

# Global Conference on Measuring New Forms of Employment

Brussels, 4 - 5 July 2024

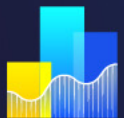


#MeasuringEmployment

# Unpaid Labour, Precarity and Labour Markets

Session number 3

**Valeria Pulignano**  
**Professor Sociology KU Leuven**



## Australia: no longer the lucky country?

Rates of unpaid overtime and the decline of the 38 hour week



\* Over **85% of respondents** reported working unpaid overtime each week.

- On average respondents reported working 9.08 hours of unpaid work each week. In an average work year (48 weeks) this would represent 58.1 days or 11.6 weeks of unpaid work.
- The financial value of unpaid work is \$21,563 per year for an average worker on a yearly income of \$96,660.
- Over 70% of respondents reported working overtime on weekends. Almost half of this number reported they worked more than two weekends per month.
- Respondents reported that on average they were skipping lunch breaks at least three times per week.
- More than three quarters (77%) of respondents believe doing unpaid hours is having a negative impact on their life outside of work.
- 79% of workers reported their mental health is negatively impacted by their overtime hours.
- 69% of respondents have had friends and family comment negatively on the unpaid work they do outside of regular hours.
- Only 17.4% of respondents believe their workplace would be able to function without the use of unpaid overtime.
- The majority of survey respondents (64% of respondents) believed that refusing a request to perform unpaid overtime was career limiting.
- Almost half of those surveyed said they would participate more in community volunteering if they performed less unpaid overtime work.

DGB

## So viel Arbeitskraft und Lebenszeit verschenkten Beschäftigte 2022:



Unbezahlte Überstunden:  
702 Millionen Stunden



Wert der unbezahlten Arbeit:  
15 Milliarden Euro



So oft könnte eine vierköpfige Familie dafür in Urlaub fahren:  
2,9 Millionen Reisen

Daten: Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung, Statistisches Bundesamt, Stiftung für Zukunftsfragen.



ERC AdG  ResPecTMe: *“Resolving Precariousness: Advancing the Theory and Measurement of Precariousness Across the Paid/Unpaid Work Continuum”*



ERC AdG  ResPecTMe: “Resolving Precariousness: Advancing the Theory and Measurement of Precariousness Across the Paid/Unpaid Work Continuum”



# Precarious Work




Outside the market

*Unpaid Labour*  
(household/care-social  
reproductive; volunteer &  
community work)

Inside the market

*Unpaid Labour*  
(time & effort in paid employment)

ERC AdG  ResPecTMe<sup>+</sup> *Resolving Precariousness: Advancing the Theory and Measurement of Precariousness Across the Paid/Unpaid Work Continuum*

1 - *Novel theoretical perspective* of precarity based upon *Unpaid Labour*, reflecting the growing diversities/complexities and institutional & organisational changes within different work areas (i.e., Home Care, CCIs, Gig Work) across (and within) different national settings (i.e., Fr, It, UK, NL, SW, PL, De, Be);

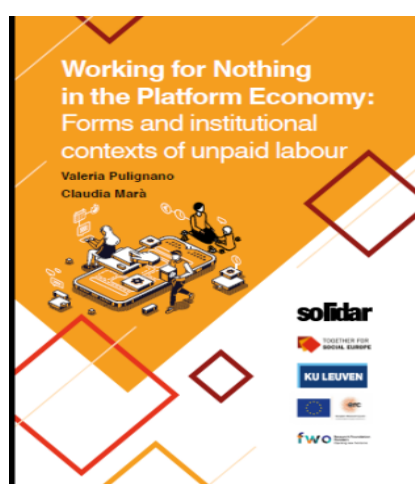
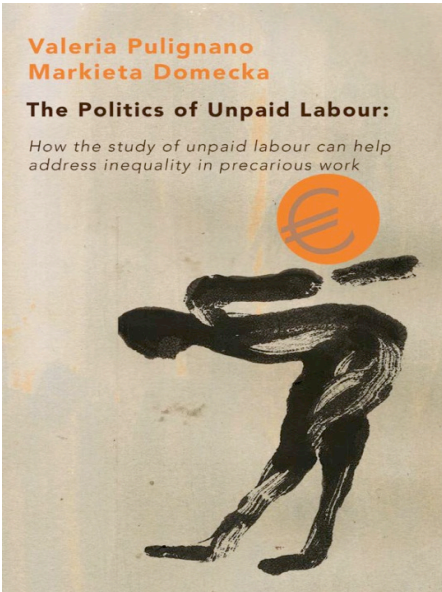
1 - *Novel theoretical perspective* of precarity based upon *Unpaid Labour*, reflecting the growing diversities/complexities and institutional & organisational changes within different work areas (i.e., Home Care, CCIs, Gig Work) across (and within) different national settings (i.e., Fr, It, UK, NL, SW, PL, De, Be);

- What are the form of unpaid/under-paid labour?
- Why do workers engage in unpaid/under-paid labour?
- Does unpaid/under-paid labour entails precarity ?
- Does precarity unfolds automatically from unpaid/under-paid labour?
- Which resources workers use to build resilience towards unpaid/under-paid labour, and how far are they resilient ?

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Control and consent regime dynamics within labour platforms

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Milena Franke, milena.franke@kuleuven.be  
University of KU Leuven, Belgium



Does it pay to work? Unpaid labour in the platform economy

Valeria Pulignano, Agnieszka Piasna, Markieta Domecka, Karol Muszyński and Lander Vermeerbergen

European Economic, Employment and Social Policy  
2021.15

CHAPTER 4

FEAR AND PROFESSIONALISM ON THE FRONT LINE: EMOTION MANAGEMENT OF RESIDENTIAL CARE WORKERS THROUGH THE LENS OF COVID-19 AS A 'BREACHING EXPERIMENT'

Valeria Pulignano<sup>a</sup>, Mè-Linh Riemann<sup>b</sup>, Carol Stephenson<sup>c</sup> and Markieta Domecka<sup>a,d,\*</sup>

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<sup>b</sup>Europa-Universität Viadrina, Germany  
<sup>c</sup>Northumbria University, UK  
<sup>d</sup>University of Roehampton, UK

**ABSTRACT**  
*This study applies Garfinkel's (1967) concept of 'breaching experiment' to explore the impact of COVID-19-induced disruptions on the 'emotion management' practices of residential care workers in the United Kingdom and Germany. It examines the influence of professional feeling rules on workers, emphasizing the prescribed importance of displaying affective, empathetic concern for residents' health and well-being. Findings demonstrate that authenticity and adherence to professional feeling rules in relation to emotional management are not mutually exclusive. The authors underscore how adherence to professional*

'Digital Tournaments': the colonisation of freelancers' 'free' time and unpaid labour in the online platform economy

Valeria Pulignano<sup>a</sup>, Stefania Marino<sup>a</sup>, Mathew Johnson<sup>a</sup>, Markieta Domecka<sup>a</sup> and Mè-Linh Riemann<sup>a</sup>

This article challenges positive views of the assumed relationship between skills, productivity and rewards in self-employed digital freelancing. It suggests that the upward pressure made by freelancers to build up positive platform ratings, are not necessarily rewarded in the form of increased autonomy, guaranteed work or more lucrative ' gigs'. Drawing on 58 autobiographical narrative interviews and 12 audio working diaries with diverse online freelancers in Europe, we show how the low barriers to enter platform work provide opportunities for those with limited work experience and other commitments outside of work. However, this diverse competition between an ever-expanding pool of (both skilled and unskilled) task freelancers within 'digital tournaments' results in the colonisation of workers' free time, and the normalisation of unpaid labour. This implies that 'free time' for freelancers is largely an illusion. Furthermore, the significant 'task cover' that freelancers make in terms of time, platform-specific skills, reputation and networks are not fully recovered and cannot be transferred to other platforms.

**Key words:** Working time, Free time, Freelancers, Digital platforms, Unpaid labour, Platform work  
JEL classification: J31, J24, J81

**1. Introduction**  
Modern production systems have moved away from the regular rhythms of production lines and introduced greater task and schedule flexibility, therefore disrupting the standard division of working and non-working time (Grimshaw et al., 2002). In tandem, the decline of vertically integrated production underpinned by hierarchical internal labour markets have contributed to more fluid or 'boundary-less careers' in which individuals move between jobs, organisations and projects in pursuit of

Article



Product markets and working conditions on international and regional food delivery platforms: A study in Poland and Italy

Karol Muszyński, Valeria Pulignano and Claudia Marà  
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Why does unpaid labour vary among digital labour platforms? Exploring socio-technical platform regimes of worker autonomy

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Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands

**Abstract**  
Digital platforms provide many workers with vital income and offer the promise of flexible work, and yet also contribute to experiences of precariousness and exploitation, particularly with regard to pressures to undertake unpaid work. This article explores why unpaid labour is necessary and what drives its extent and form among diverse types of digital platforms. We theorize two ideal types of 'open' and 'closed' socio-technical platform regimes of worker autonomy, building on sociological insights about socio-technical systems, management control over worker autonomy and labour market segmentation by skill. In principle, 'open' ('closed') platform regimes grant relatively high (low) worker autonomy in terms of access to the platform, paid work and control over work tasks. Analysing the case studies, illustrative of 'open' and 'closed' regimes, we



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Main Article

Informal employment on domestic care platforms: a study on the individualisation of risk and unpaid labour in mature market contexts

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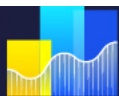
Karol Muszynski  
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<https://soc.kuleuven.be/ceso/wo/erlm/respectme>



Fairwork Belgium Ratings 2022: Labour Standards in the Platform Economy



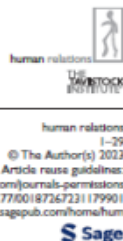
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### Why does unpaid labour vary among digital labour platforms? Exploring socio-technical platform regimes of worker autonomy

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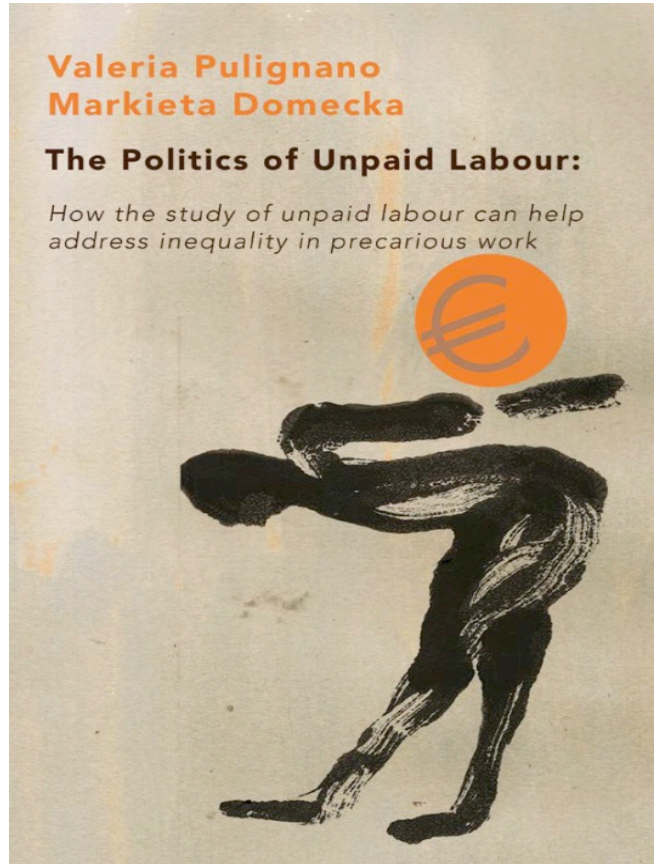
**Abstract**  
Digital platforms provide many workers with vital income and offer the promise of flexible work, and yet also contribute to experiences of precariousness and exploitation, particularly with regard to pressures to undertake unpaid work. This article explores why unpaid labour is necessary and what drives its extent and form among diverse types of digital platforms. We theorize two ideal types of 'open' and 'closed' socio-technical platform regimes of worker autonomy, building on sociological insights about socio-technical systems, management control over worker autonomy and labour market segmentation by skill. In principle, 'open' ('closed') platform regimes grant relatively high (low) worker autonomy in terms of access to the platform, paid work and control over work tasks. Analysing five case studies, illustrative of 'open' and 'closed' regimes, we

Table 3. Measures of unpaid labour in the four case study platforms (% of person-days)

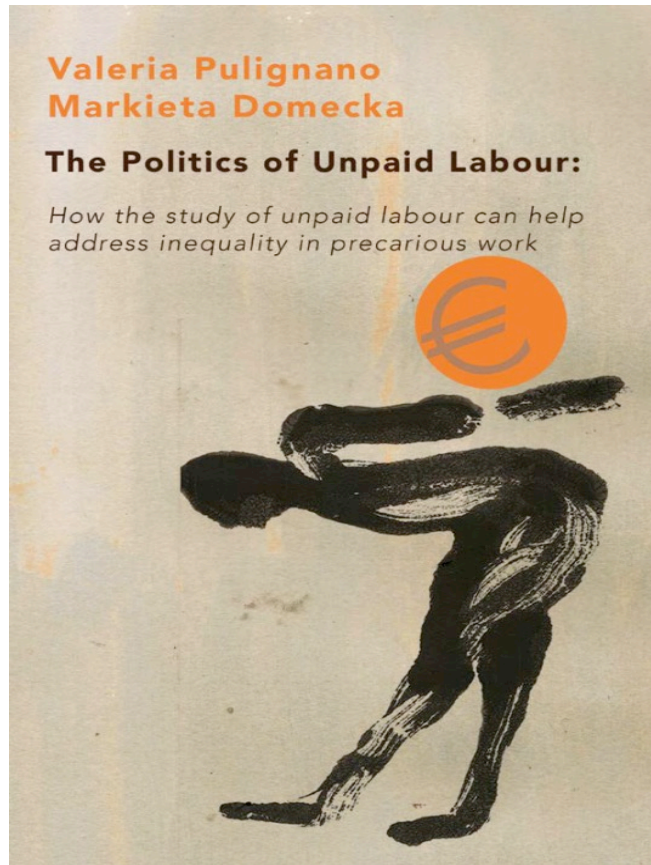
Sector	Forms of unpaid labour	Example quote	Percentage of days this form of unpaid labour was mentioned by workers (%)	
			Open regimes	Closed regimes
Food-delivery labour platforms			<b>Deliveroo</b>	<b>Takeaway</b>
	1. Waiting time because of a lack of orders	"In a period of 15 minutes it can be that there aren't any orders and then you're just waiting." (BEMF16)	64%	0%
	2. Searching time in case of errors and delays at restaurant	"I had to wait four times for 10 minutes in different restaurants. That is waiting time you are not paid for (BEMF40)	47%	2%
	3. Travel time: to and from work	"I got an order and then cycled from the costumers house back to the center waiting for an order. After that I cycled home, which was also unpaid" (NLMR02)	39%	12%
	4. Travel time between orders	"Between the orders I always had to wait for about 10 minutes for a new order. That is also unpaid." (BEMF38)	23%	0%
	5. Time invested in dealing with conflicts (restaurants/clients)	"I tried to call the customer but he did not answer. I then contacted the platform with the chat. After 5 minutes they answered but they could not reach them either." (BEMF16)	11%	0%
	6. Compulsory unpaid breaks and shortening of the shifts	"It was a bit frustrating that they made me finish my shift earlier than I should. Which is something that they constantly do" (NLMR05)	2%	44%
Freelancing labour platforms			<b>Jellow</b>	<b>Upwork &amp; Malt</b>
	1. Communication with clients	"I received a message from my English client, he wanted me to do a transcription of a video. We talked for an hour and then he changed his mind. He didn't give me this job." (FRCM16)	8%	94%
	2. Buying platform currency to bid for tasks	"What bothers me is buying the currency, paying the commission fees and covering the transaction costs, like the exchange rate." (FRCM16)	0%	2%
	3. Job searching and applications	"All the work I've carried out today was not paid for. It was just searching for jobs and applying for transcription and translation jobs. Nothing came out of it." (NLMR08)	0%	36%
	4. Sending free samples of work	"They ask you to send things and then they actually use parts of the texts that I have written without paying me anything" (NLLV01)	0%	5%
	5. Compulsory unpaid breaks	"Today I had to work for four hours without a break because the client was in a great hurry." (FRCM16)	49%	97%
	6. Doing extra jobs to keep clients satisfied	"I am scared to say 'no' to the client as that may close some doors for the future." (FRCM13)	9%	33%
	7. Investment in reputation building	"I keep adding things to my website, my Instagram, doing a bit of marketing, a bit of connecting with people. I wrote a bit for my blog, which I hope will be paid for one day." (BEMF13)	8%	30%

Source: Own elaboration. The sample size included: 80 working days in Upwork, 50 working days in Malt, 60 working days in Jellow, 70 working days in Deliveroo, 80 working days in Takeaway





Unpaid labour, may either increase employability or arrest workers in precarious jobs, depending on available resources.



Unpaid labour, may either increase employability or arrest workers in precarious jobs, depending on available resources.

To make labour markets more equitable, public policy must address their unequal distribution.

# Measurement

## The Survey module of unpaid labour



ERC AdG  ResPecTMe *Resolving Precariousness: Advancing the Theory and Measurement of Precariousness Across the Paid/Unpaid Work Continuum*

2 - Valid, standardized and multi-indicator Measurement, i.e. *the survey module of unpaid labour based on the newly developed theory.*

# Unpaid Labour

*Unpaid Labour* is time, effort (including material & immaterial assets) working people (waged and no-waged labour) invest in (or afford to) undertaking tasks related to their work, whether explicitly assigned or implied, for which they receive no compensation.

# The Survey Module of Unpaid Labour: Dimensions

## Time

Waiting time  
Preparation time  
Communication time  
Administration time  
Networking time  
Training time  
Maintenance time  
Family time  
Travel time  
Overtime

## Material

Office spaces, smart  
phone, software, PCs &  
other infrastructures

## Immaterial

Emotions, feelings,  
knowledge, skills &  
competences

# The Survey Module of Unpaid Labour: Dimensions



**Time**

**Material**

**Immaterial**

Representative panel surveys in SW (Lore), FR (ELIPSS), NL (LISS) and the UK (Pilot Kantar).



# Panel Survey in France and Sweden, Pilot UK

- Pilot Commercial company “Kantar”
- UK
- N=2005
- In paid job: N = 2005
- Online panel
- 3 Aug – 22 Aug 2022

- National Probability Panel “ELIPSS”
- France
- N=2023
- In paid job: N=1114
- Online panel
- 12 Oct – 9 Nov 2023

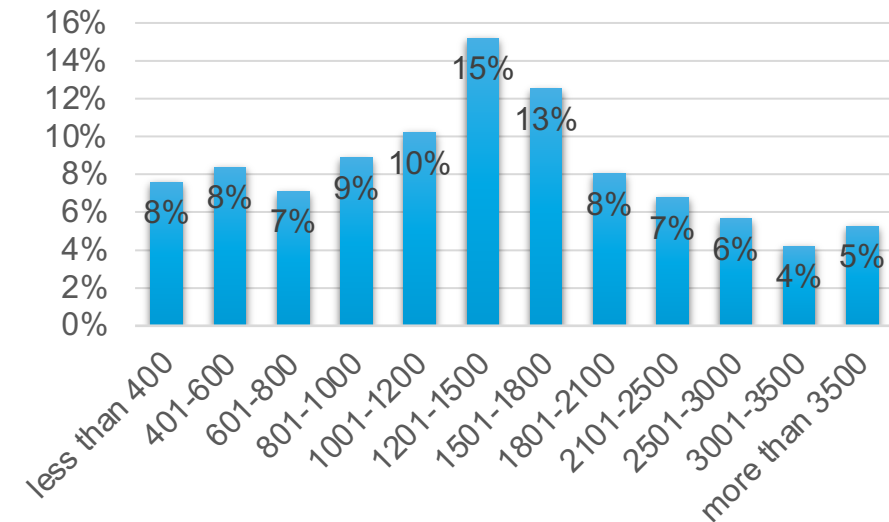
- National Probability Panel “LORE”
- Sweden
- N=3137
- In paid job: N=2978
- Online panel
- 9 Nov – 28 Nov 2023



# UK Pilot survey

- Gender: Women (53%), Men (47%)
- Age: 18-34 (35%), 35-49 (32%), 50+ (33%)
- Education: ISCED0 (1%), ISCED1 (2%), ISCED2 (3%), ISCED3 (52%), ISCED4 (1%), ISCED5 (39%), ISCED6 (1%)
- Employment status: Employee (84%), self-employed (14%), own family business (1%)
- Employment contract type: unlimited duration (66%), limited duration (13%), temporary agency (3%), apprenticeship or training (1%), zero hours contract (without minimum hours, 8%), on-call/on-demand (4%), other (6%)

Net monthly income from main job (monthly)  
UK in Sterling Pounds



# Panel Surveys

## France

**Gender** Female (56.46%); Male (43.54%)

**Age** 18-25 (11.85%), 26-35 (14.54%), 36-45 (24.40%), 46-55 (31.51%), 56-65 (15.17%), 66+ (1.53%)

**Education** Lower secondary below (6.28%), upper secondary (9.52%), BA1 (19.12%) BA2 (38.06%), MA+ (26.93%)

**Emp. Status** Employee (87.35%), Self-emp (10.77%), other (1.89%)

**Contract Type** Permanent (64.3%), fixed-term (17.2%) project-based (1%), continuous until notice (17.9%)

## Sweden

Female (45.16%); Male (54.84%)

Under 30 (3.19%), 30-39 (18.91%), 40-49 (26.46%), 50-59 (33.85%), 60-69 (17.60%)

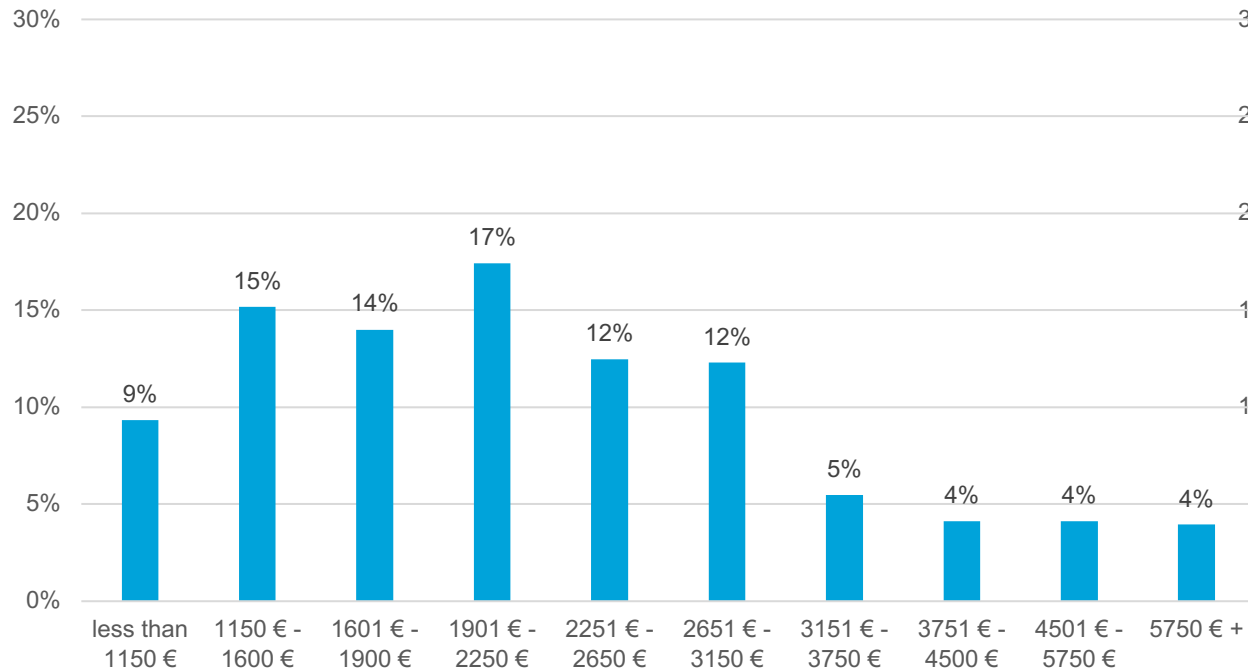
Lower secondary below (1,14%), upper secondary (16,82%), post-secondary (10.03%) BA+ (66.56%), PhD (5.45%)

Employee (89.29%), Self-emp (10.51%), other (0.20%)

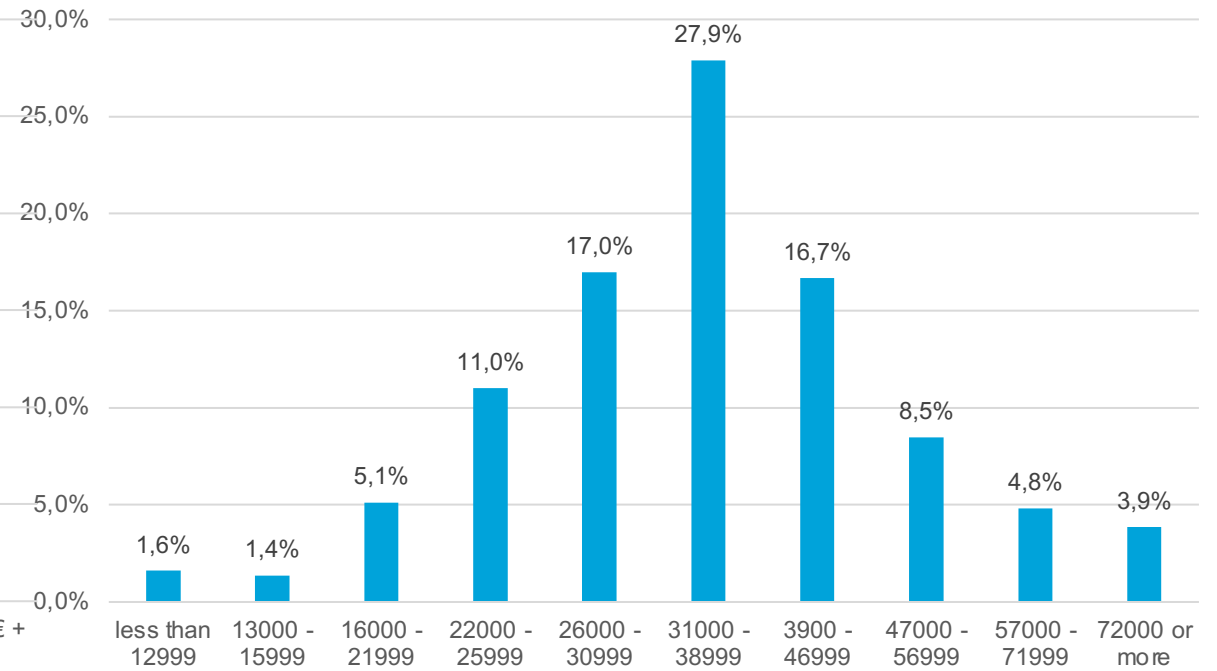
Permanent (96.35%), fixed-term (2.90%) project-based (0.57%), on-call (0.41%)

# Panel Surveys

Net monthly income FRANCE (N=1114)



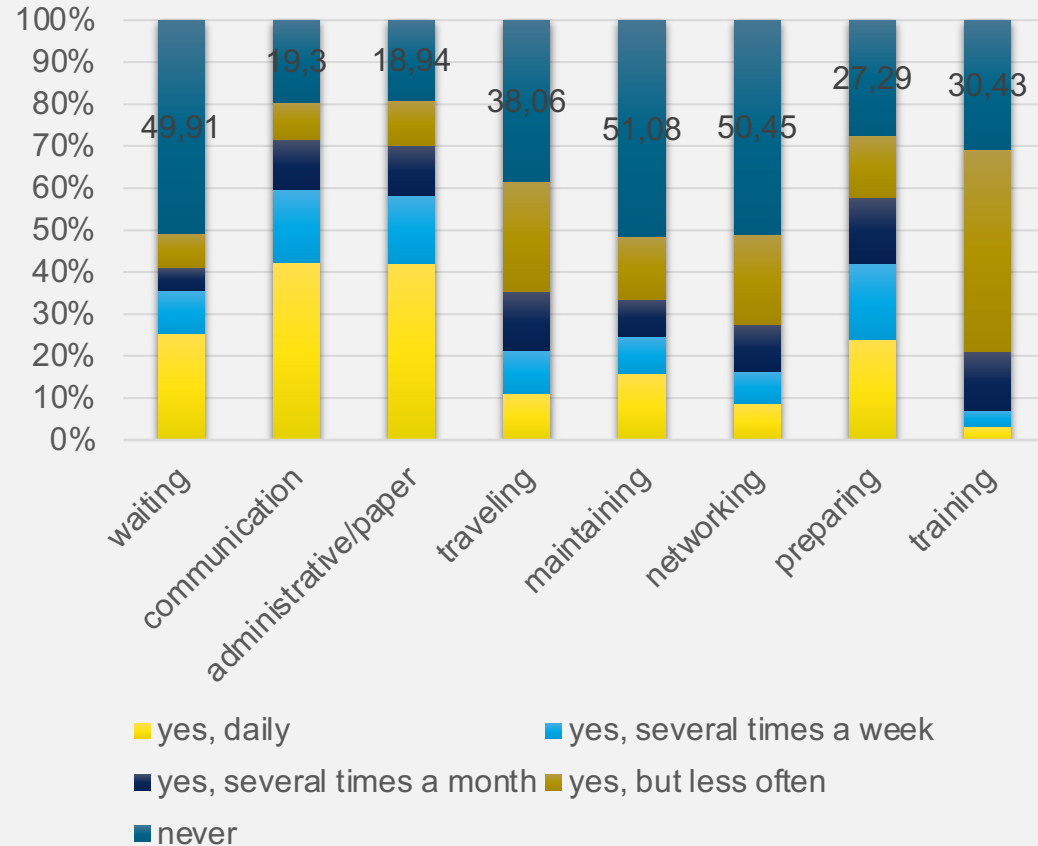
Net monthly income Sweden (N=2775) in SEK



# Panel surveys: On average, how frequently do you do the following work?

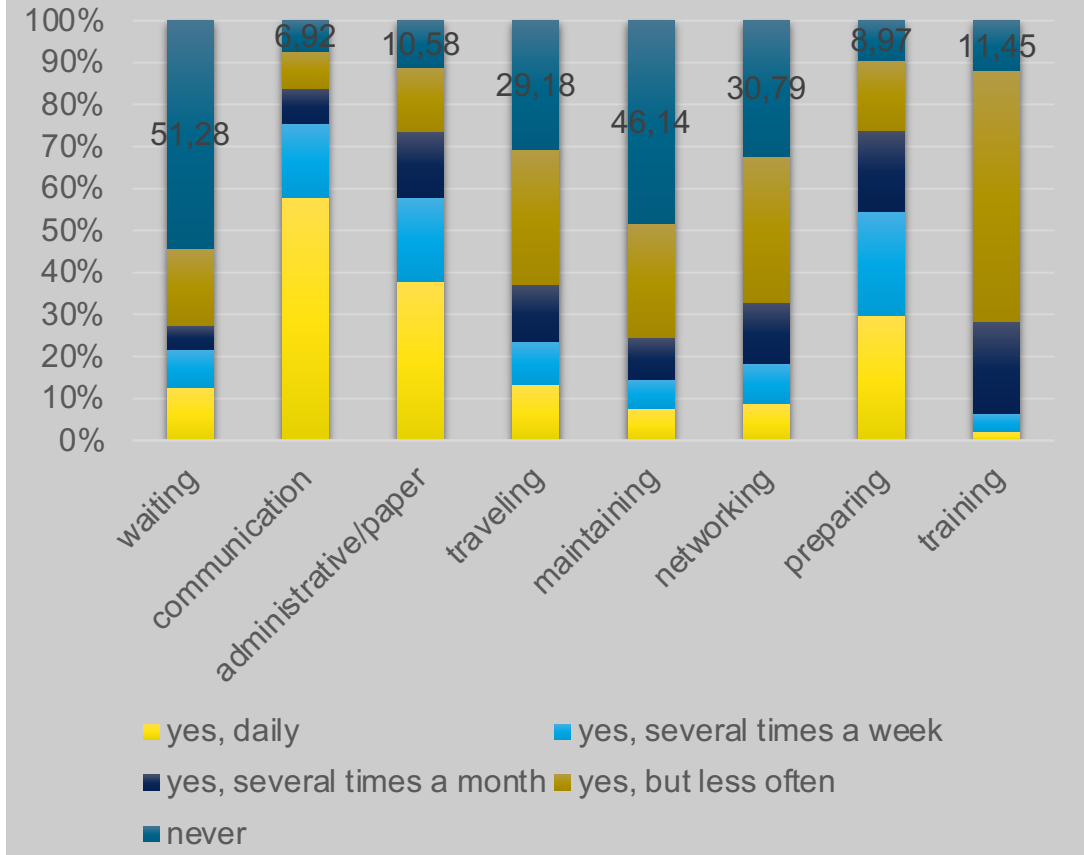
## France

(%; N=1114)



## Sweden

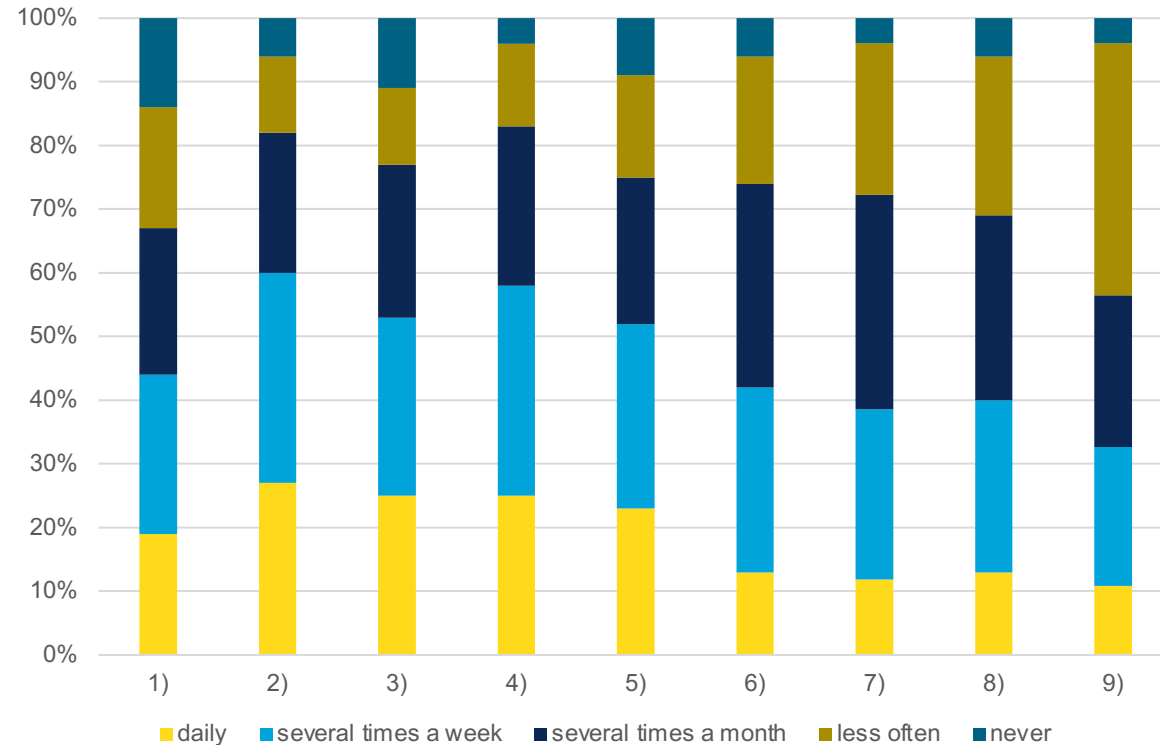
(%, N=2978)



# UK: On average, how frequently do you do the following work?

- Unpaid overtime (including partial) (40.7% among 1350 who work overtime)
- Unpaid hours (including partial) (N=2500)
  - 1) Waiting time between jobs/tasks (14.8%)
  - 2) Preparation time (18.0%)
  - 3) Communication with clients/employers (18.8%)
  - 4) Administrative/paperwork (19.8%)
  - 5) Travel time between jobs and tasks (17.2%)
  - 6) Maintenance time (11.3%)
  - 7) Networking time (12.1%)
  - 8) “volunteer work” as part of the job (12.9%)
  - 9) Training (15.6%)

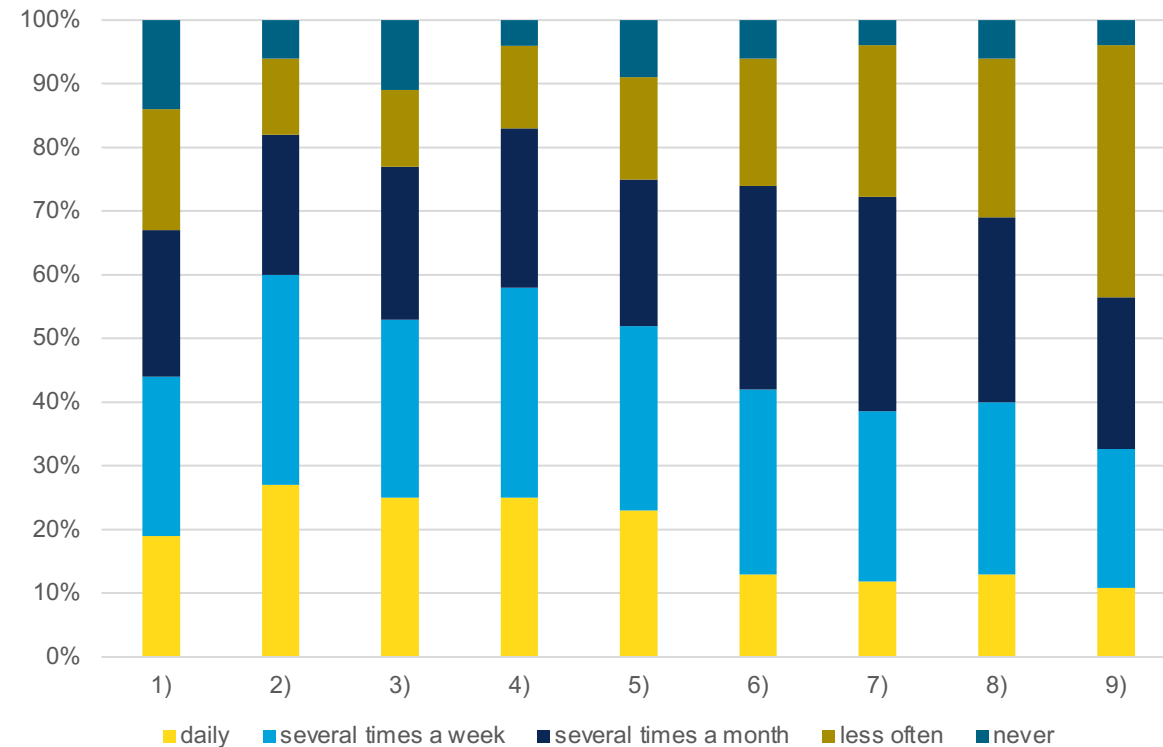
On average, how frequently do you do the following work unpaid? (%)



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  - 9) Training (15.6%)

On average, how frequently do you do the following work unpaid? (%)



# Panel surveys: unpaid time

## France

- **Unpaid overtime** (76.2% (unpaid including partial) 57.7% (only fully unpaid) among 728 who work overtime)
- **Unpaid hours** (including partial, without never or not responded to frequency question)
  - 1) Waiting time between jobs/tasks (23.7%)
  - 2) Communication time (24.3%)
  - 3) Administrative/paperwork (24.6%)
  - 4) Travel time between jobs and tasks (34.8%)
  - 5) Maintenance time (33.6%)
  - 6) Networking time (39.4%)
  - 7) Preparation time (25.2%)
  - 8) Training (26.8%)

## Sweden

- **Unpaid overtime** (61.1% (unpaid including partial) 43.9% (only fully unpaid) among 2020 who work overtime)
- **Unpaid hours** (including partial, without never or not responded to frequency question)
  - 1) Waiting time between jobs/tasks (17.0%)
  - 2) Communication time (15.4%)
  - 3) Administrative/paperwork (16.0%)
  - 4) Travel time between jobs and tasks (37.6%)
  - 5) Maintenance time (19.7%)
  - 6) Networking time (32.9%)
  - 7) Preparation time (20.0%)
  - 8) Training (23.8%)

## UK

- **Unpaid overtime** (including partial) (40.7% among 1350 who work overtime)
- **Unpaid hours** (including partial, without those not doing the following tasks)
  - 1) Waiting time between jobs/tasks (23.2%)
  - 2) Communication time (29.4%)
  - 3) Administrative/paperwork (30,2%)
  - 4) Travel time between jobs and tasks (44.5%)
  - 5) Maintenance time (33.8%)
  - 6) Networking time (36.2%)
  - 7) Preparation time (37.2%)
  - 8) “volunteer work” as part of the job (62.0%)
  - 9) Training (24.4%)



# Panel surveys: unpaid time

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  - 9) Training (24.4%)

# Panel surveys: unpaid time

## France

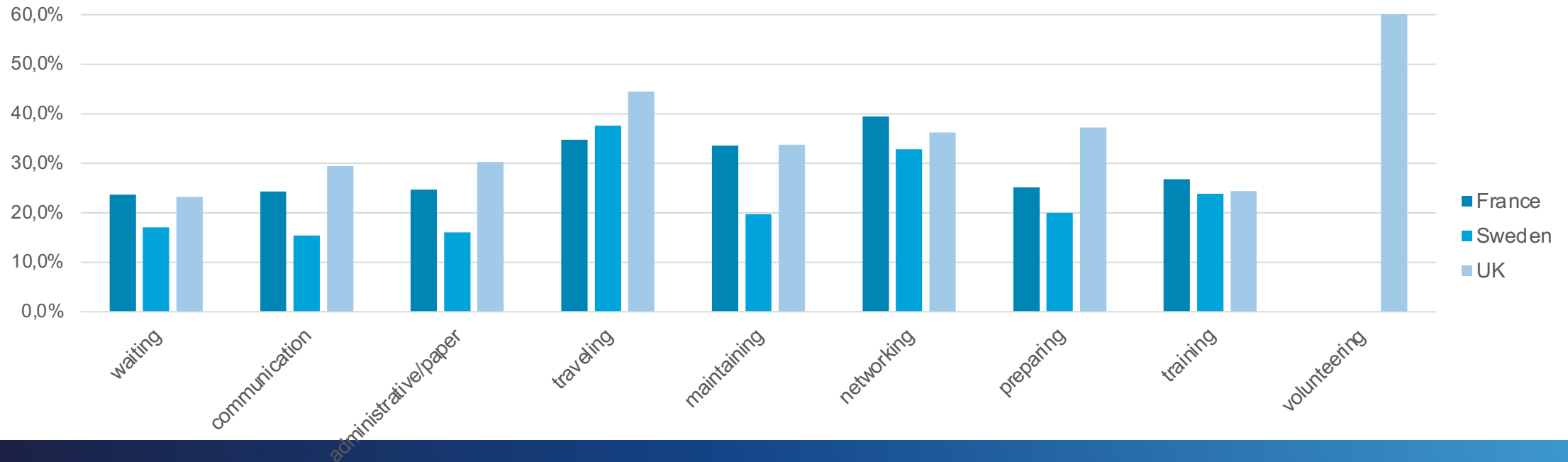
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## Sweden

• **Unpaid overtime** (61.1% (unpaid including partial) 43.9% (only fully unpaid) among 2020 who work overtime)

## UK

• **Unpaid overtime** (including partial) (40.7% among 1350 who work overtime)



# Panel surveys: unpaid material (tools/equipment)

## France

• (including partial, among those who specified that they use them)

- 1) Transportation means (43.2% N=555)
- 2) Related to safety (18.3% N=432)
- 3) Related to appearance (30.6% N=418)
- 4) Computer (19.1% N=923)
- 5) Phone (34.2% N=877)
- 6) Internet (29.8% N=951)
- 7) Gifts/rewards for clients (27.4% N=124)
- 8) Working space (22.8% N=928)

## Sweden

• (including partial, among those who specified that they use them)

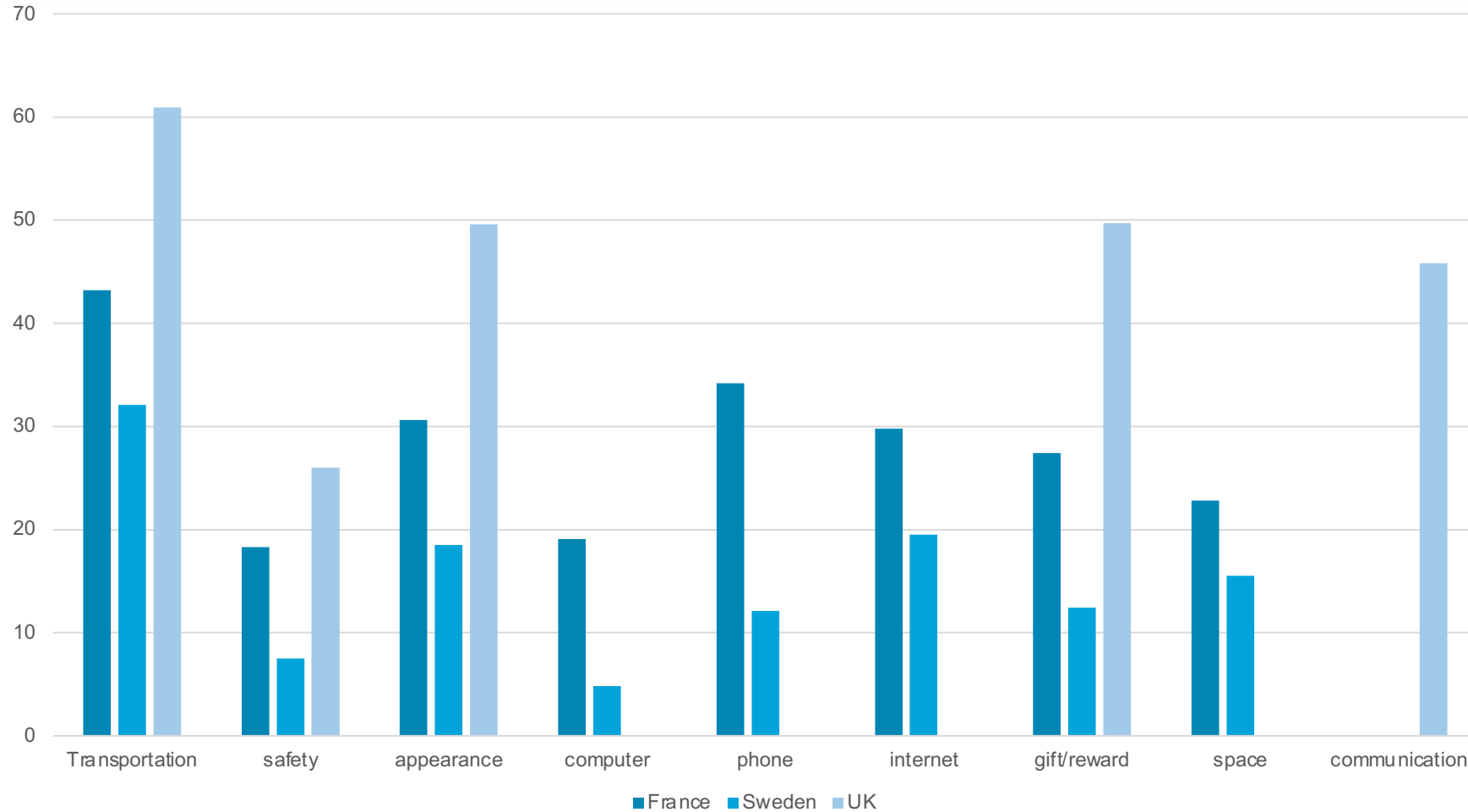
- 1) Transportation means (32.1% N=1102)
- 2) Related to safety (7.5% N=970)
- 3) Related to appearance (18.5% N=996)
- 4) Computer (4.8% N=2542)
- 5) Phone (12.1% N=2473)
- 6) Internet (19.5% N=2611)
- 7) Gifts/rewards for clients (12.4% N=291)
- 8) Working space (15.5% N=2367)

## UK

• (including partial, among those who specified that they use them)

- 1) Transportation means (60.9%, N=980)
- 2) Related to safety (26.0%, N=1046)
- 3) Related to appearance (49.6%, N=932)
- 4) Related to communication (45.8%, N=1253)
- 5) Gifts/rewards for clients (49.7%, N=374)

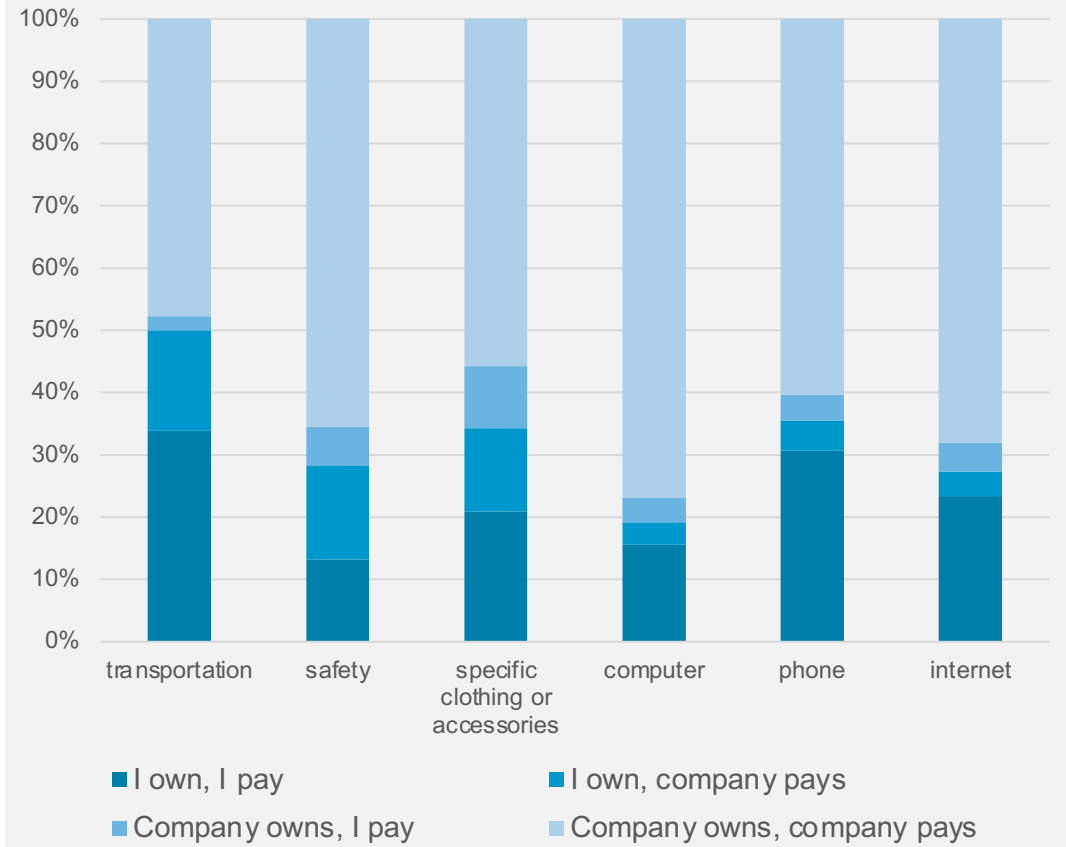
# Panel surveys: unpaid material (tools/equipment)



# Panel surveys: Who owns the following and who covers the expenses for using it?

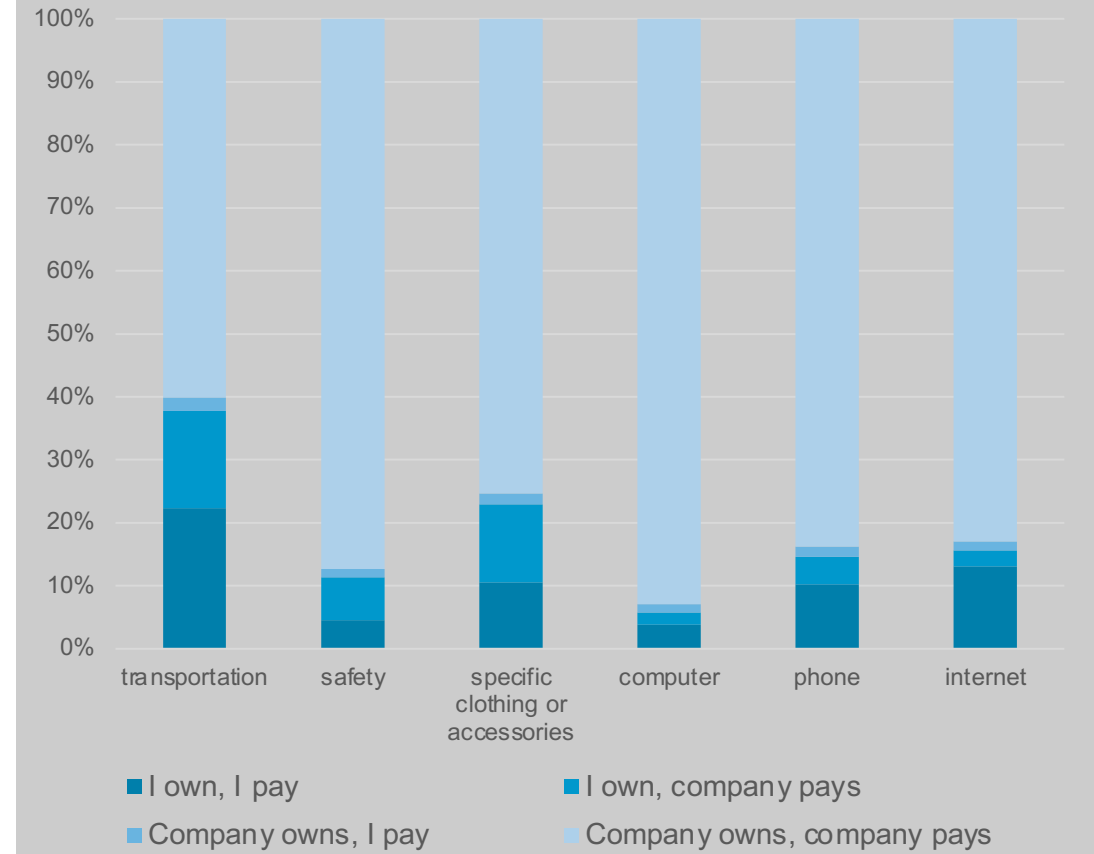
## France

(% - varying N)



## Sweden

(%, varying N)



# Pilot survey: motivations for doing unpaid work

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? (% , N=2978)

inevitability

- 1) Unpaid work is part of my job
- 2) There is no one to perform the tasks for my job instead of me

reward

- 3) Doing unpaid work can help with my career (e.g., promotion, increase in wage, bonus, finding a better job, etc.)
- 4) Doing unpaid work is seen favorably by colleagues/clients/employers
- 5) Doing unpaid work is an act of care or kindness towards people I work with (e.g., colleagues, clients)

penalty

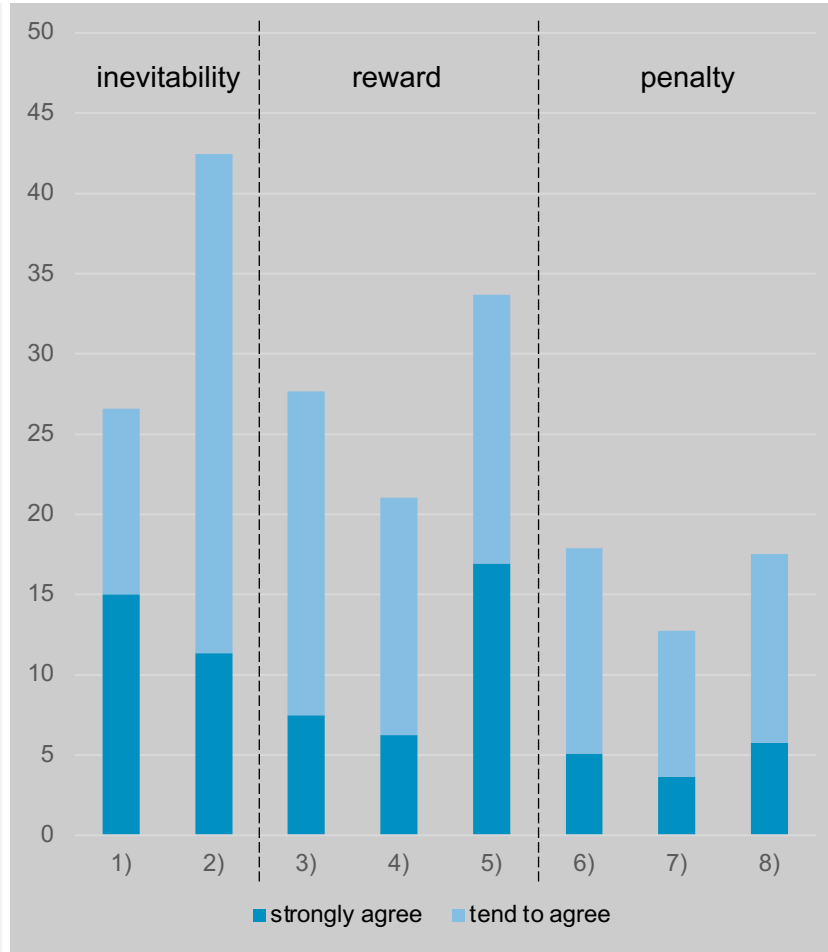
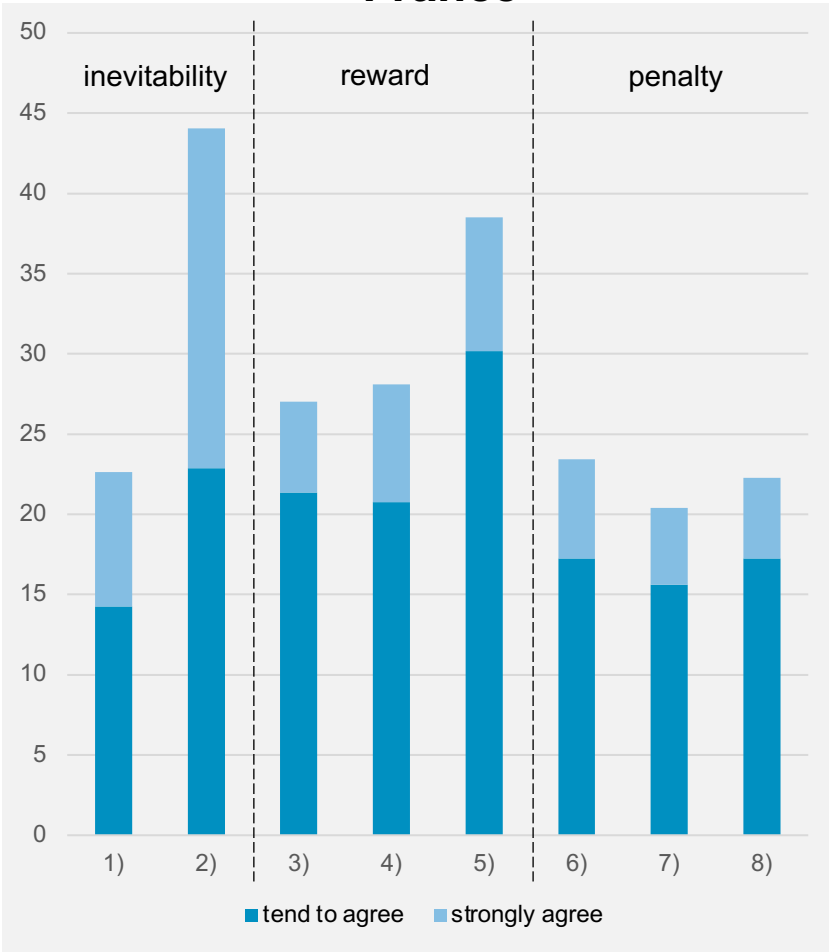
- 6) Not doing unpaid work would make me feel guilty
- 7) Not doing unpaid work is seen badly by colleagues/clients/employers
- 8) Not doing unpaid work might harm my career (e.g., promotion, finding better job in the future, wage, losing clients)

# Panel surveys

**France**

**Sweden**

**UK**



# Research Team



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Established by the European Commission



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# Thank you



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