

The Racial and Income Gap in Commuting for Work After COVID

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This presentation draws from *LSE's* Economic Inequality Series blog “Understanding the Racial and Income Gap in Commuting for Work Following COVID-19” by Ruchi Avtar, Rajashri Chakrabarti and Maxim Pinkovskiy. The views expressed here are those of the presenter and do not necessarily represent those of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York or the Federal Reserve System.

What We Ask?

- ❖ Were there differences in commuting to work patterns by race and income following the pandemic?
- ❖ We differentiate between:
 - Low Income versus Higher Income communities
 - Majority Minority versus other communities
 - Commuting for full-time versus part-time work
 - National versus regional patterns

Data and Definitions

Data

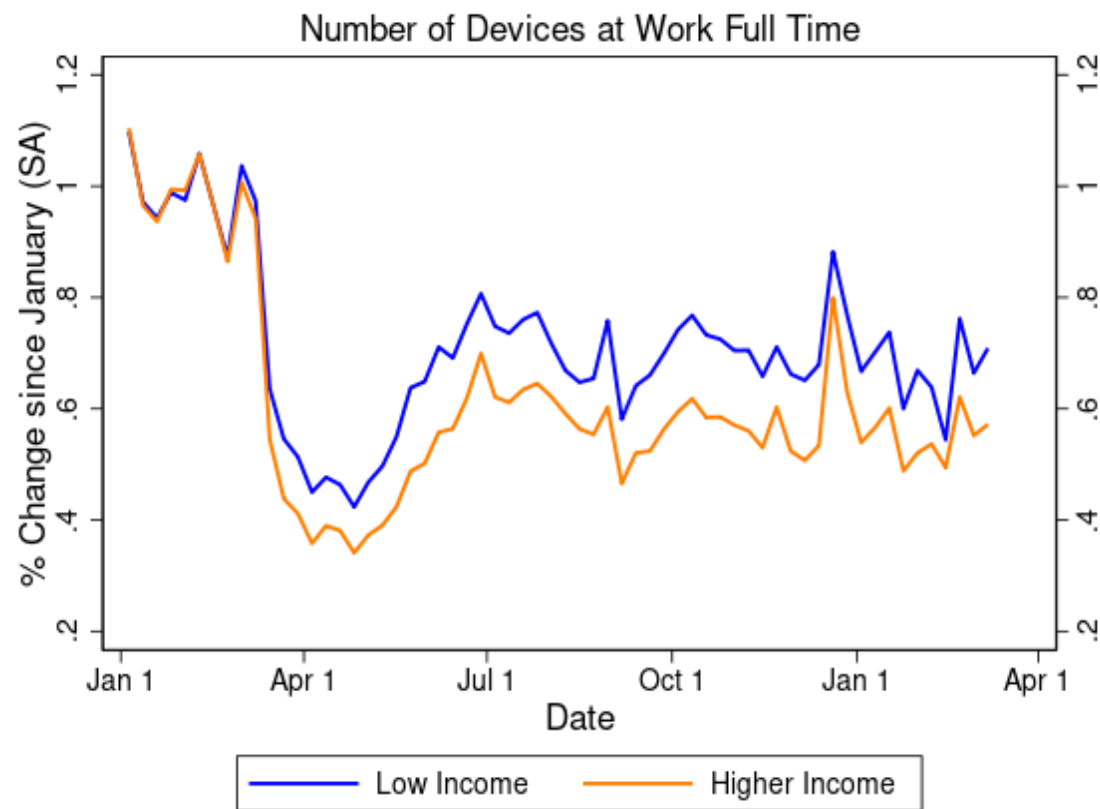
- ❖ SafeGraph's anonymized cell phone mobility data to identify commuting for full-time work or part-time work

Definitions

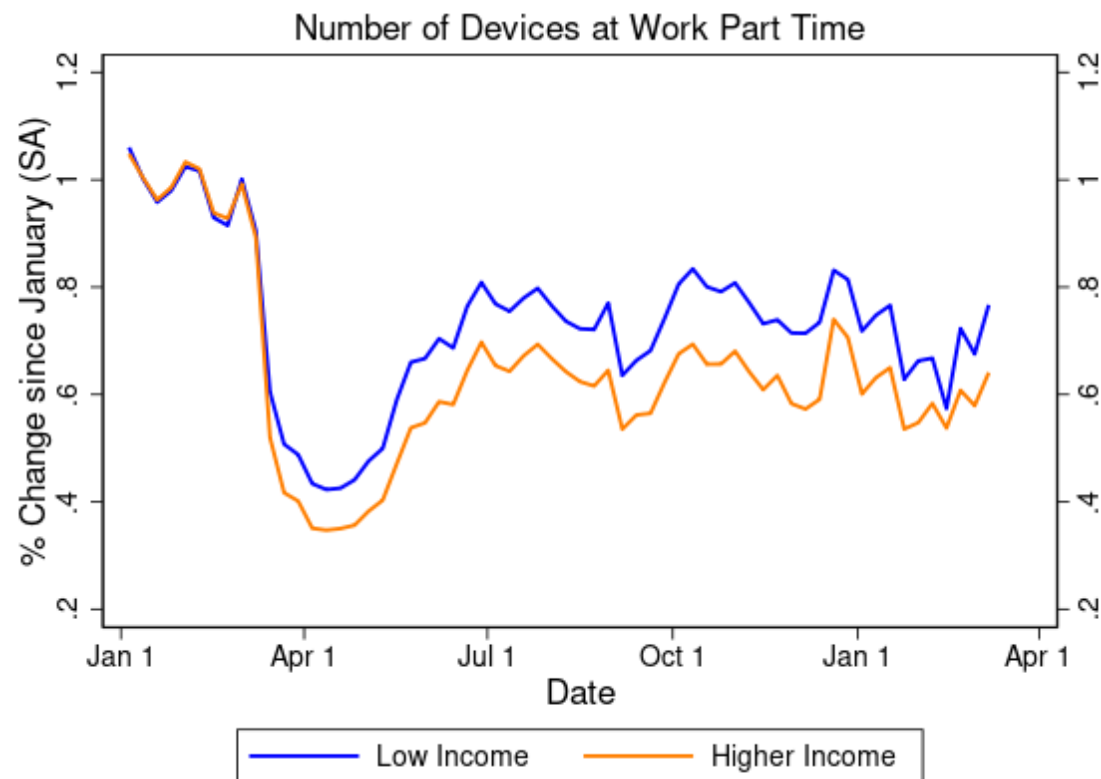
- ❖ Low Income counties → counties in the lowest quartile of the (population-weighted) median household income distribution
- ❖ Majority Minority counties → counties where at least half the population is Hispanic and/or non-Hispanic Black

Differences in Commuting to Work Patterns By Income

Decline in Commuting for Full-Time Work Markedly Lower in Low Income Counties

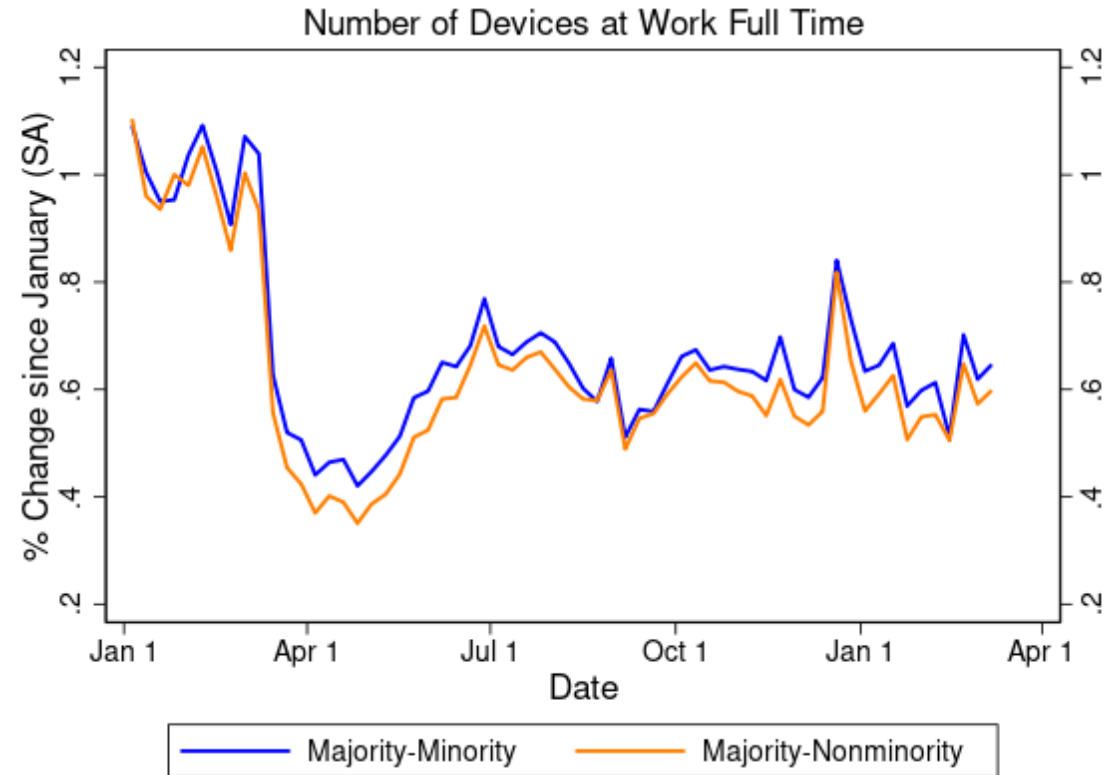


Decline in Commuting for Part-Time Work Perceptibly Lower in Low Income Counties

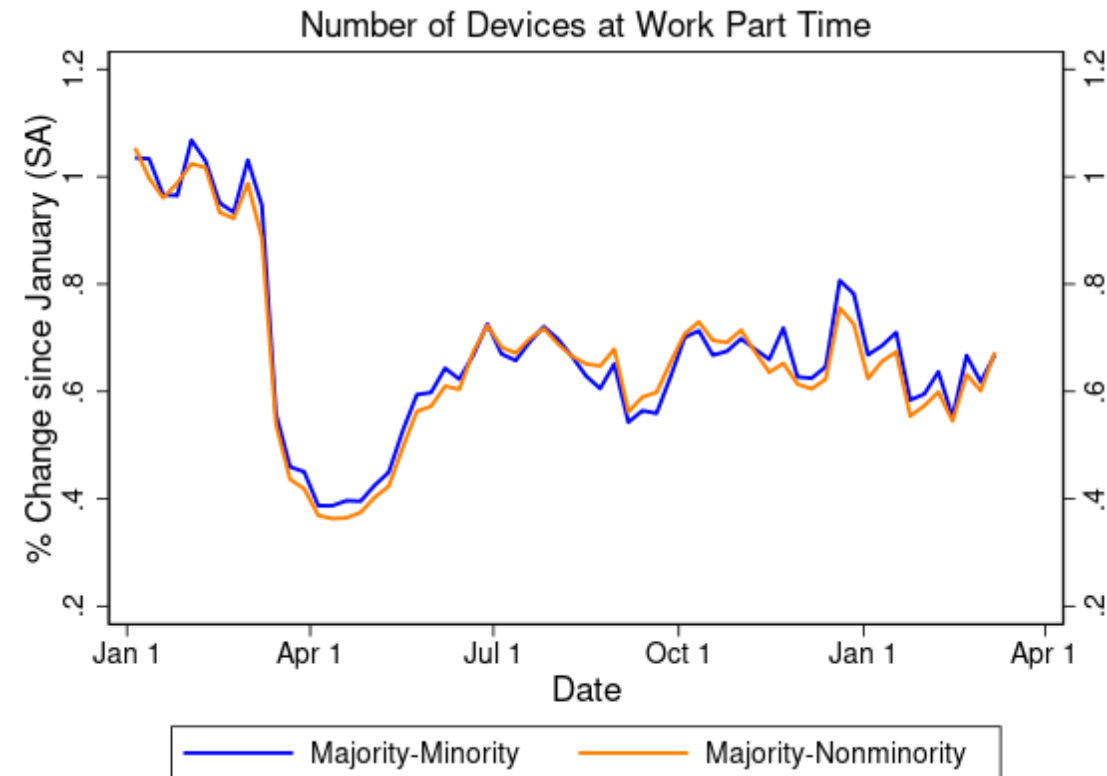


Differences in Commuting to Work Patterns By Race

Decline in Commuting for Full-Time Work Lower in Majority-Minority Counties



No Perceptible Difference in Commuting Patterns for Part-Time Work in Majority-Minority Counties



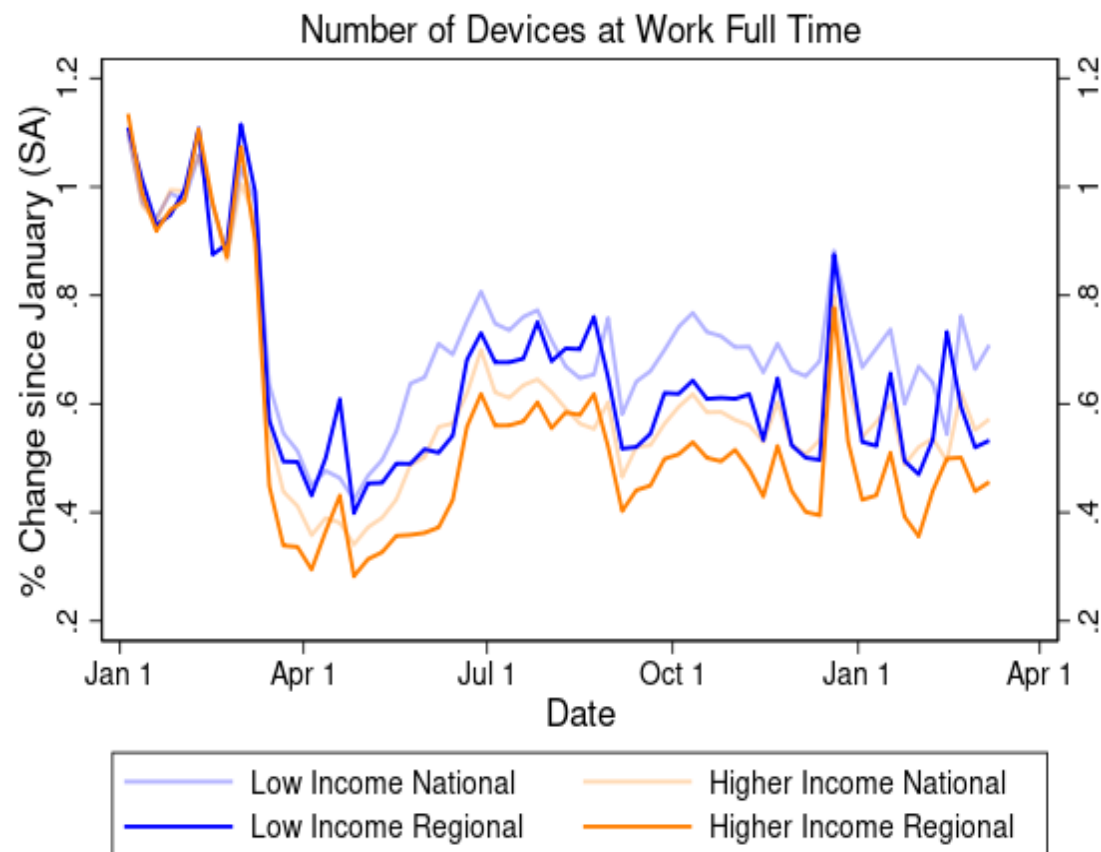
Main Takeaways

- ❖ COVID-19 pandemic associated with large decline in workers commuting to work.
- ❖ Low-Income and Majority-Minority communities saw a perceptibly smaller decline in workers commuting to work.
- ❖ Reopenings associated with dramatic return to commuting for work which was noticeably larger in Low-Income and Majority-Minority communities.
- ❖ Findings suggest workers in Low-Income and Majority-Minority communities are more dependent on occupations that require commuting to work and that are less amenable to working from home.

Appendix

Decline in Commuting for Full-Time Work Starker in the Region

Differentiating
by Income



Decline in Commuting for Full-Time Work Starker in the Region

Differentiating
by Race

