

# **Working from Home and Psychological Detachment from Work: Representative Evidence from Germany during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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## **Abstract**

As working from home (WFH) becomes increasingly common, it is important to examine its consequences for employees. We explore the relation between WFH and psychological detachment from work during nonwork time. We use population representative data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP) collected in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. This dataset allows us to examine four complementary dimensions of WFH: whether employees work from home at all (i.e., the extensive margin), how often they do so (i.e., the intensive margin), the WFH mismatch (i.e., wanting to work from home but being unable to), and the COVID-19 WFH shock (i.e., the sudden increase in remote work during the pandemic). Our results show a significant negative relation between the extensive and intensive margins of WFH and psychological detachment. This suggests that employees who work from home struggle to mentally disengage from work during their leisure time. Somewhat surprisingly, both the WFH mismatch and the COVID-19 WFH shock show no significant associations with psychological detachment.

**Keywords:** COVID-19 pandemic, psychological detachment from work, recovery, remote work, SOEP, working from home, working from home mismatch