

Exploring the Characteristics of Partial Interviews in the Consumer Expenditure Survey

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Outline

- Brief overview of the CE
- Response Rates and Partial Interviews
- Research Questions
- Findings



Consumer Expenditure Survey

- Collects spending data on the U.S. Population
- Sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, collected by the Census Bureau
- Survey participants report dollar amounts for all non-investment purchases. Business expenses and reimbursements are excluded.
- Provide expenditure weights for the U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- Quarterly Interview and Diary Survey



Data



- 2017 CE Quarterly Interview (CEQ)
 - ▶ Personal interview
 - ▶ Rotating panel, collected quarterly, each household interviewed 4 times.
 - ▶ 3-month recall
 - ▶ Designed to collect larger, recurring expenses that are easy to recall

Response Rates and Partials

- In CE, interviews are counted as complete if they cover all expenditure sections (through section 20).
- “Sufficient Partials” are interviews that complete everything, but the income, assets, and liability questions (section 21 and 22).
- “Insufficient Partials” are classified as Type A non-interviews and are indistinguishable based on our final interview classification codes.

2017 CEQ	n	Rate (% eligible)
Eligible	40,193	100
Complete Interviews	24,479	60.9
Type A Non-interview	15,714	39.1
<i>Insufficient Partials</i>	??	??



Research Questions

- Who are those that drop out?
- Can they help provide insight on other non-responders?
- Can their break-off point inform us about survey design?
- Could their data somehow be used in our processing?



Defining a Partial: Data

- Audit trail data: paradata created during a Blaise programmed Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) instrument that records a detailed history of the sequence, timing, and flow of an interview
 - ▶ Summarized Audit Trail timing data in survey files
 - ▶ Detailed, accessible audit trail tables

Defining a Partial

- Type A (Noninterview) cases with time > 0 for expenditure sections
- Eliminate cases where cumulative expenditure time < 65 seconds or where demographic questions were never asked.

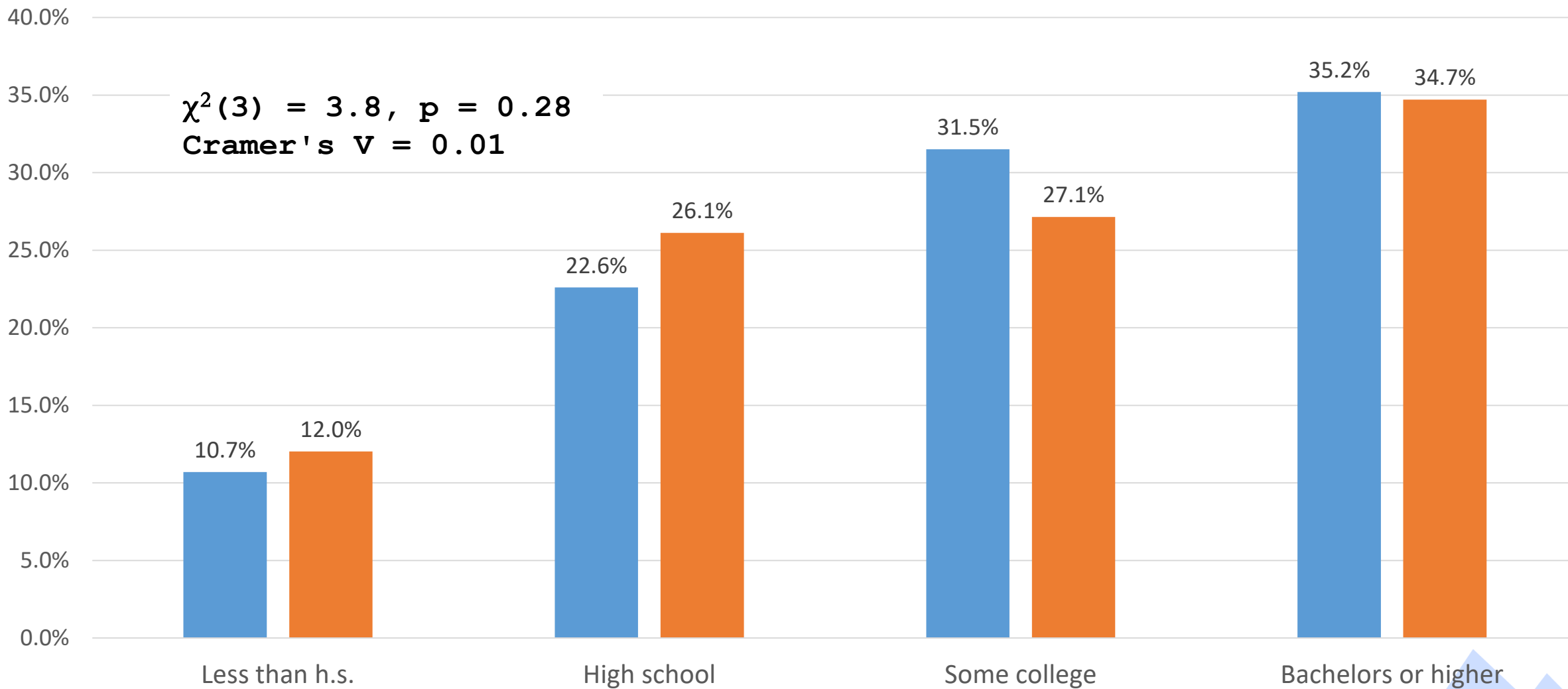
2017 CEQ	n	Rate (% eligible)
Eligible	40,193	100
Complete Interviews	24,479	60.9
Type A Non-interview	15,714	39.1
<i>Insufficient Partial</i> s	294	0.7



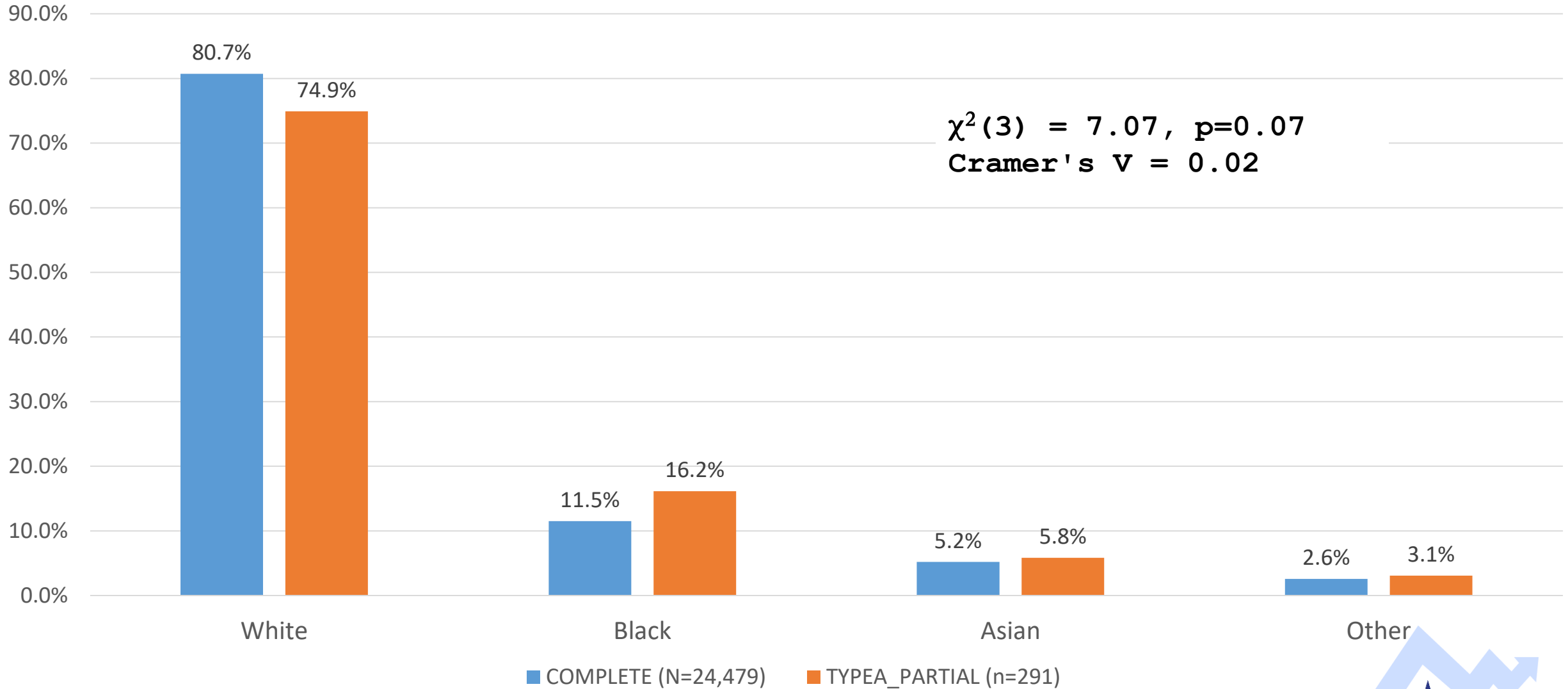
Who are these partials?



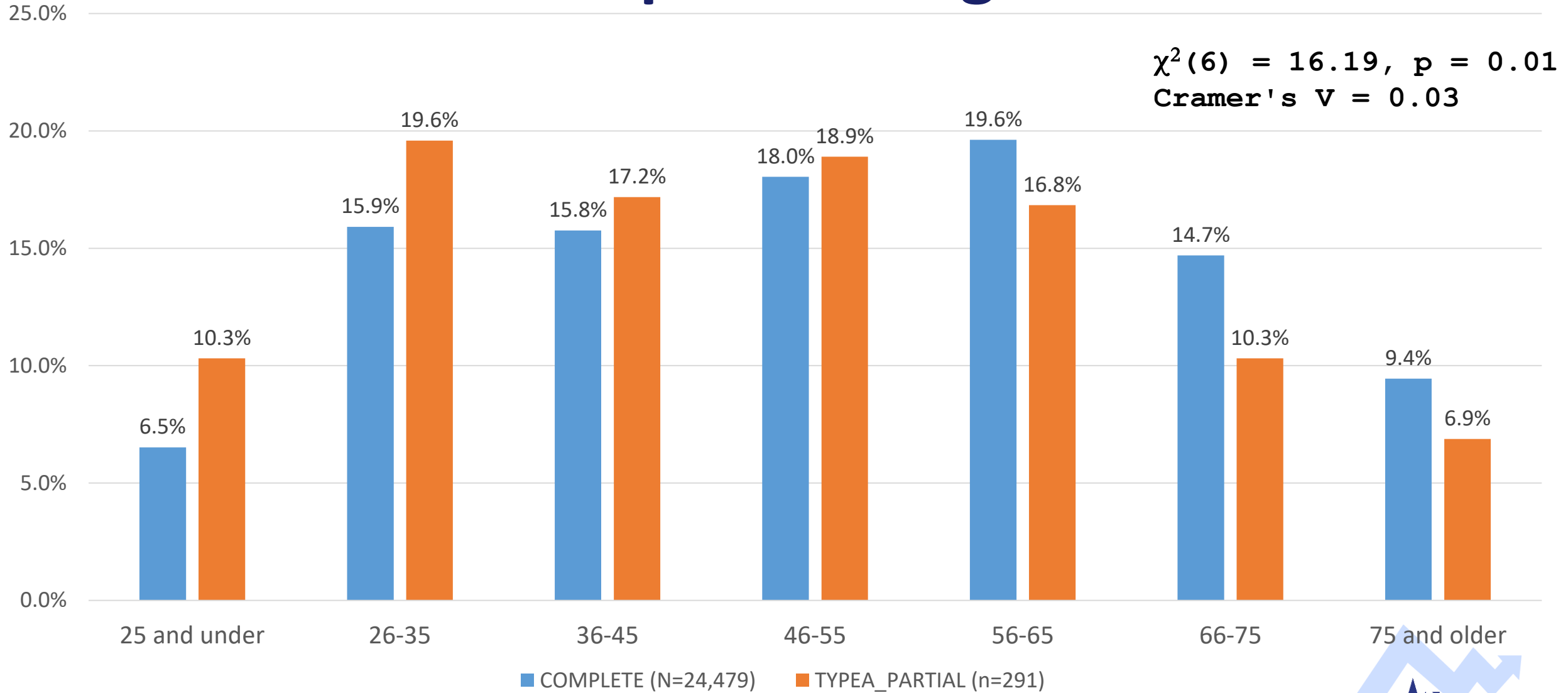
Respondent Education Level



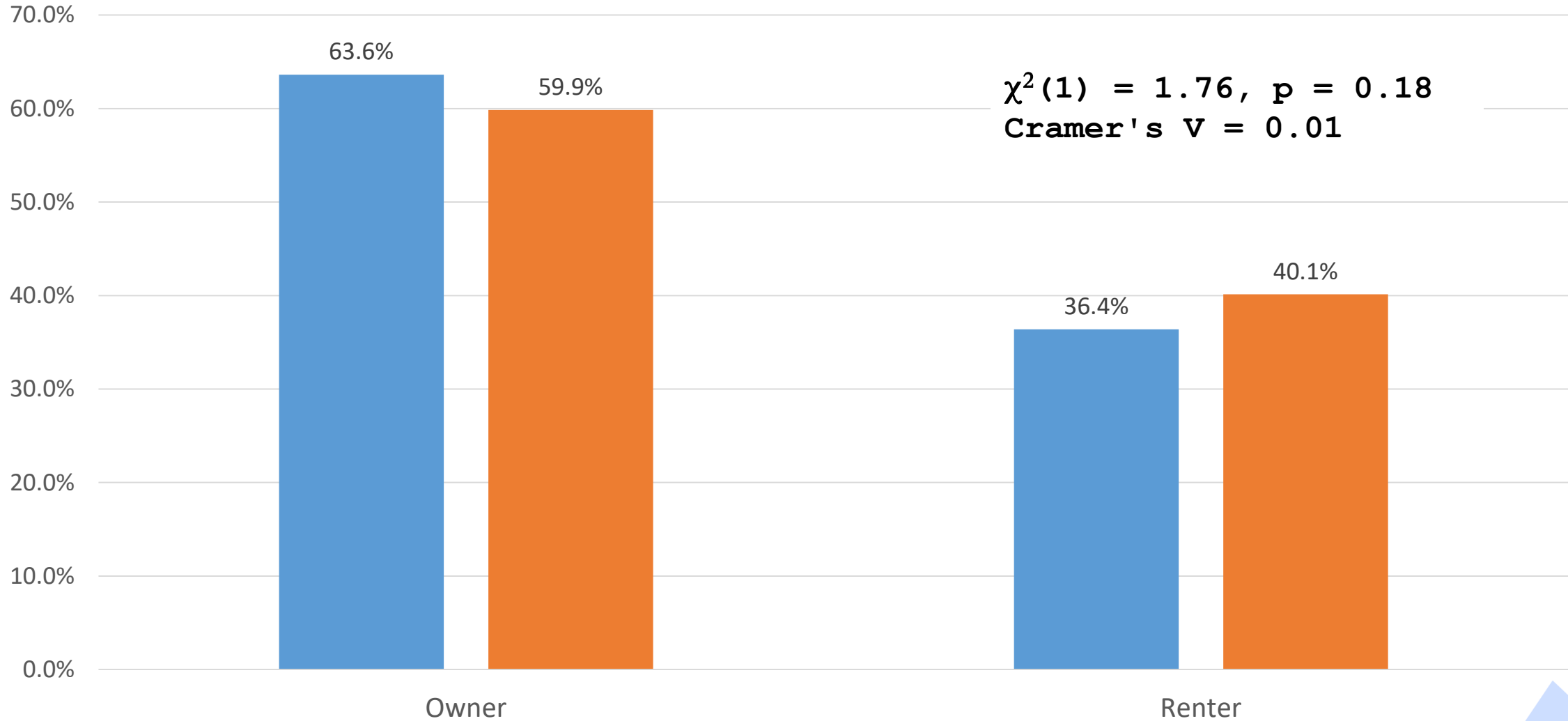
Respondent Race



Respondent Age



Household Tenure

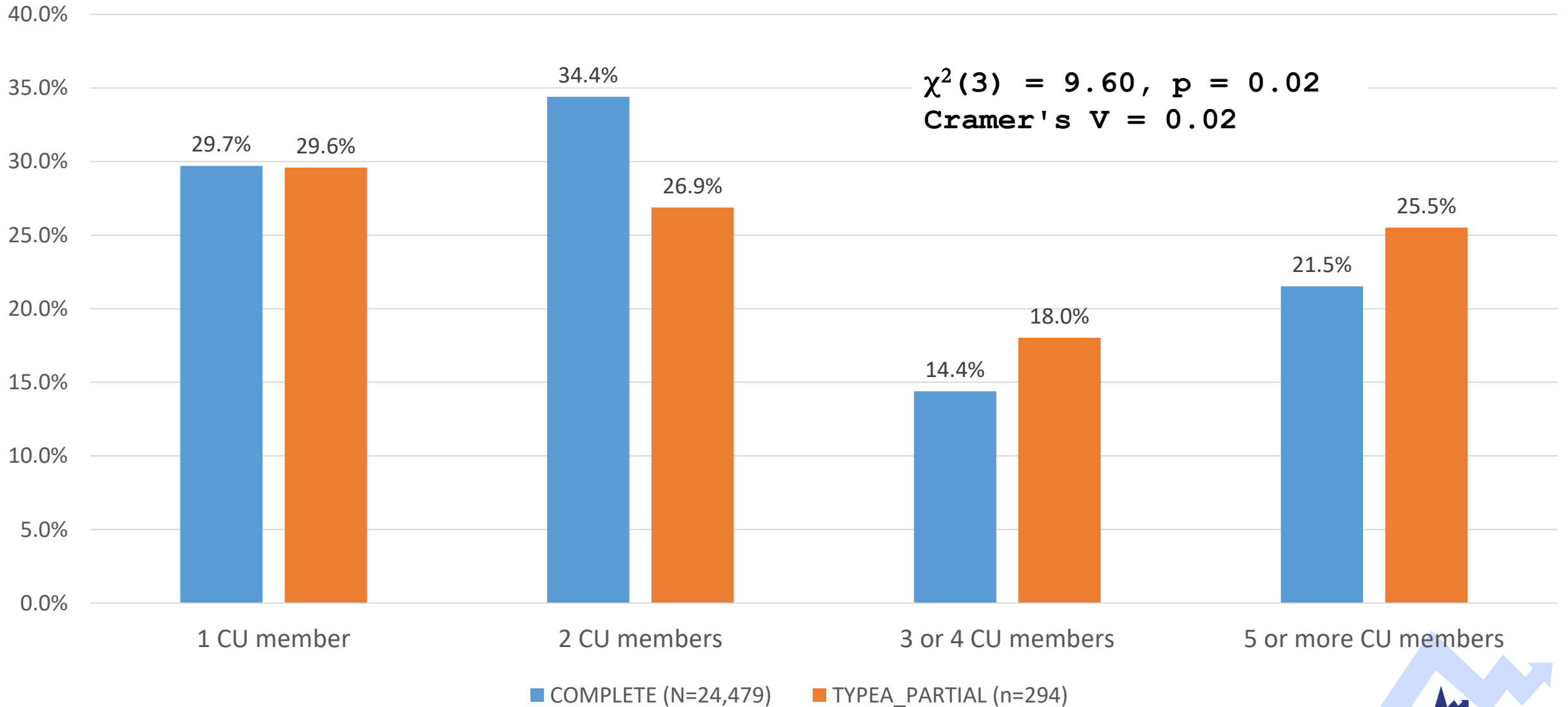


$\chi^2(1) = 1.76, p = 0.18$
Cramer's V = 0.01

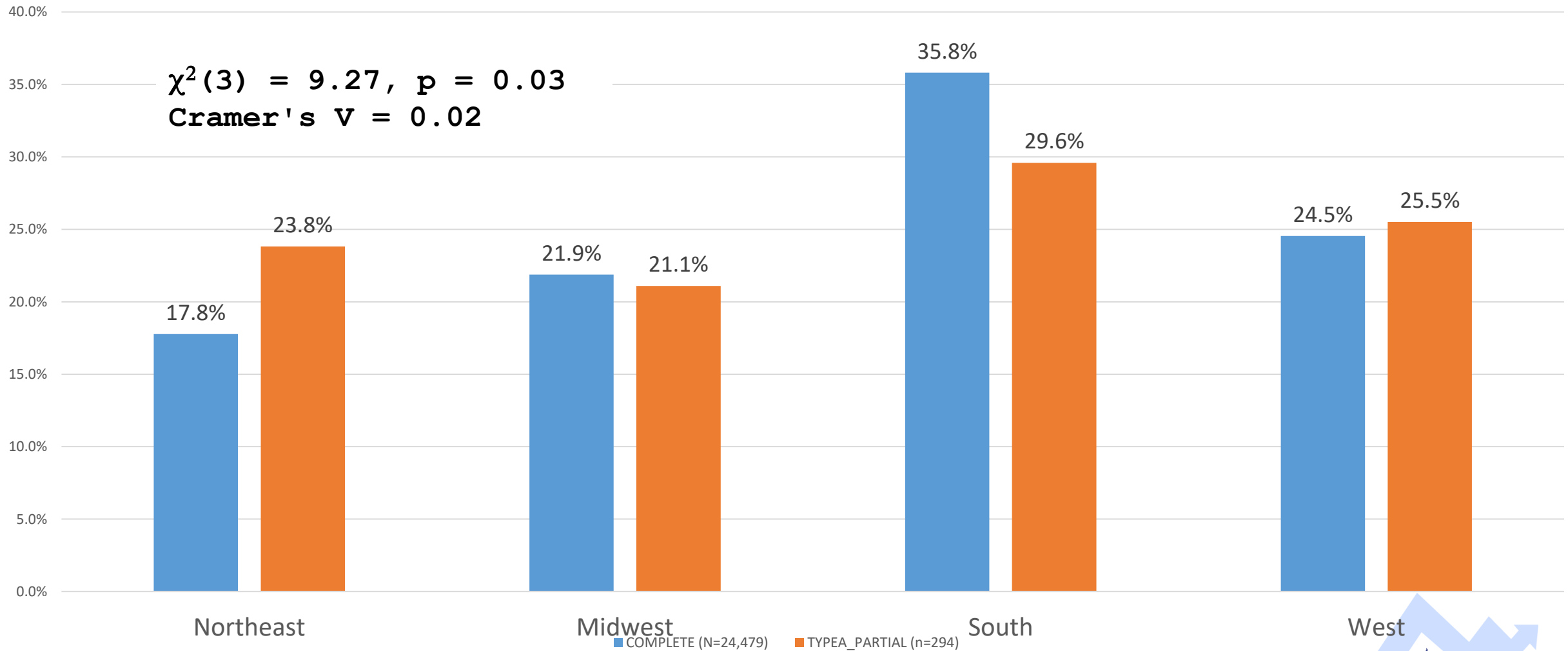
COMPLETE (N=24,479) TYPEA_PARTIAL (n=294)



Household Size



Region



Participation - Wave

■ Wave of data

Count of complete interviews	Percent of Completes (n=24,773)	Percent of Partial (n=294)
1	25.8	28.6
2	24.7	25.5
3	24.2	28.2
4	25.4	17.7

Participation – other waves

- With 4 waves of data collections, what happens in the other waves?

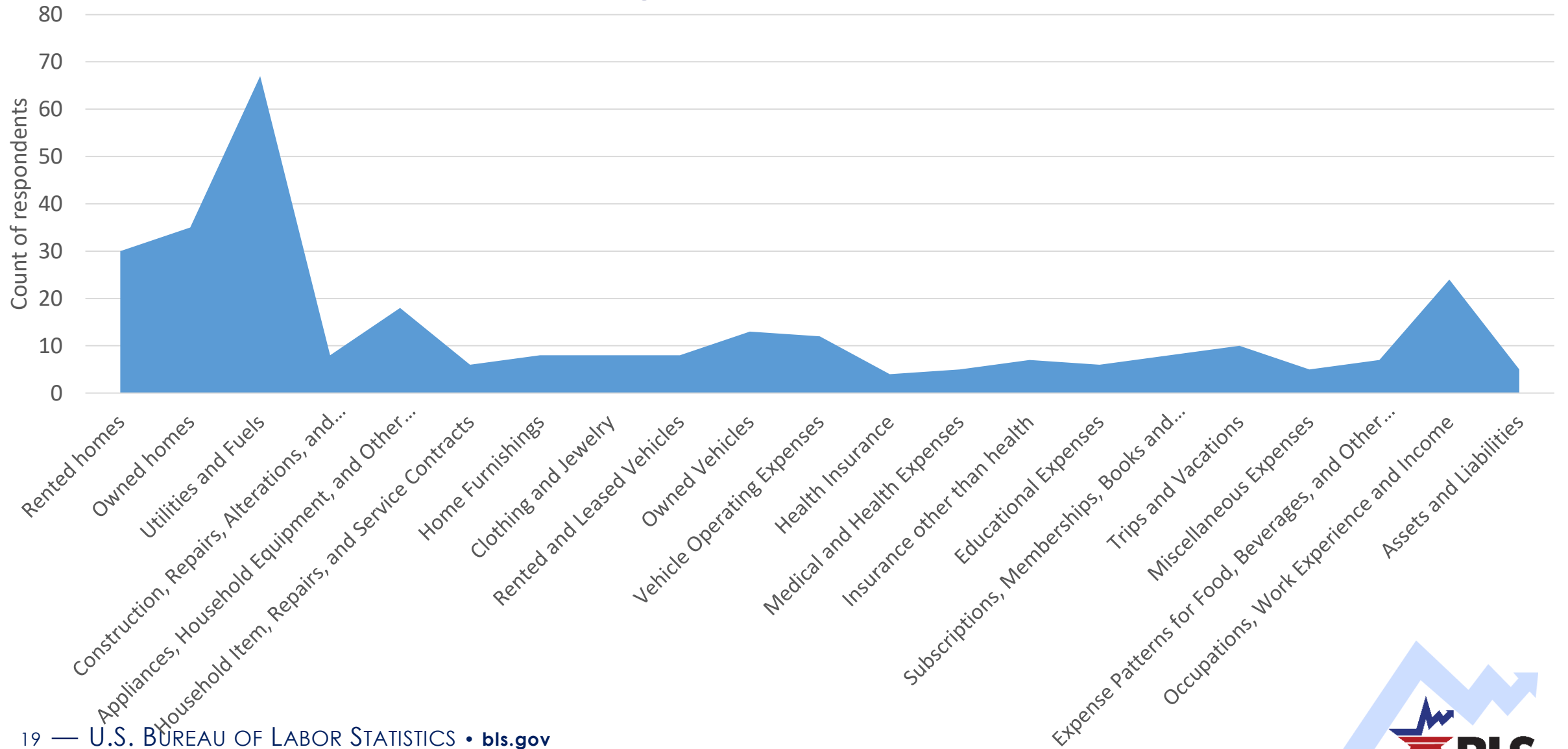
Count of complete interviews	Percent of Completes (n=24,773)	Percent of Partial (n=294)
0	-	36.1
1	8.25	30.3
2	10.7	20.1
3	17.25	13.6
4	63.81	-



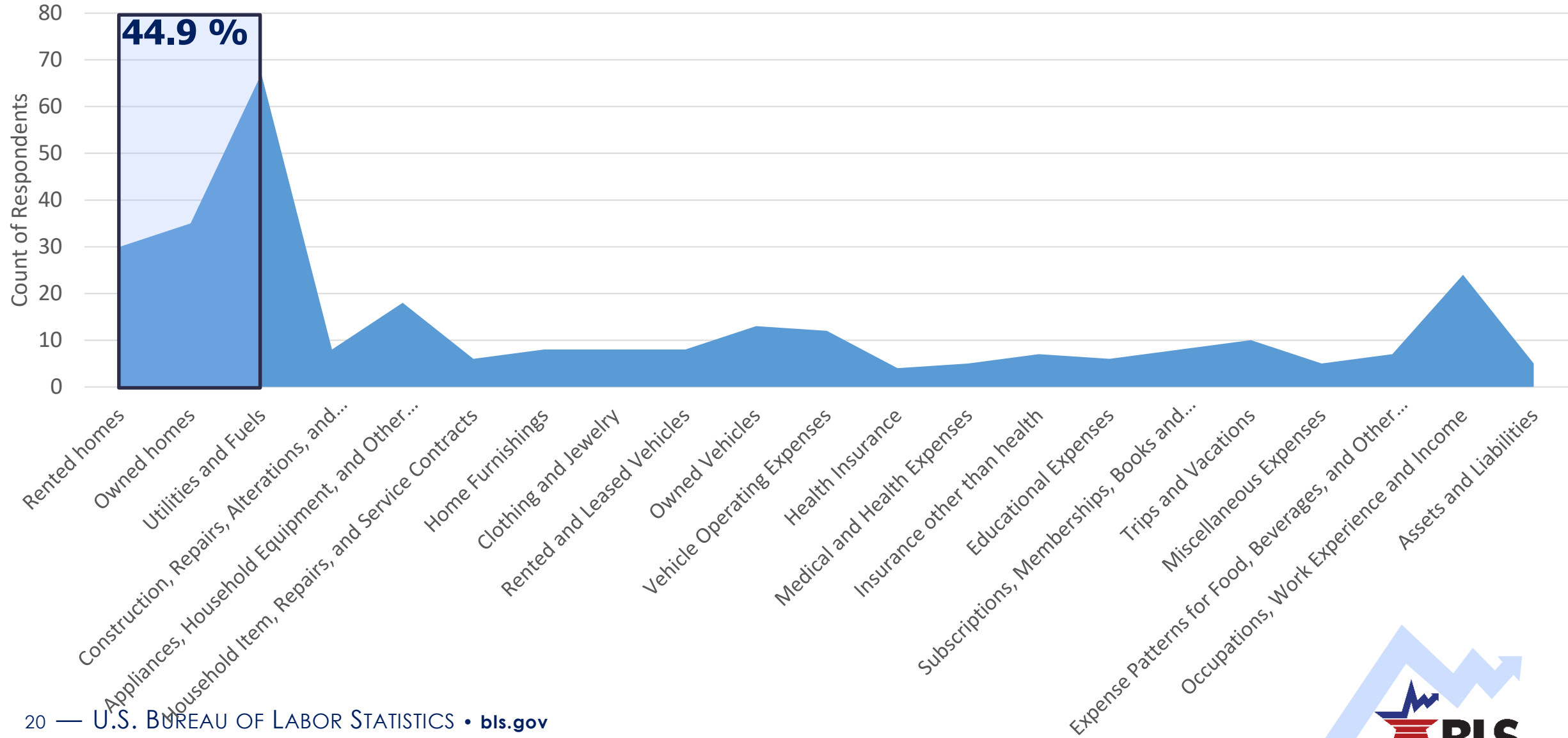
Where do respondents break-off?



Where Respondents Break-Off



Where Respondents Break-Off



Time with Respondent Interviewing (minutes)

	Mean	Mean
Completes (n=24,479)	76.5	60.3
Partials (n=294)	37.7	20.7



How do the expenditure data compare?



How do their expenses compare? (Rented Property)

	N	Mean
Average monthly rent (1st property)		
Completes	8,225	\$ 900
Partials	62	\$ 1,100



How do their expenses compare? (Owned Property)

	N	Mean
Annual property tax (1st property)		
Completes	13,169	\$ 3,200
Partials	98	\$ 5,700
Original mortgage amount (1st loan)		
Completes	8,315	\$ 186,000
Partials	73	\$ 349,000
Amount of last monthly payment (Fixed rate mortgage) (1st loan)		
Completes	8,343	\$ 1,500
Partials	75	\$ 1,600

How do their expenses compare? (Utilities)

	N	Mean
Monthly telephone/internet/cable bills		
Completes	22,571	\$ 204
Partials	120	\$ 216
Monthly electric/gas/water/etc		
Completes	22,406	\$ 203
Partials	98	214



Research Questions

- Who are those that drop out?
 - ▶ *Slightly younger, larger, non-white households, in the Northeast*
- Can they help provide insight on other non-responders?
 - ▶ *Reported expenditures are higher for those that break-off*
- Can their break-off point inform us about survey design?
 - ▶ *Around 15-30 minutes seems to be where the majority of partials lose interest...or is it content of the sections? More research is needed.*
- Could their data somehow be used in our processing?
 - ▶ *Data for partials were very sparse, so not likely.*

Next Steps

- Closer look at the definition of a partial (presence of respondent)
- Investigate respondents that do stick around for >1 hour and then drop out
- Look at data quality of sections (e.g. item nonresponse) for partials
- Investigate interviewer reported reasons that the respondents didn't complete the interview (“doorstep concerns”)



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