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The Remote Work Gap: Steady Demand, Fewer Opportunities

Key Findings

- **Pandemic-era spike in demand for remote-work has persisted...**
  Job seeker demand for remote work peaked for most countries in mid-2022 and has only modestly declined for most since.

- **... with large variation across countries in job seeker behavior**
  At one extreme, more than 1 in 5 job seekers in the United States exclusively apply to remote jobs; in the United Arab Emirates, 1 in 100 job seekers do.

- **The share of remote jobs is higher among jobs that continue to attract job applicants**
  In late 2024, the share of newly listed jobs that were remote was 9% in the US but among still-active jobs that continued to attract applicants, the share was 16%.

- **Remote job availability has diminished in recent years**
  At its peak in early 2022, in the US, 27% of jobs that members applied to offered remote flexibility but by late 2024 this share had fallen to 16%. This pattern of diminished supply of remote work—contrary to workers' demand—is evident around the world.

- **The rise and fall of labor market tightness coincides with the increase and decline in remote-work availability**
  Around the world, the tightening then loosening of the labor market occurred alongside the increase and decline in remote work availability despite sustained preference by job seekers for such flexibility. Remote work flexibility appears to be a workplace amenity that workers and firms actively bargain over, with the balance of power partly shaped by prevailing labor market conditions.

Peter McCrory
Staff Research Economist
Economic Graph Research Institute
pmccrory@linkedin.com

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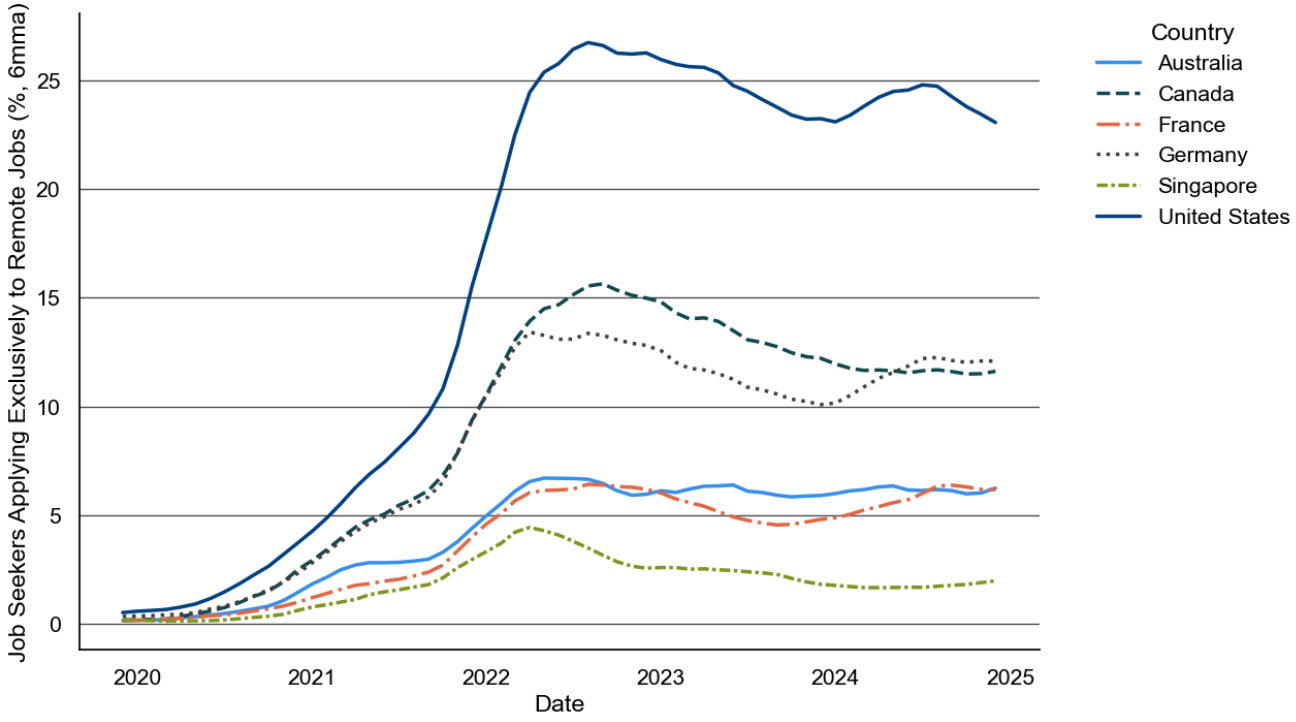
The pandemic brought substantial change to labor markets around the world. As the virus spread and the costs and feasibility of in-person economic activity rose, workplace arrangements became more amenable to remote work.[1] This was initially born of necessity and benefited workers and firms alike. As pandemic concerns subsided, however, firms have become less accommodating even though many job seekers continue to have a preference for work-from-home flexibility.

Prior to the pandemic, very few job seekers applied exclusively to remote roles, reflecting the general lack of availability of such roles. With the onset of the pandemic, the share of job seekers exclusively targeting remote opportunities rose sharply before peaking in mid-2022 in most countries (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Share of Job Seekers Exclusively Applying to Remote Roles in Select Countries



Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph

Among the fifteen countries we study in this note, this increase in the demand for remote work was most pronounced in the United States, where at its peak more than 1 in 4 job seekers exclusively applied to remote roles. In other countries, the rise in demand for remote work was less pronounced. In Singapore and United Arab Emirates, for example, less than 5% of job seekers have ever exclusively applied to remote roles, likely a consequence of the limited availability of such roles, as we discuss below.

[1] By May 2020 in the United States, many workers who could plausibly work remotely were in fact doing so: Dingel and Neiman (2020) present evidence that nearly 4 in 10 workers in the U.S. could plausibly work remotely at the onset of the pandemic given the nature of their work responsibilities. Bick, Blandin, and Mertens (2023) report that 31.4% of workers in May 2020 in the U.S. worked entirely remotely.

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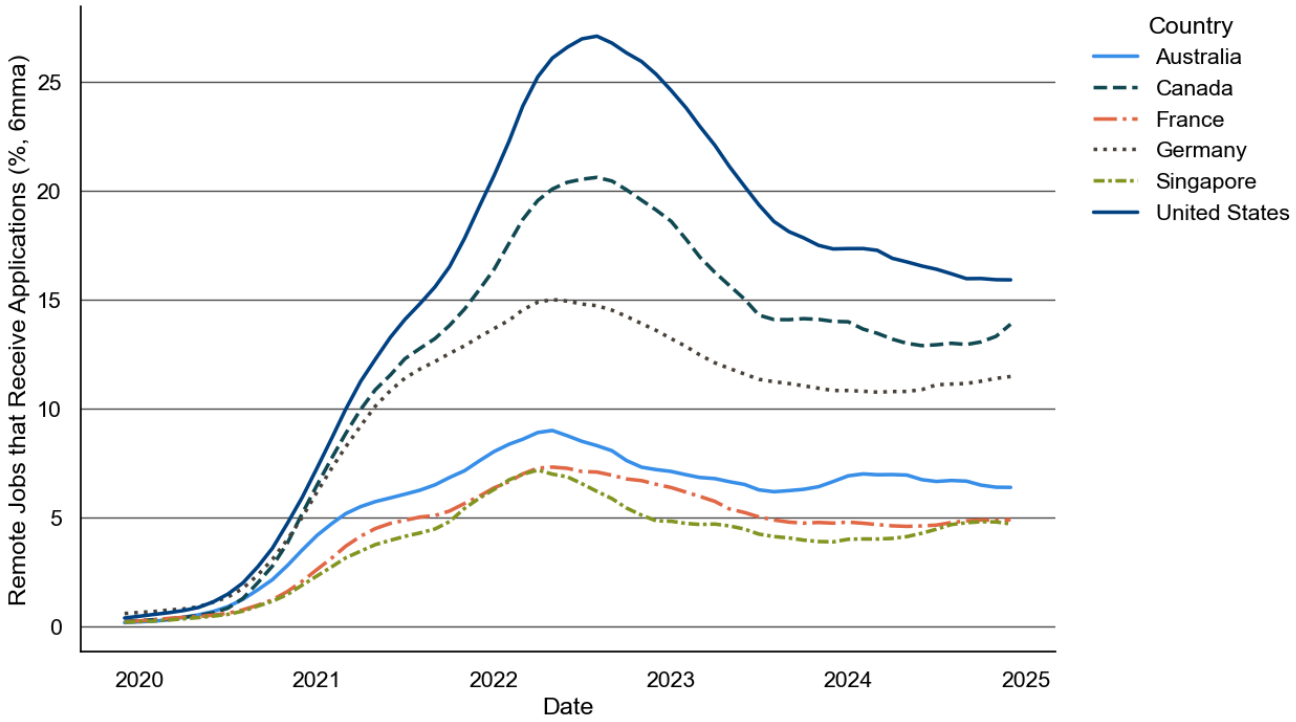
The difference in experience across countries likely reflects variation in sectoral and occupational composition of the workforce, policy-responses to the pandemic, and broader institutional factors that might make remote work less desirable or feasible (e.g. size of residence, public transit options).

Around the world, this pandemic-induced rise in demand for remote work has largely persisted even as pandemic distortions in the global economy subsided. This suggests that the confluence of pandemic-era factors that made remote work feasible (e.g. investment in home-office equipment, changes to workplace policies) or choices made in light of such flexibility (e.g. moving to a faraway place) have led some job seekers to maintain a persistent demand for working remotely.[2]

Figure 2: Share of Remote Jobs in Select Countries



Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph. The share of remote jobs is calculated for the share of jobs that members actively apply to in a given month. How we identify such active and attractive jobs is discussed in the main text and in the appendix.

Firms were initially willing to accommodate job seeker demand for remote flexibility. From 2020 to mid-2022, the share of remote jobs among those that received applications increased essentially in tandem with job seeker demand for remote roles (Figure 2).[3] In the years since, the supply of remote roles has fallen by noticeably more than has job seeker demand.

[2] During the pandemic, people wanted more space and migrated to metropolitan areas more favorable to working remotely, contributing significantly to house price appreciation in the US (Mondragon and Wieland 2022). Some portion of demand for remote work may reflect mortgage rate lock and diminished household mobility (Liebersohn and Rothstein 2024).
[3] Throughout this analysis, we focus on "Active and Attractive" jobs, defined in the next section. In short, such jobs are those that were either promoted on LinkedIn or were manually listed by a job poster and received an application from a member

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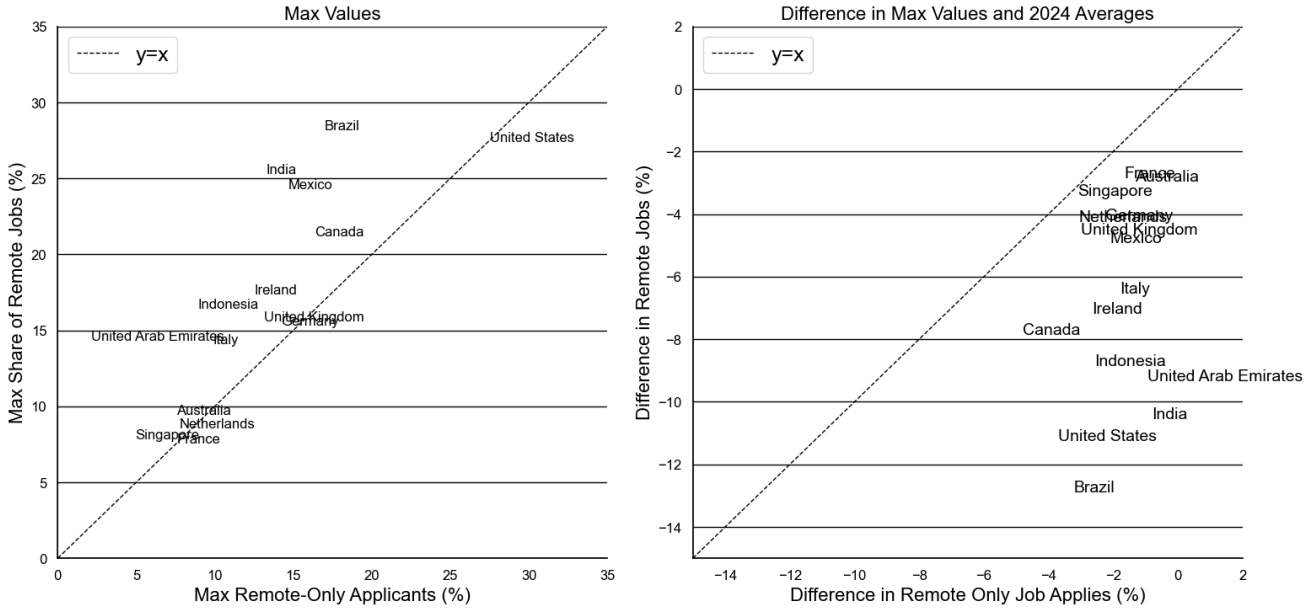
To summarize,

- Based on LinkedIn data the supply and demand for remote work rose swiftly in the early years of the pandemic around the world, peaking sometime in 2022.
- In the years since—against the backdrop of subsiding pandemic concerns—both supply and demand for remote work declined.
- However, the decline in the availability of remote work for job seekers was more pronounced than the more modest drop in the share of applicants exclusively applying to remote roles. In other words, many job seekers still want remote roles even if such opportunities are less prevalent.

Figure 3: The Rise and Fall of Supply & Demand for Remote Work



Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph

We confirm these observations for a broader sample of countries in Figure 3. The left panel compares the peak increase in the demand for remote work (share of members exclusively applying to remote roles) against the peak increase in the supply of remote work (among jobs receiving applicants, share classified as remote). Indeed, the increase in demand for remote work through 2022 was matched by rising supply.

The right panel of Figure 3 illustrates the asymmetry of the decline in supply and demand for remote work in recent years. Along the horizontal axis we calculate the percentage-point drop in the share of members only applying to remote roles from peak values to 2024 values. On the vertical axis, we calculate the corresponding drop in the share of remote jobs.

within the country in which it was listed. This approach seeks to filter out job postings that are stale or otherwise do not have material impact on labor market tightness. The appendix describes how this can be articulated in the framework of Abraham, Haltiwanger, and Rendell (2020).

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The drop in the demand for remote work was relatively small across most countries, ranging from a 4.8%-pt drop in Canda (against a peak of 21%) to a 0.8%-pt fall in India (against a peak of 13%). By comparison, the drop in the supply of remote roles was much larger, ranging from a 12.9%-pt drop in Brazil (against a peak of 28%) to 2.8%-pt decline in France (against a peak of 7.6%). See Table 1 for the statistics underlying Figure 3.

Table 1: Rise and Fall of Supply & Demand for Remote Work

Country	Remote-Only Applicants (%, Max)	Remote Jobs (%, Max)	Remote-Only Applicants (%, 2024 Avg. - Max)	Remote Jobs (%, 2024 Avg. - Max)
Australia	7.5	9.5	-1.3	-2.9
Brazil	17.0	28.2	-3.2	-12.9
Canada	16.4	21.2	-4.8	-7.8
France	7.6	7.6	-1.7	-2.8
Germany	14.2	15.3	-2.2	-4.2
India	13.3	25.3	-0.8	-10.5
Indonesia	8.9	16.4	-2.6	-8.8
Ireland	12.5	17.4	-2.7	-7.2
Italy	9.9	14.1	-1.8	-6.5
Mexico	14.7	24.3	-2.1	-4.9
Netherlands	7.7	8.6	-3.1	-4.2
Singapore	4.9	7.9	-3.1	-3.4
United Arab Emirates	2.1	14.3	-0.9	-9.3
United Kingdom	13.1	15.6	-3.0	-4.6
United States	27.5	27.4	-3.7	-11.2

Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph

Availability of remote work & labor market tightness

What might help explain the asymmetric decline in the supply of remote opportunities as compared to the smaller fall in demand for remote work among job seekers? And why has supply of remote roles declined by so much more than demand?

In this section we present evidence that the rise and fall in the availability of remote work may reflect fluctuations in worker bargaining power in recent years. As the labor market tightened around the world from late 2020 to 2022, firms accommodated job seekers' rising preference for remote work in the types of roles listed on LinkedIn. In other words, in a tight labor market—and especially as the pandemic raged—firms appeared willing to accommodate the preferences of job seekers for remote flexibility.

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And as tight labor markets normalized in the years since and pandemic concerns waned, the availability of remote roles likewise diminished. Notably, we document a similar sensitivity of remote-work availability to cooling labor market conditions as when labor markets were heating up, suggesting that it is not just a normalization of the labor market as COVID-19 became endemic around the world.

Given this evidence, it is natural to conceive of remote flexibility as a non-wage amenity that workers and firms actively negotiate over and which exhibits sensitivity to broader business cycle conditions.[4] We discuss this point further in the conclusion.

To document the sensitivity of remote-work availability to broader labor market conditions, we need a measure of labor market tightness. In this note we construct a novel notion of labor market tightness to facilitate the analysis.[5]

The high-level idea is to first identify job listings on LinkedIn that are likely to have the greatest influence on the wage & compensation negotiations for newly hired workers. Then, to measure labor market tightness we scale the count of such jobs by an appropriately defined measure of active job seekers.

We first introduce the notion of *Active and Attractive Jobs*. These are jobs on LinkedIn that satisfy two conditions:

i. Job posters either paid to promote the role or manually listed the job on LinkedIn (thus paying an opportunity cost of the employee's time). In other words, listing the firm on LinkedIn was, in some sense, a costly action.
ii. Received an application from a member in the country in which the job is located.

Our scale of *Effective Job Seekers* are those members who apply to at least one *Active and Attractive Job* listed in their country of residence. We then define labor market tightness in country c at time t as

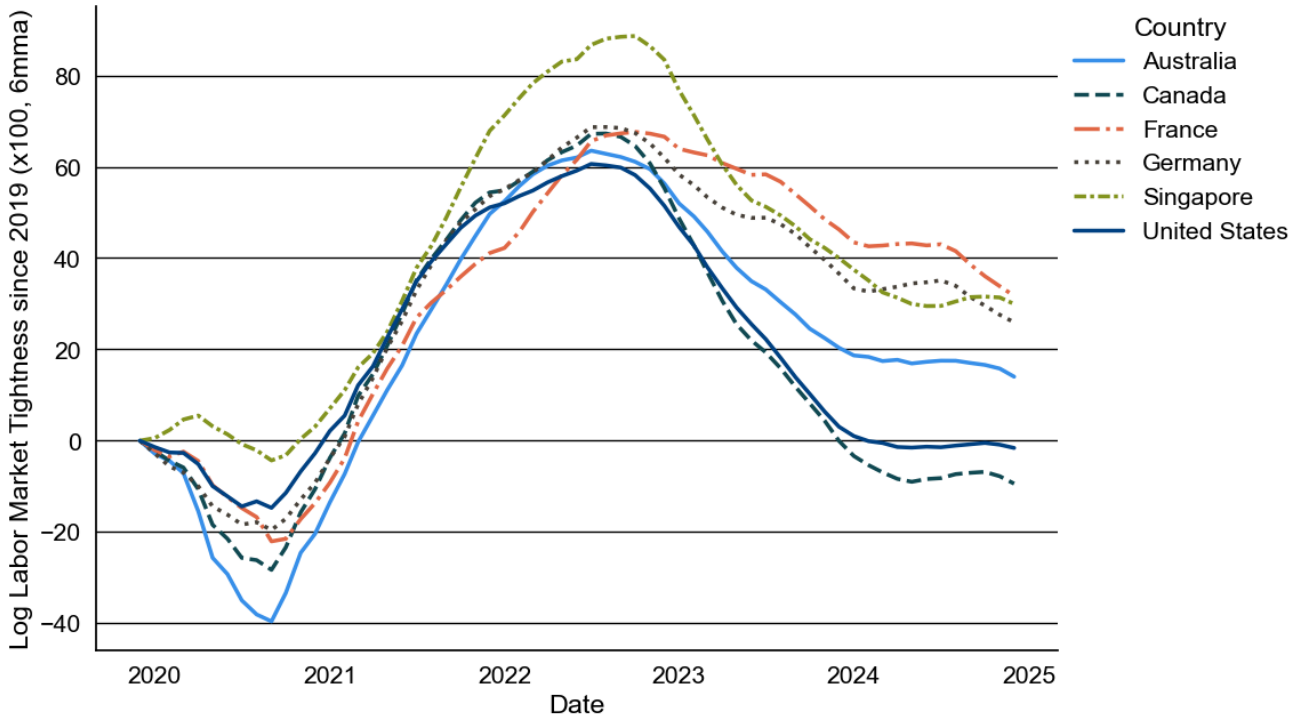
$$Labor\ Market\ Tightness\colon\ \theta_{c,t} \equiv \frac{Active\ and\ Attractive\ Jobs_{c,t}}{Effective\ Job\ Seekers_{c,t}}$$

Figure 4 plots this notion of labor market tightness for select countries measured in terms of log deviations (x100) in this measure relative to its average value in the second half of 2019. We can clearly see the global pandemic shock: In spring of 2020 as the global economy came to a sudden halt there was a corresponding drop in the number of active and attractive jobs as compared to the number of job seekers applying to such roles.

[4] Given our focus on job listings, there is a clear parallel with the literature that documents that wages of new hires are more cyclically sensitive than wages of incumbent workers (Pissarides 2009). Comparing the cyclicality of working remotely among new hires and incumbent workers in LinkedIn data is beyond the scope of this short note but would be an interesting area to explore.

[5] It is possible to articulate our approach in the framework of Abraham, Haltiwanger, and Rendell (2020) where job listings receive weight one if they are "active and attractive" as defined above (zero otherwise) and where job seekers receive weight one if they apply to an active and attractive job. We discuss this further in the methodological appendix.

Figure 4: Labor Market Tightness since 2019 in Select Countries



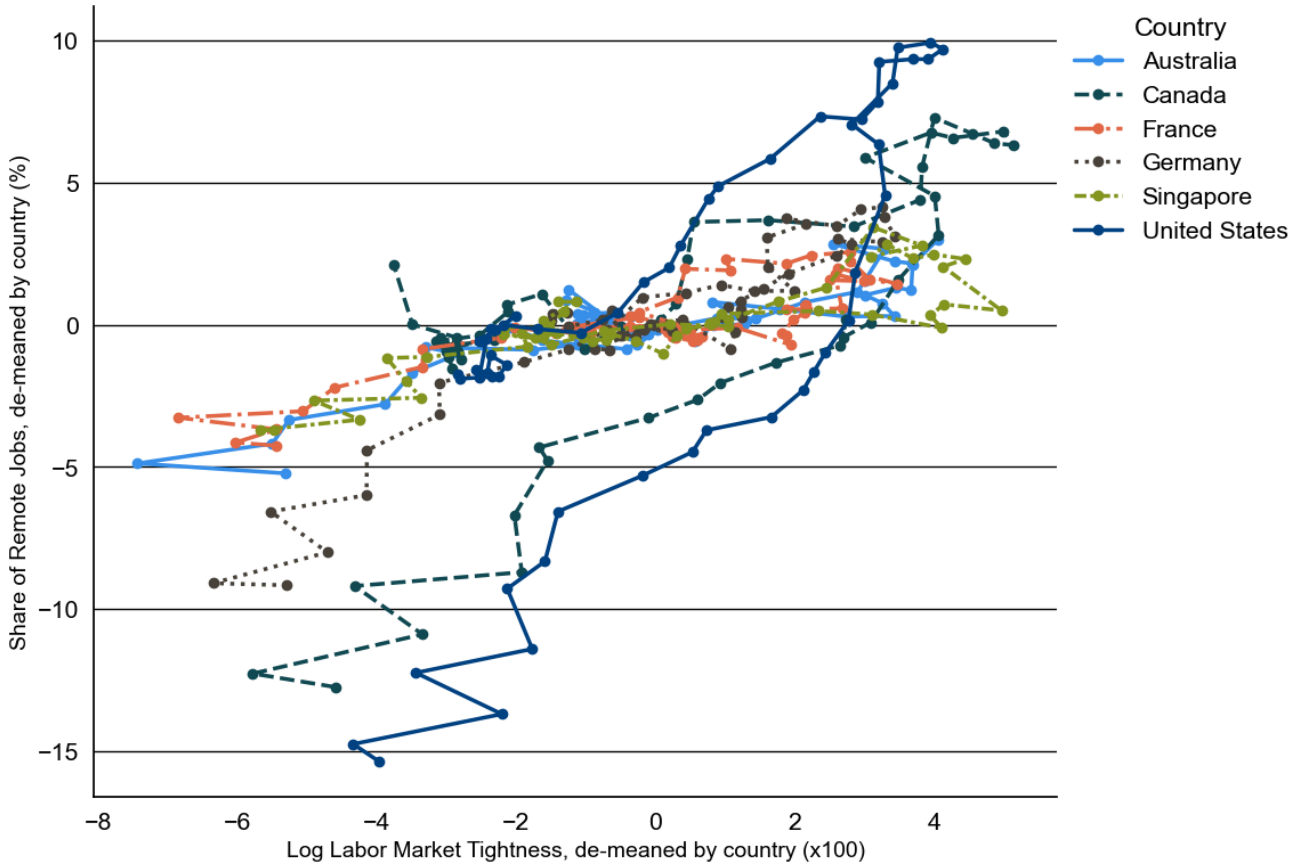
Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph. Labor market tightness is defined as the ratio of active and attractive jobs (defined in text) to the number of effective job seekers for such roles.

By early 2021, the labor market was already appearing tighter than it was pre-pandemic according to this measure. And much like the supply and demand for remote work, labor market tightness peaked for these countries at some point in 2022 before declining, to varying degrees, since. In the United States, for example, this measure of labor market tightness had returned to its pre-pandemic level in early 2024, where it has remained since.

How does this compare with the availability of remote work? Figure 5 provides a connected scatter plot for select countries of labor market tightness and the share of remote jobs, net of each country's average values from June 2020 to December 2024. We focus here on values from June 2020 onward to exclude the earliest months of the pandemic.

While the sensitivity of remote work availability and labor market tightness clearly varies across countries, the general pattern is evident: As the labor market tightened from mid-2020 to 2022 the availability of remote jobs increased. After labor market tightness peaked and began to fall, so too did the supply of remote work. In a few instances it—most notably the United States—the decline in labor market tightness was initially quicker than the drop-off in the share of remote jobs that members applied to, reflected in a counter-clockwise rotation.

Figure 5: Labor Market Tightness & Remote Job Share, June 2020 to December 2024 in Select Countries



Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph. Labor market tightness is defined as the ratio of active and attractive jobs *(defined in text) to the number of effective job seekers for such roles. The share of remote jobs is among active and attractive jobs.*

Broadening our sample of countries to those that appear in Table 1, we calculate the (correlational) sensitivity of remote work availability to labor market tightness by estimating the following regression:

$$ShareRemoteJobs_{c,t} = \alpha_c + \beta \times 10 \times ln\, Labor\ Market\ Tightness_{c,t} + error \qquad (1)$$

Because of the log specification, the estimated coefficient $\hat{\beta}$ can be interpreted as the percent increase in remote work availability per 10% increase in the ratio of active and attractive jobs to effective job seekers. This is elasticity is pooled across countries during the pandemic and can be thought of as the average elasticity. α_c is a country fixed effect. We cluster errors at the monthly level.

Table 2 records the estimates of this specification for four different samples. The first column is the full sample from June 2020 to December 2024. The second column focuses on the window of time when labor markets around the world were generally tightening; the third column captures the period of time when labor markets were generally cooling. The final column calculates six-month differences in both variables to net out the country-fixed effect and focus on low-frequency changes over the entire sample.

Table 2: Elasticity of Remote Work Availability to Labor Market Tightness

	Share of Remote Jobs			6-month Change in the Share of Remote Jobs
	2020:6-2024:12	2020:6-2022:6	2022:7-2024:12	2020:6-2024:12
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
10 x Log Labor Market Tightness	0.836*** (0.042)	1.012*** (0.035)	0.854*** (0.063)	
10 x 6-month Change in Log Labor Market Tightness				0.897** (0.227)
Country Fixed Effects	x	x	x	-
Observations	825	375	450	135
R^2	0.805	0.811	0.948	0.309

*Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph. Significance levels: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered by month. Columns (1) through (3) report the elasticity estimate from regressing the share of remote jobs on the log of labor market tightness scaled so that the coefficient is read as the %-pt increase in the share of remote roles per 10% increase in labor market tightness. Column (4) regresses the 6-month change in remote job availability on the 6-month log change in labor market tightness. Specifications (1) through (3) include country fixed effects.*

The point estimates range from 0.8 to 1 implying that on average across the countries in our sample each 10% increase in labor market tightness was associated with a 0.8-1.0 percentage point increase in the share of remote jobs that LinkedIn members applied to. Importantly, the association between remote job availability and movements in labor market tightness are of a comparable economic magnitude across both sub-samples when labor markets were tightening and loosening.

Of course, Table 2 simply reports the pooled elasticity across countries. Figure 6 provides country-specific estimates across the two sub-samples in our data corresponding to the rise and fall of labor market tightness. Two broad patterns emerge from this analysis.

First, across countries and sub-samples there is a robust positive correlation between labor market tightness and the availability of remote work with the majority of point estimates above 0.5 regardless of country or sub-sample. This implies that remote work availability rose or fell by 0.5%-pt in most countries for each 10% increase or decrease in measured labor market tightness.

Second, for 12 out of 15 countries in our sample the estimated sensitivity of remote work availability to labor market tightness was smaller during the normalization period (mid-2022 and beyond). A particularly notable example is in the United States where each 10% rise in labor market tightness was initially associated with a nearly 3% rise in the availability of remote work. After both peaked in 2022 and subsequently fell the association weakened to 1.7 so that each 10% decline in labor market tightness corresponded to a 1.7%-pt drop in the share of remote roles that members applied to.

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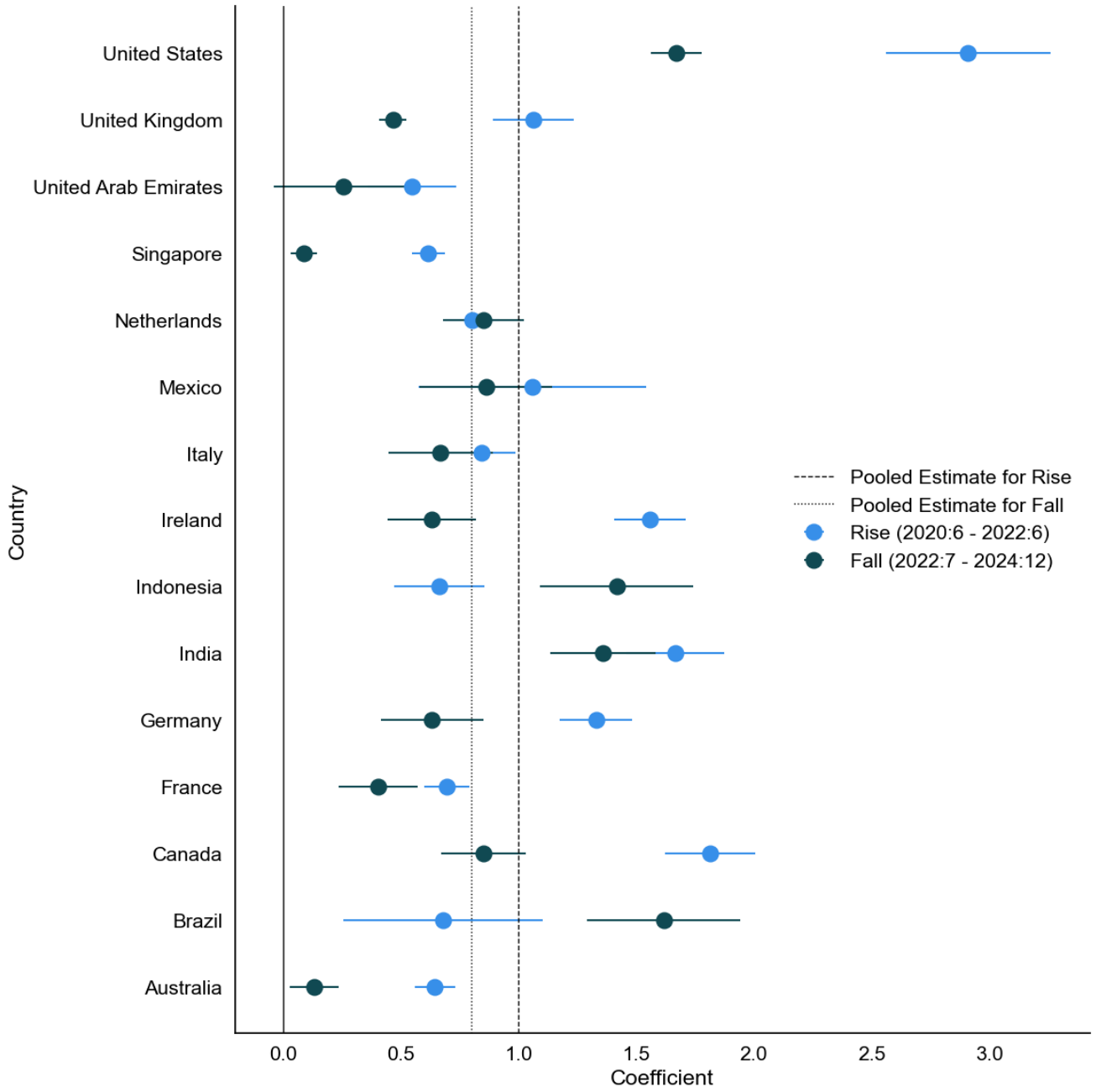
Figure 6: Elasticity of Remote Work Availability to Labor Market Tightness by Country



Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph. Each elasticity estimate comes from a regression of the share of remote jobs on the log of labor market tightness with country fixed effects and allowing for the elasticity to vary by country. We estimate the model for each subsample and cluster standard errors by month. Labor market tightness is defined as the ratio of active and attractive jobs *(defined in text) to the number of effective job seekers for such roles. The share of remote jobs is among active and attractive jobs.*

Conclusion & Discussion

This note makes a number of observations about workers' demand for and firms' supply of remote work around the world since the onset of the pandemic.

First, demand for remote work among job seekers has proven to be persistent. In the United States, more than 1 in 5 job seekers exclusively apply to remote opportunities. Elsewhere the initial rise was less dramatic but nevertheless has remained close to pandemic-era highs. For example, in Germany the share of applicants exclusively applying to remote roles peaked at around 14% and has only fallen to 12% by the end of 2024. For firms struggling to attract talent, offering remote flexibility appears to be an effective strategy for identifying interested candidates. Recent academic evidence suggests that offering flexible workplace amenities may even come at lower cost to employers as, on average, workers may be willing to forgo higher pay to work remotely (Cullen, Pakzad-Hurson, and Perez-Truglia 2025).

Second, the rise in the availability of remote work among jobs listed on LinkedIn initially matched the rise in demand as firms and workers adjusted workplace arrangements in the midst of the pandemic; however, remote job availability declined more swiftly in recent years than did job seeker demand. Again, the experience in the United States is revealing: At its peak in 2022 more than 25% of all jobs that members applied to in the US were remote roles; by the end of 2024 this share had declined to 16%.

Third, the availability of remote work around the world over the course of the pandemic business cycle was highly correlated with movements in labor market tightness.[6] On average across the fifteen countries in our sample, each 10% increase in labor market tightness was associated with a close to 1%-pt increase in the share of remote jobs that members apply to.

This is an economically meaningful association. From January 2023 to December 2024, the measure of labor market tightness introduced in this note fell by 30% on average across the countries in our sample. Over this same period of time, the share of remote roles among active and attractive jobs fell by around 2.9%-pt to a cross-country average of 1 in 10 jobs.

As the balance of power shifted favorably toward firms in recent years, employers offered fewer remote opportunities to job seekers. This presumably reflects, in many cases, management preferences for in-person work and concerns about the productivity of remote workers, among other factors. The evidence in this note suggests that a further deterioration in labor market conditions could lead to a further reduction in the availability of remote offerings for job seekers.[7]

[6] If you have jumped ahead to the conclusion (as is reasonable), we calculate labor market tightness as the ratio of "Active and Attractive Jobs" to the number of members that apply to such jobs from within the country in which the job is listed. These jobs satisfy two conditions: (i) the job poster paid to promote the role or manually listed the job on LinkedIn and (ii) the job received at least one applicant from within the country. See the Appendix or main text for more details and motivation.

[7] A recent survey of US executives suggests, instead, that remote-work offerings are recession-proof as surveyed companies do not expect to adjust their return-to-office policies during a downturn (Barrero et al 2025).

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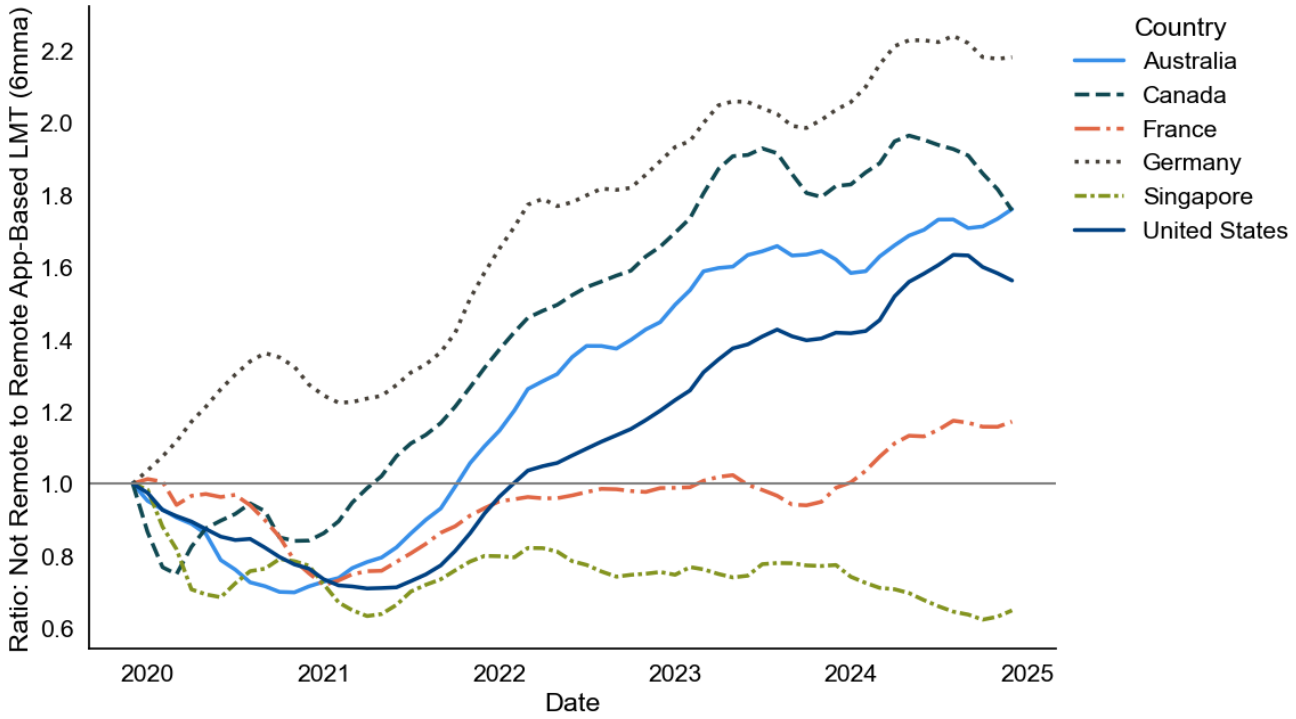
The sensitivity of the availability of remote work among jobs listed on LinkedIn to labor market conditions coupled with the relatively stable demand for remote work lends credence to the view that remote flexibility is an important dimension through which to understand the (at times) unusual behavior of the pandemic-era labor market.

In this sense—and as a final remark—the results in this short note provide complementary evidence in support of the argument that the persistent rise in some job seeker's preference for remote work shaped labor market dynamics in recent years (see Bagga, Mann, Şahin, and Violante 2024). Indeed, the labor market for non-remote roles has become relatively tighter in recent years (for most countries in our sample) consistent with the persistent preference some job seekers have for such flexibility (Figure 7).

To conclude, we have documented that the rise and fall in labor market tightness over the course of the pandemic and subsequent recovery coincided with the ebb and flow in the availability of remote work. Many job seekers have nevertheless maintained a preference for such workplace flexibility, suggesting that it is a non-wage amenity over which workers and firms actively negotiate. Understanding which types of workers have such preferences is a fruitful area for future research as is tracking labor market tightness in the coming year amid uncertainty over the future course of the global economy.

Figure 7: Ratio of Application-Based Labor Market Tightness for Non-Remote to Remote Roles Since 2019 in Select Countries



Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph. Labor market tightness for remote jobs is defined as the ratio of active and attractive jobs *(defined in text) to the number of applications submitted by effective job seekers for such roles. We then take the ratio of this application-based labor market tightness for non-remote roles to remote roles and normalize this ratio to be equal to 1 in 2019 for each country. We scale each remote and non-remote series by the number of applications instead of applicants since, in our view, this better accounts for the scarcity of remote roles prior to the pandemic.*

Appendix

Methodology

Data and Privacy:

This body of work represents the world seen through LinkedIn data, drawn from the anonymized and aggregated profile information of LinkedIn's 1+ billion members around the world. As such, it is influenced by how members choose to use the platform, which can vary based on professional, social, and regional culture, as well as overall site availability and accessibility. In publishing these insights from LinkedIn's Economic Graph, we want to provide accurate statistics while ensuring our members' privacy. As a result, all data show aggregated information for the corresponding period following strict data quality thresholds that prevent disclosing any information about specific individuals.

Sample Construction

Throughout this analysis we focus on a sample of members and jobs identified in the following way.

First, in each country in our sample we identify *Active and Attractive Jobs (AAJ)*. These are jobs on LinkedIn that satisfy two conditions:

i. Job posters either paid to promote the role or manually listed the job on LinkedIn (and thus paying an opportunity cost in terms of the employee's time)
ii. Received an application from a member in the country in which the job is located, where an application is either an on-site application or a member clicked to apply to the role offsite.

For each country and month we calculate the share of *Active and Attractive Jobs* that are identified as remote roles.

We then calculate share of applicants who exclusively applied to a remote role as the number of distinct members who exclusively applied to a remote AAJ divided by the distinct number of members who apply to an AAJ irrespective of remote status (i.e. *Effective Job Seekers (EJS)*).

Labor market tightness is the ratio of AAJ to EJS for every country and month. To see how this notion of labor market tightness fits into the framework of Abraham, Haltiwanger, and Rendell (2020; AHR) let V_j refer to job listing j and S_i refer to member i. In the AHR framework, labor market tightness is defined as a weighted sum of job listings to members on LinkedIn:

$$Labor\ Market\ Tightness: \theta = \frac{\sum \rho_j V_j}{\sum \rho_i S_i}$$

Appendix

If we set ρ_j equal to one for any Active and Attractive Job listing and ρ_i equal to one for any member who applies to such a job, we are left with the notion of labor market tightness defined in the main text. This approach focuses exclusively on the extensive margin of measuring recruiting effort by firms (the numerator) and the job search effort by job seekers (the denominator). Subsequent research, beyond the scope of this note, could investigate alternative methods for choosing these weights.

Figure 6 is based on labor market tightness measured separately for remote versus not-remote roles. For example, for remote roles this is the number of AAJs that are remote divided by the distinct count of members that apply to such roles.

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