emergence of **stranded assets** → potential spillovers through the **collateral channel** (Chaney et al., [2012, AER](#))
- ▶ Ambiguous effect of WFH on **agglomeration effects** → firms centralization vs reduction in face-to-face interactions

Gradients

Table: Distance to center gradients

	$\log(\text{rent})$	$\log(\text{density})$	$\log(\text{connection})$	WFH-Occupation
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
$\log(\text{distance})$	-0.35*** (0.03)	-0.04*** (0.00)	-0.04*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)
Intercept	6.13*** 0.08	0.83*** (0.04)	0.60*** (0.03)	0.32*** (0.03)
'Office' sub-sample	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.44	0.24	0.24	0.15
Num. obs.	153	268	268	268

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; \cdot $p < 0.1$. Estimates from the linear regressions performed at the municipality level. Dependent variables: average office rent, job density, rail connection density, and WFH exposure. Covariate: natural logarithm of the euclidian distance to the center. The average office rent, which measures the rent per sqm on new office leases, is available for only 153 municipalities in 2019.

Map

Table: Correlation matrices

<i>A: Municipality characteristics</i>						
	WFH-Occ.	log(<i>dist.</i>)	log(<i>dens.</i> ₂₀₁₉)	log(<i>comm.</i> ₂₀₁₉)	log(<i>firms.</i> ₂₀₁₉)	log(<i>conn.</i> ₂₀₁₉)
WFH-Occupation	1					
log(<i>distance</i>)	-0.50	1				
log(<i>density</i> ₂₀₁₉)	0.62	-0.69	1			
log(<i>commuting</i> ₂₀₁₉)	0.183	0.06	0.18	1		
log(<i>firmsize</i> ₂₀₁₉)	0.33	0.06	0.32	0.57	1	
log(<i>connection</i> ₂₀₁₉)	0.41	-0.65	0.64	0.01	-0.08	1

<i>B: WFH indicators</i>				
	WFH-Occ.	WFH-Occ.-LCS	WFH-Occ.-Resi	WFH-Sector
WFH-Occupation	1			
WFH-Occupation-LCS	0.99	1		
WFH-Occupation-Resi	0.95	0.75	1	
WFH-Sector	0.78	0.77	0.74	1

Notes: This table presents two matrices composed of the correlation coefficients for each pair of variables: (A) for the main municipality characteristics and (B) the WFH indicators.

Table: Comparative summary statistics

Variable	Unit	Mean (<Median WFH)	Mean (>Median WFH)	T-Test
WFH-Occupation	teleworkable = 1	0.395	0.510	***
Vacancy rate	% of stock	0.027	0.067	***
Stock	sqm	46,914	332,034	***
Employment	units	6,213	26,036	***
Employment density	thousand/sqm	9.41	63.66	***
Retail employment	units	675	1,664	***
Retail businesses	units	72	219	***
Distance to center	km	21.5	13.2	***
Median commuting distance	km	6.2	7.6	***
Rail connection density	units/ha	0.26	1.23	***
Average firm size	employees/business	12.3	17.7	***

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; $\cdot p < 0.1$. Presents the mean values of indicators for subsets of the sample divided at the median level of the WFH indicator. T-Test' column provides p-values significance for the comparison of means across these two subsets.

'WFH-Sector'

As a robustness check, I build an alternative '**WFH-sector**' indicator, combining

- ▶ For each sector j (NACE38), the **share of employees WFH at least one day in a reference week** μ_j at the french national level during the pandemic from the following equation (source: Dares, from April 2020 to March 2022)

$$WFH_{jt} = \mu_j + \nu_t + \epsilon_{jt} \quad (5)$$

- ▶ The **sectoral composition of employment** at the workplace at the municipality level in 2019 (source: Urssaf)

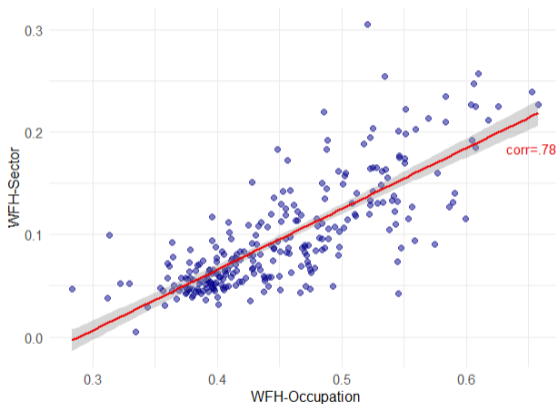
Table: Effect of WFH on office vacancy

	Vacancy			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
WFH-Occupation × Post	0.081 (0.057)	0.152** (0.056)	0.143** (0.053)	
WFH-Occupation × 2020				0.105* (0.051)
WFH-Occupation × 2021				0.172** (0.058)
WFH-Occupation × 2022				0.157* (0.078)
Urate × $\log(\text{density}_{2019})$		0.071* (0.031)	0.083** (0.030)	0.086** (0.030)
$\log(\text{Stock})$			0.952*** (0.210)	0.949*** (0.211)
Municipality and year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Num. obs.	3216	3216	3216	3216
Pseudo R ²	0.932	0.933	0.936	0.936

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; \cdot $p < 0.1$. Estimates from the diff-in-diff. Dependent variable: office vacancy. Treatment variable: 'WFH-Occupation'. Estimated by PPML. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

event study - vacancy

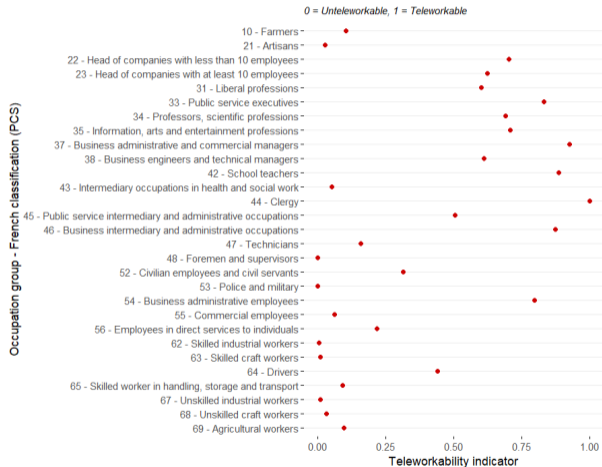
Figure: Correlation between the two WFH indicators



Notes: Scatter plot of WFH-Occupation versus WFH-Sector. The fitted line indicates a positive linear relationship.

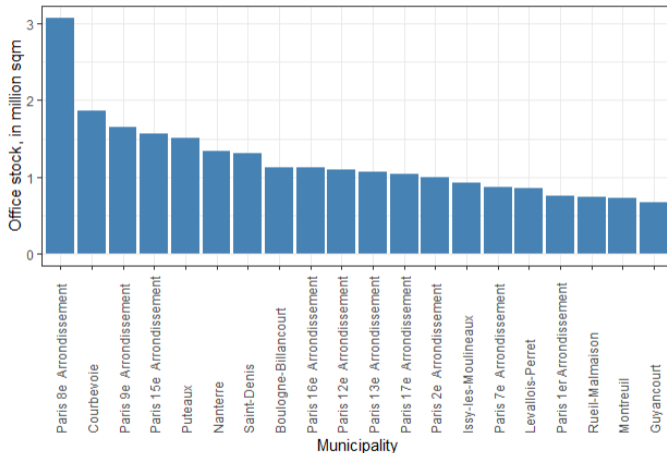
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Figure: WFH by sector in France during the Covid-19 crisis



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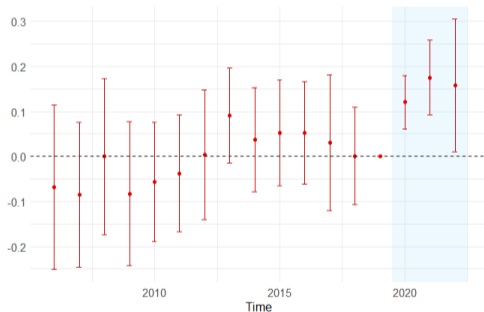
Figure: Top 20 office markets in the Paris metropolitan area



Notes: This figure plots the office stock, measured in million sqm, for the top 20 municipalities in the Paris region, in 2019.

$$vacancy_{it} = \exp(\alpha_i + \gamma_t + \sum_t \beta_t WFH_i + \log(stock_{it}) + Urate_t \times \log(dens_i)) + \epsilon_{it} \quad (6)$$

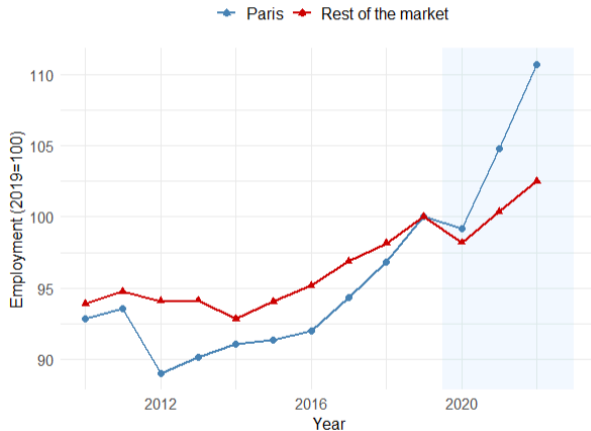
Figure: Effect of WFH(-Occupation) exposure on office vacancy



Notes: Estimates of β_t from model and 95% confidence interval. Dependent variable: office vacancy. Treatment variable: 'WFH-Occupation'. Estimated by PPML. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

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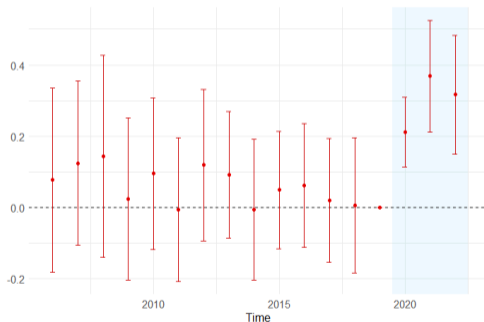
Figure: Employment in the Paris metropolitan area



Notes: End-of-year employment in the Paris metropolitan area, by comparing Paris and the suburbs, from 2010 to 2022. Source: URSSAF

$$\log(\text{vacancy}_{it} + 1) = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \sum_t \beta_t \text{WFH}_i + \log(\text{stock}_{it}) + \text{Urate}_t \times \log(\text{dens}_i) + \epsilon_{it} \quad (7)$$

Figure: Effect of WFH(-Occupation) exposure on office vacancy



Notes: Estimates of β_t and 95% confidence interval. Dependent variable: log-transformation of the municipality-level office vacancy. Treatment variable: 'WFH-Occupation'. Estimated by OLS and is weighted by the 2019 office stock. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

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Table: Effect of WFH-Occupation on the Retail Industry

	Employment			Number of businesses		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
WFH-Occupation \times Post	-0.014 (0.009)	-0.024* (0.009)	-0.018* (0.010)	-0.016** (0.006)	-0.017** (0.006)	-0.014* (0.006)
Trend \times $\log(\text{density}_{2019})$		0.002 (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)		0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Urate \times $\log(\text{density}_{2019})$		0.000 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)		0.004* (0.002)	0.005** (0.002)
$\log(\text{hotelnights}) \times \text{hotelshare}_{2019}$			2.060** (0.711)			1.188** (0.395)
Municipality and year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Num. obs.	3216	3216	3216	3216	3216	3216
Pseudo R ²	0.989	0.989	0.989	0.972	0.972	0.972

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; \cdot $p < 0.1$. Estimates from the diff-in-diff. Dependent variable: employment and number of businesses in the retail industry. Treatment variable: 'WFH-Occupation'. Estimated by PPML. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

event study - retail

Hotel Nights

Table: Effect of WFH-Occupation on the Retail Industry - Extended Sample

	Employment			Business number		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
WFH-Occupation × Post	-0.023*	-0.035**	-0.029*	-0.025***	-0.028***	-0.024***
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Trend × log(<i>density</i> ₂₀₁₉)		0.001	0.001		0.001	0.001*
		(0.001)	(0.001)		(0.001)	(0.001)
Urate × log(<i>density</i> ₂₀₁₉)		-0.001	-0.000		0.004***	0.005***
		(0.002)	(0.002)		(0.001)	(0.001)
log(<i>hotelnights</i>) × <i>hotelshare</i> ₂₀₁₉			1.556*			0.797*
			(0.623)			(0.327)
Municipality and year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Num. obs.	11952	11928	11928	12060	12036	12036
Pseudo R ²	0.991	0.991	0.991	0.971	0.971	0.971

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; \cdot $p < 0.1$. Estimates from the diff-in-diff. Dependent variable: employment and number of businesses in the retail industry. Treatment variable: 'WFH-Occupation'. Estimated by PPML. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

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