



# *Platform workers in Italy: an empirical exploration on worker-level data*

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- ✓ Digital Labour markets
- ✓ Platform workers
- ✓ The INAPP-PLUS survey
- ✓ Empirical evidences
- ✓ Results
- ✓ Conclusions

## ✓ Digital labour platforms (Codagnone et al., 2019)

- (1) digital marketplaces for **non-standard** and **contingent work**
- (2) where **services of various nature** are produced using preponderantly the labour factor (as opposed to selling goods or renting property or a car)
- (3) where **labour (i.e. the produced services)** is exchanged for money
- (4) where the matching is **digitally mediated** and **administered** although performance and delivery of labour can be **electronically** transmitted or **physical**

## ✓ Platforms as «two-sided» or «multi-sided» markets (Hagiu & Wright, 2015)

- (i) enabling of **direct interactions** between two or more distinct sides
- (ii) affiliation of **both sides** with the platform
- (iii) affiliation generates cross-group **network effects**
- (iv) the intermediary (platform) can **extract rents** from the generated data



## Heterogeneous models:

(global market) *Online Labour Markets* (OLMs) vs. (local market) *Mobile Labour Markets* (MLMs)

## Exchange of **heterogeneous services**:

«micro-tasks» exchanged virtually or physically vs. complex tasks

- ✓ **2% of the adult population** earning more than the 50% of their income being connected to the platform (for more than 20 hours per week) (COLLEEM - Pesole et al., 2018)
- ✓ **0.5% of the active population** (Eurofound, 2018)
- ✓ **1.59%-2.03% of population 18-74** years old in Italy (Fondazione Debenedetti)
- ✓ High heterogeneity **across countries** (Codagnone et al., 2019)
- ✓ Concerns due to the **social and economic risks** and **lack of an adequate regulation** in terms of social protection (Bogliacino et al. 2019)
- ✓ 'Ambiguous' legal status of platform workers - i.e. platform workers are often identified as '**partners**' or, more broadly, **autonomous workers** (Eurofound, 2019)
- ✓ 'Digital workers' **not entitled to benefit of almost all existing social protection schemes** (Collier et al. 2017)
- ✓ In Italy low awareness of social protection schemes by digital workers and strong preference for pension schemes (Fondazione Debenedetti - INPS)

# Research questions

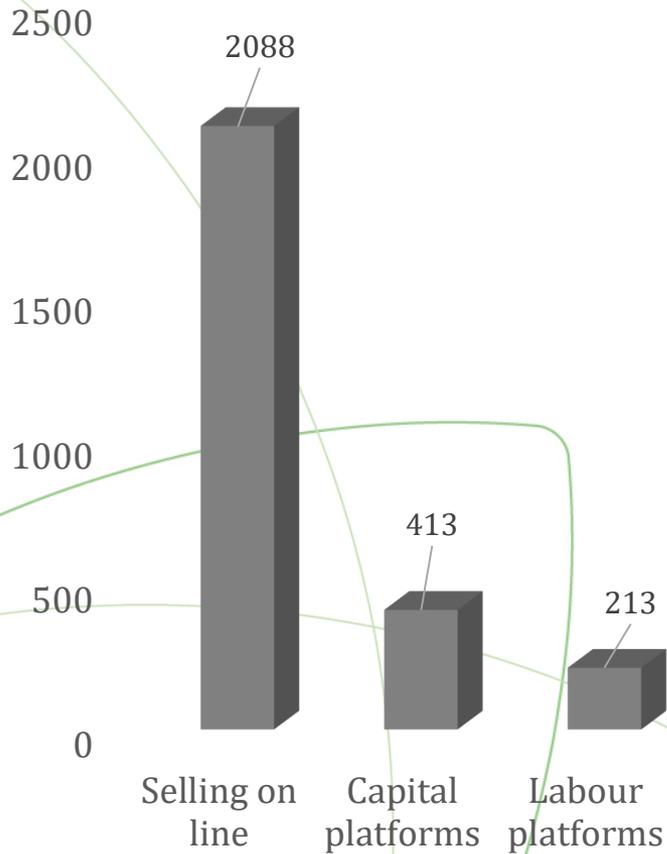
1. **How large is the share of those working for a digital platform?**
2. **Which is the distribution of platform work in terms of gender, age and educational status?**
3. **Are platforms a main income source (i.e. main job) or rather a way to integrate main incomes?**
4. **Can we observe a “pension gap” between *platform workers* and *non-platform workers* in terms of years of contributions?**

- ✓ **INAPP-PLUS (Participation, Labour, Unemployment, Survey)** is a survey performed relying on CATI (Computer-assisted telephone interviewing)
- ✓ VIII edition (PLUS 2018) → sample of **45,000 individuals** (residents aged between 18 and 74 years)
- ✓ Sample design: strata are defined by **region** (20 administrative Regions), **type of city** (metropolitan/nonmetropolitan), **age** (five classes), **sex** and the **employment status** of the individual (employed, unemployed, student, retired, other inactive)
- ✓ PLUS 2018 → Ad-hoc module «GIG ECONOMY»
- ✓ Three specific economic activities (carried out for profit) are considered:
  - i) the **online sale of goods**;
  - ii) the **provision of works and services** through platforms that intermediate work;
  - iii) the lucrative sharing (leasing) of real estate (so called **capital platform**).

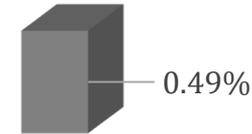
# How large is the share of those working for a digital platform?

Number of individuals  
(thousands)

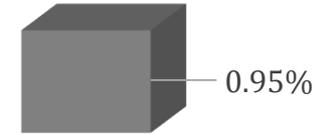
Share on the population  
(adults 18-74 years old)



Labour platforms



Capital platforms



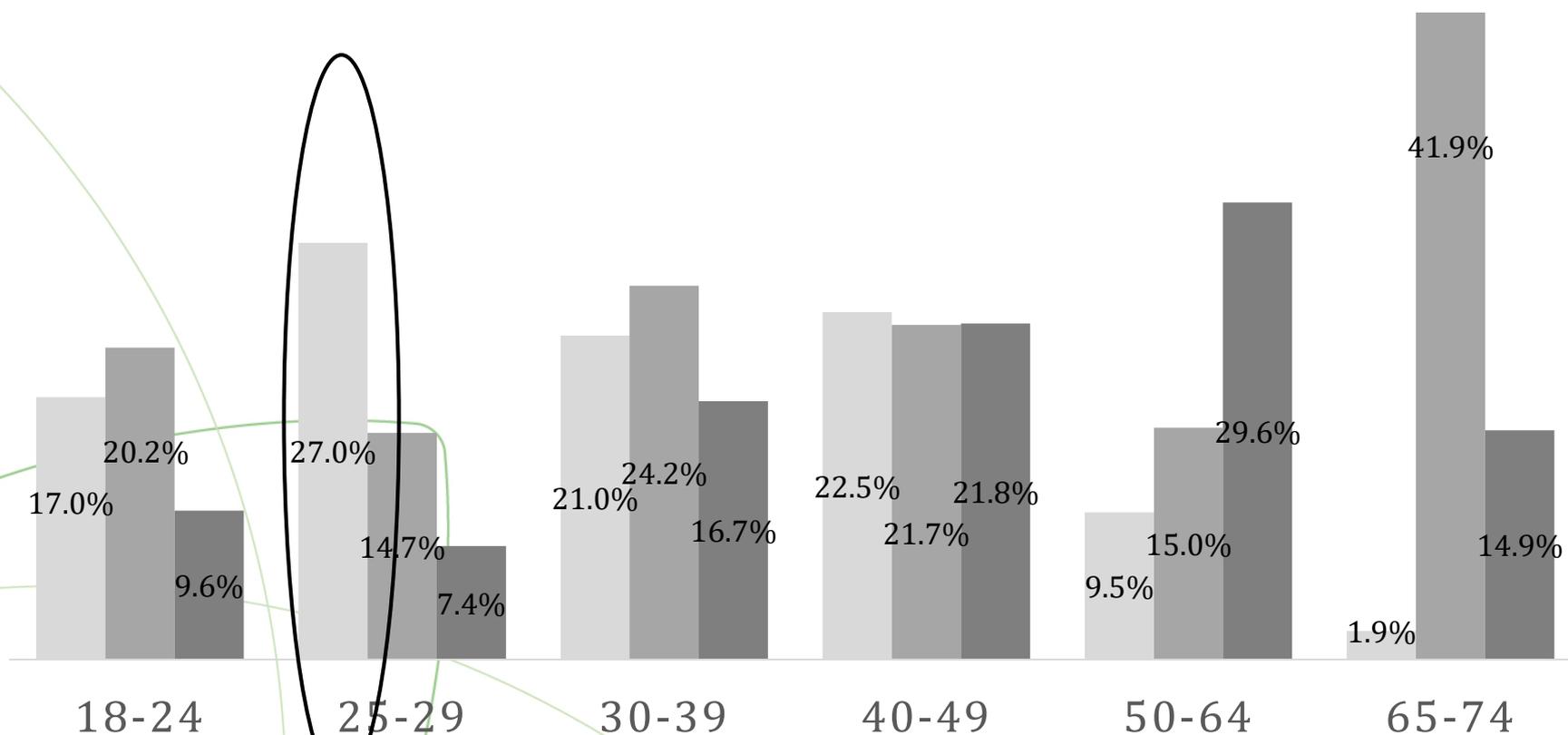
Selling on line



0% 1% 2% 3% 4% 5%

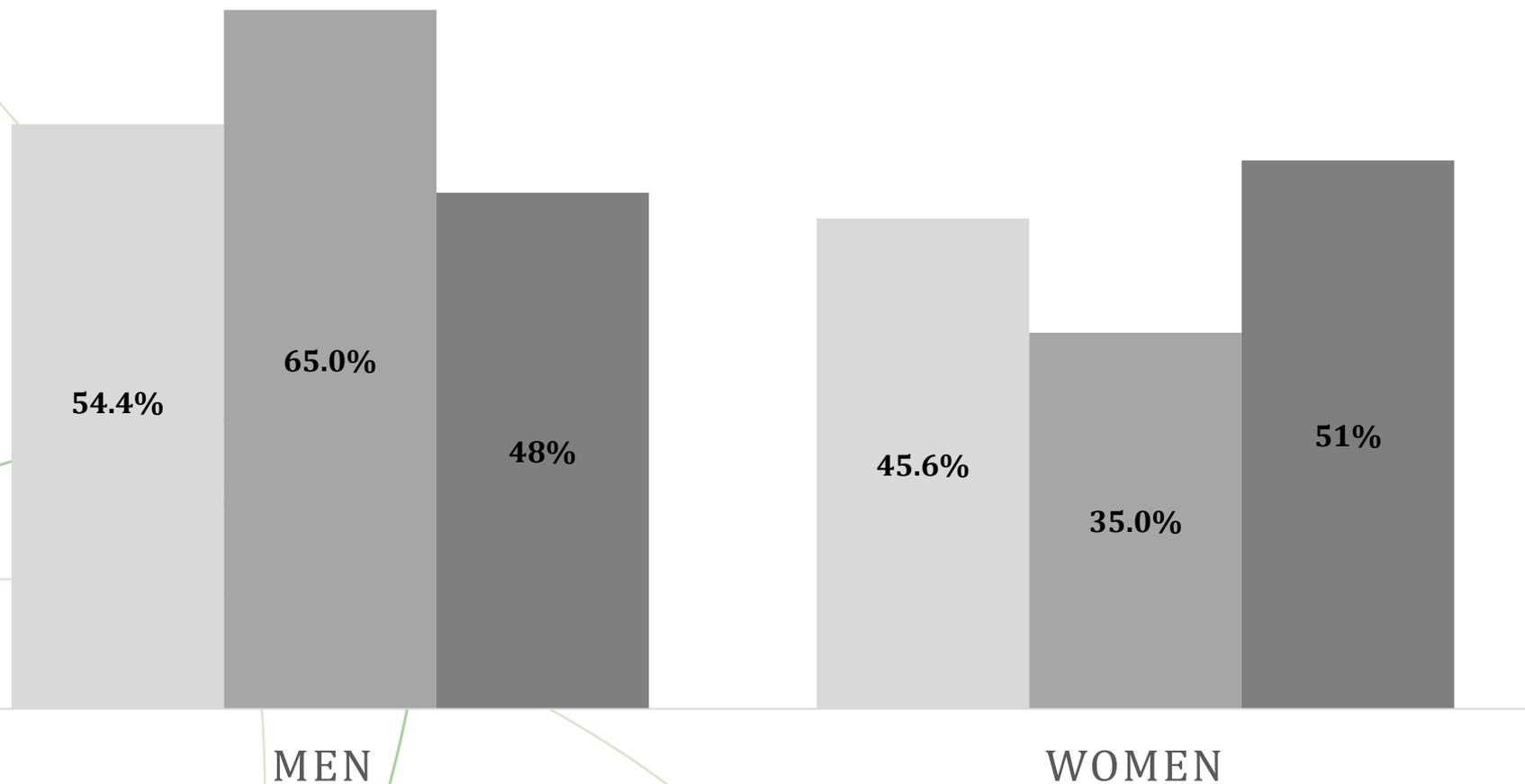
# What is the age distribution of platform workers?

Labour Platform
  Platform
  Total PLUS

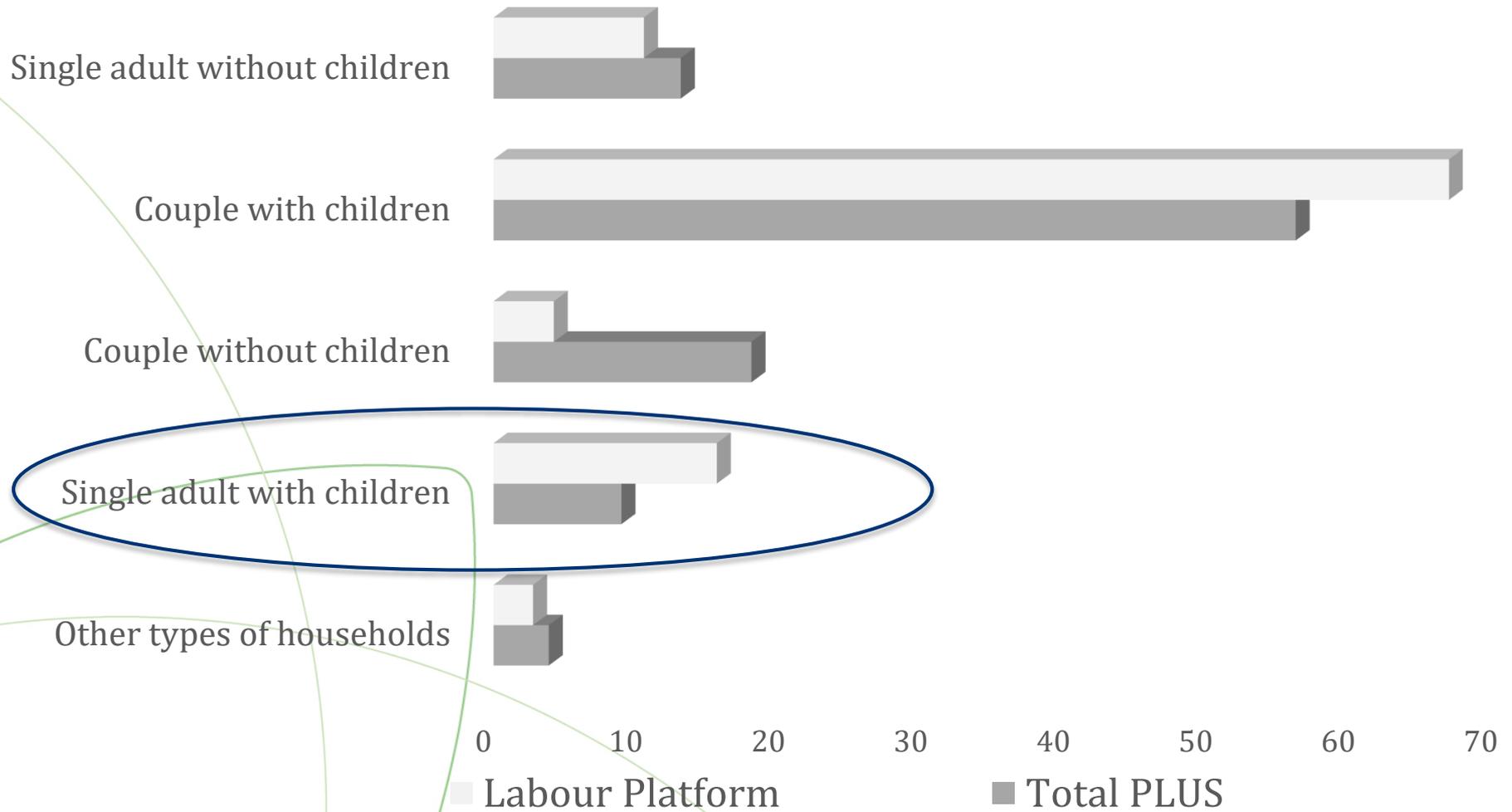


# What is the gender distribution of platform workers?

■ Labour Platform      ■ Platform      ■ Total PLUS

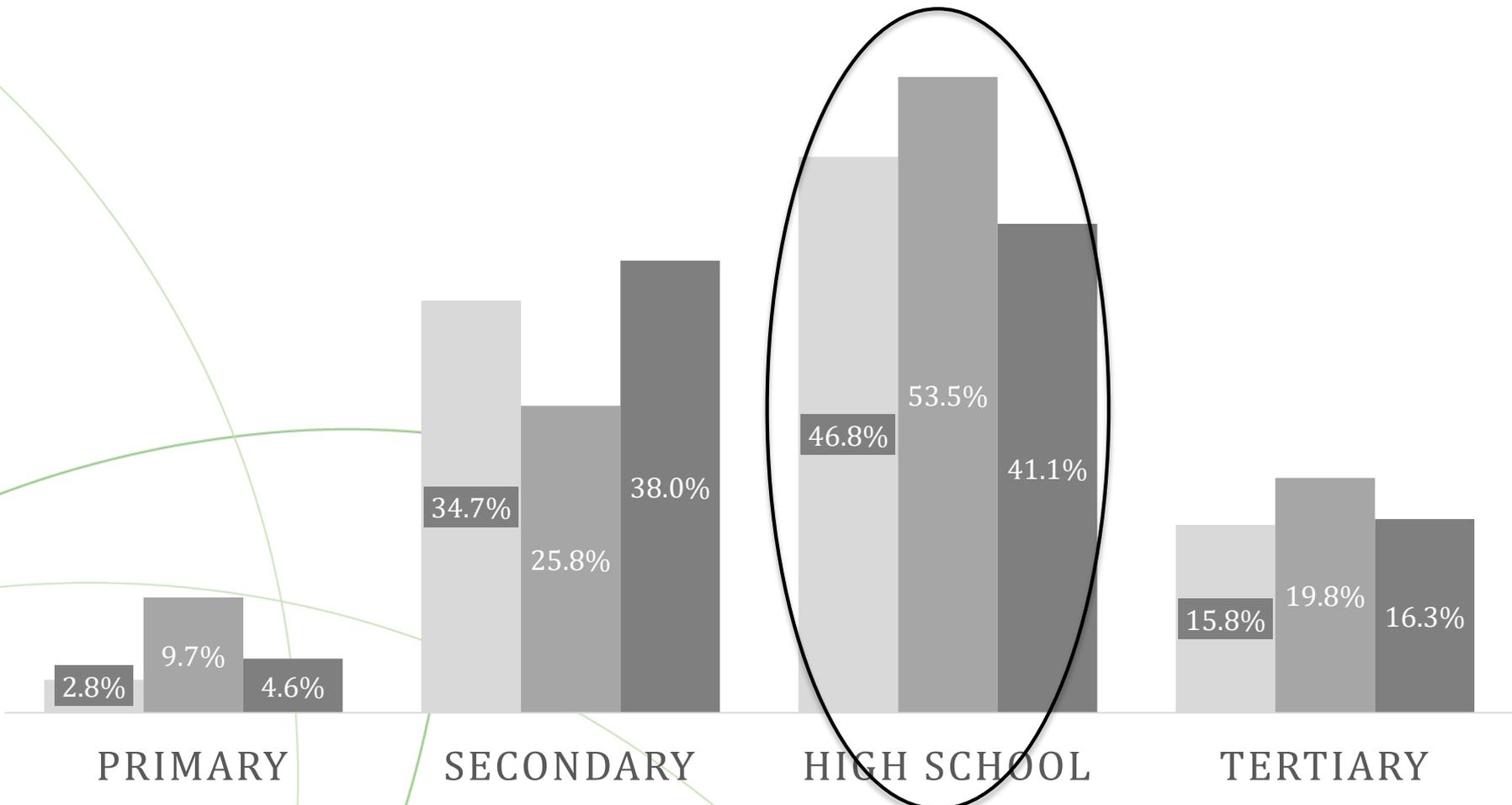


# Platform workers by household types



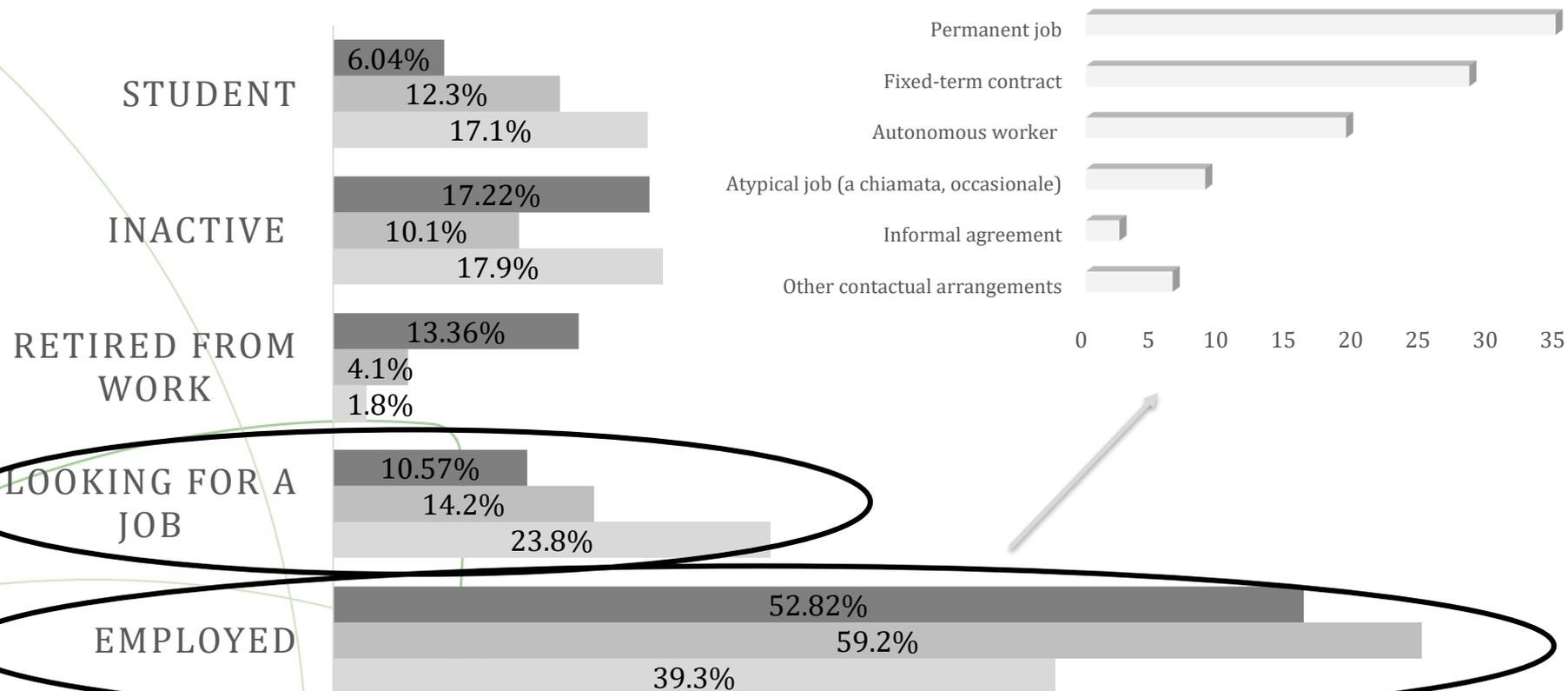
# What is the educational distribution of platform workers?

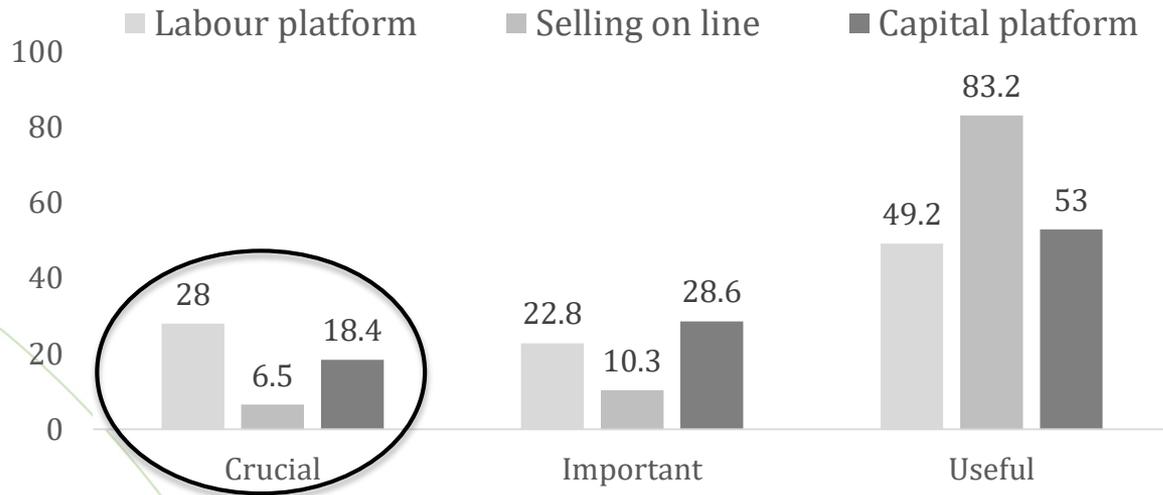
■ Labour platforms    ■ Platforms    ■ Total PLUS



# Is platform work the main source of income (i.e. main job)?

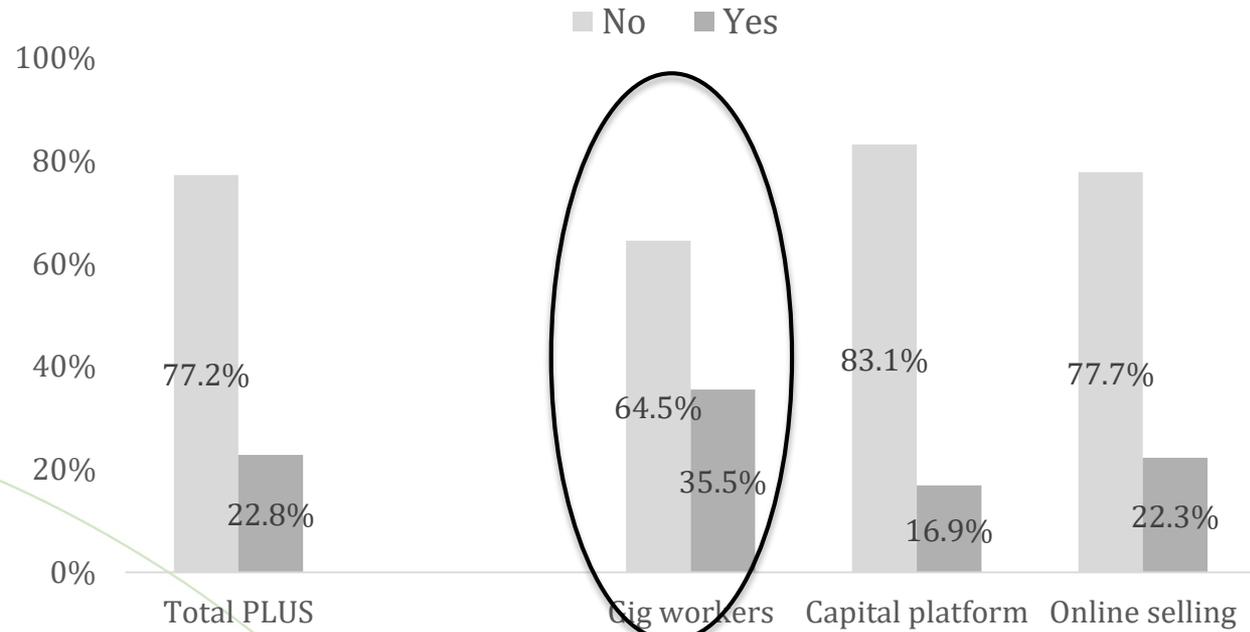
■ Total PLUS   ■ Platforms   ■ Labour Platforms



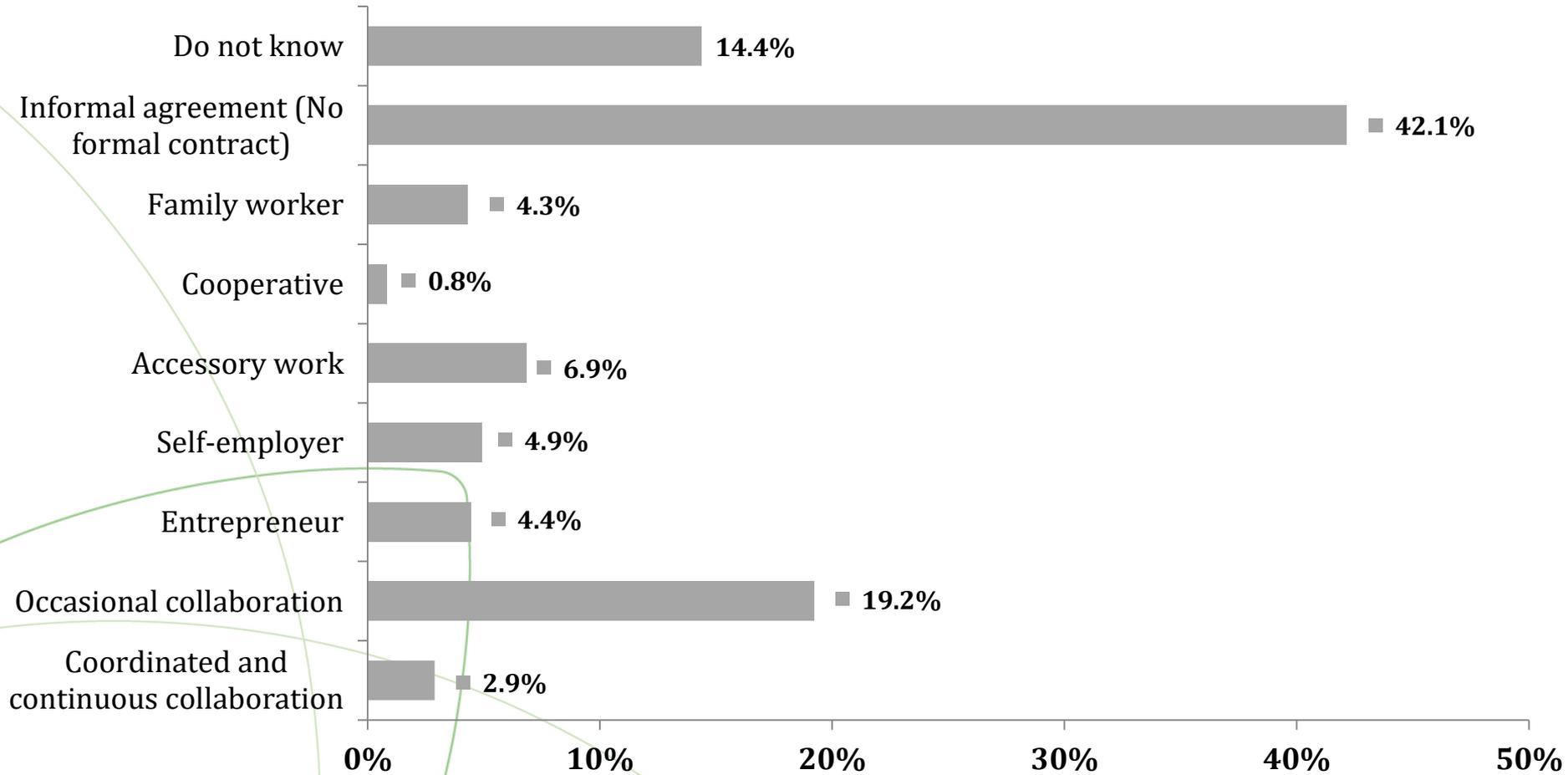


*How important is the income earned by platform?*

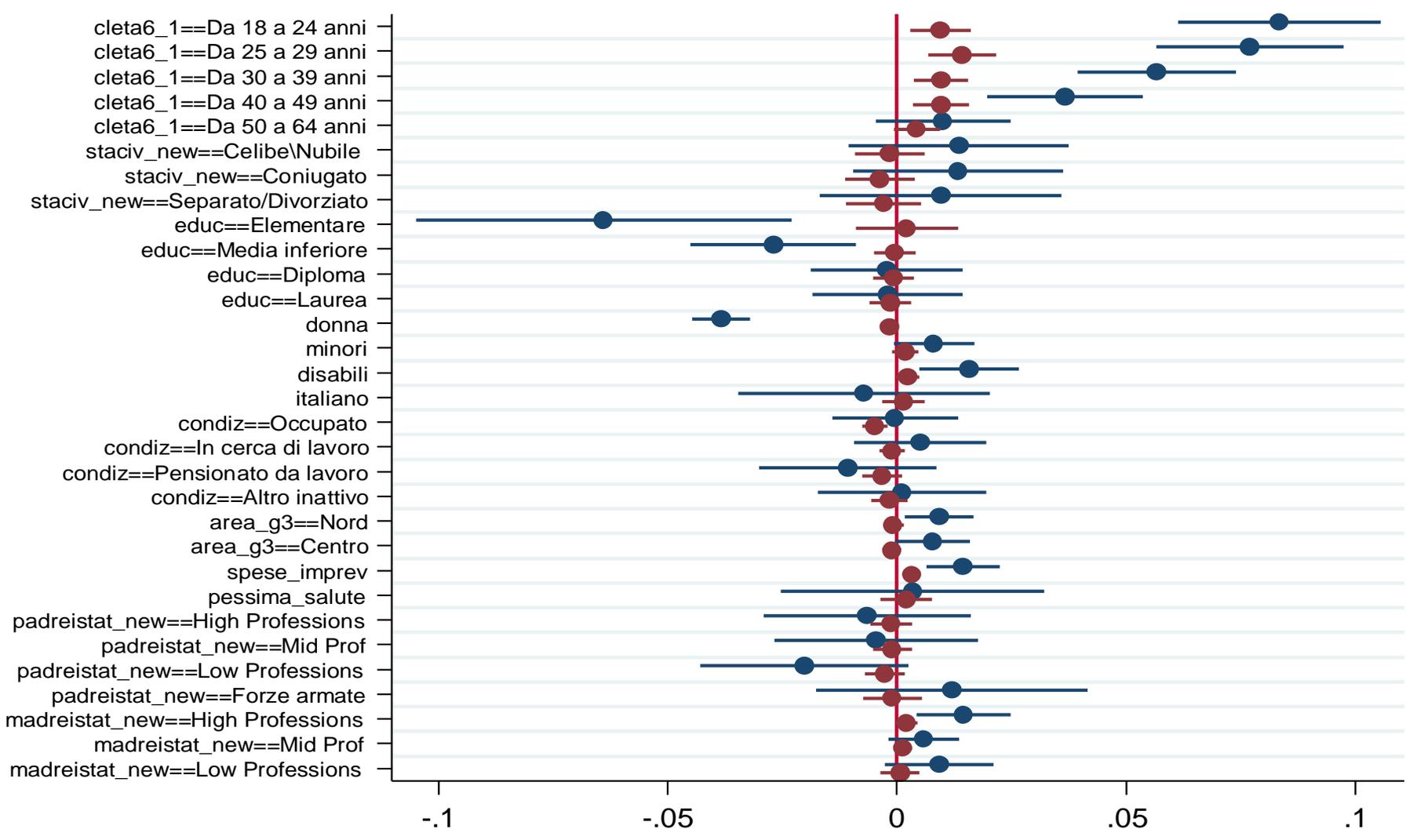
*Inability to deal with unexpected expenses (%)*



# Type of contract (%)

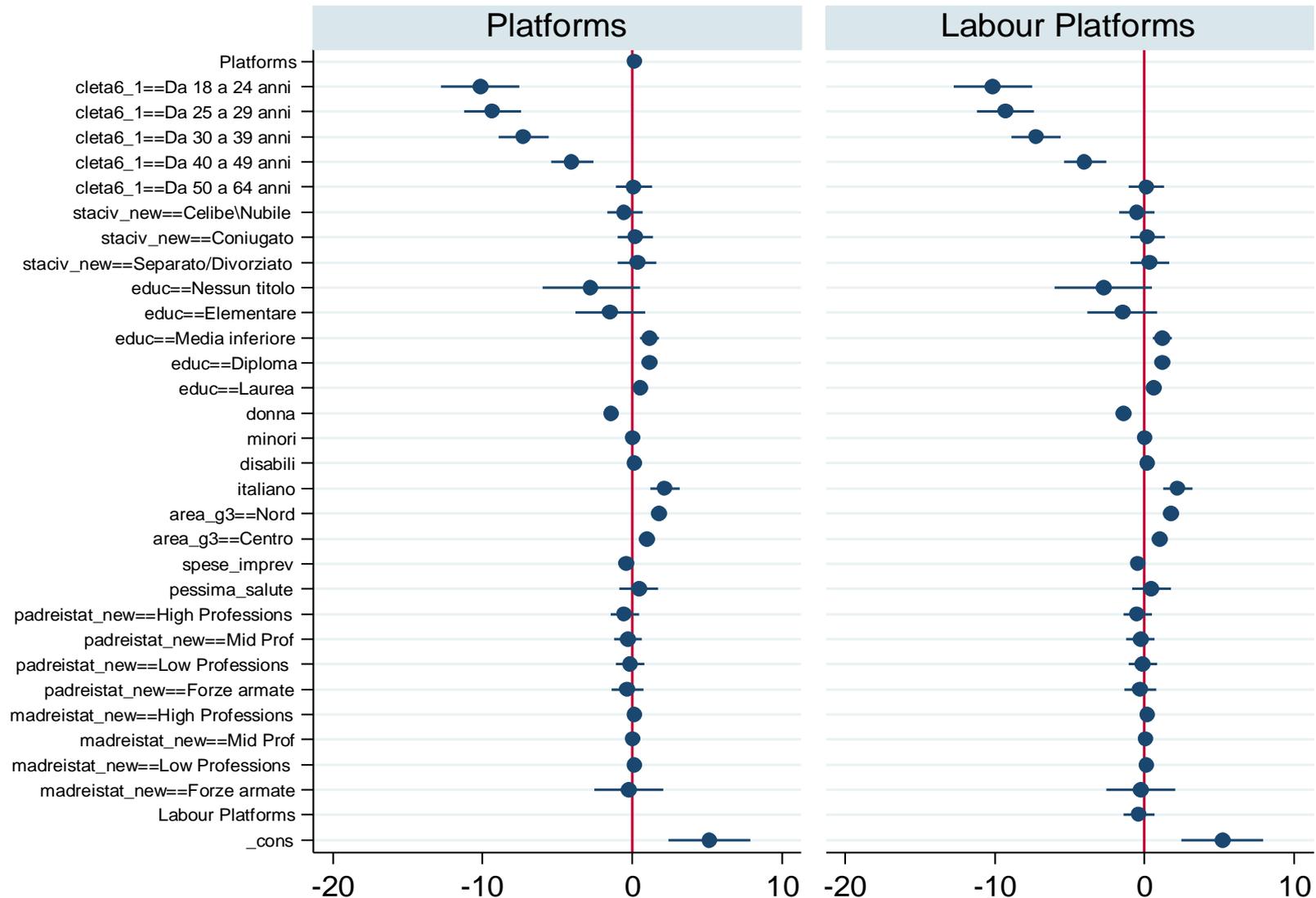


# Socio-occupational characteristics of Platform workers: evidence from PLUS (marginal effects from Probit models)



● Platforms    ● Labour Platforms

# Platform workers and pension contributions: evidence from PLUS (OLS estimations)



- ✓ There is a higher probability of working for a platform for **younger individuals**, more often **males**, with a **high education** and **living in Northern Italy**
- ✓ Platform workers tend to belong to ‘fragile households’: **households unable to deal with unexpected expenses** (i.e. families exposed to relatively higher socio-economic risks or characterized by a stronger social fragility *vis a vis* the rest of the population)
- ✓ According to preliminary estimates on INAPP-PLUS, those working for digital platforms as an additional job do not show any pension gap in terms of years of contributions

# Concluding remarks

- ✓ **Measurement issues (phenomenon hard to be properly traced and measured) →** Almost 40% of platform workers do not have a formal agreement (INAPP-PLUS) / 44% of companies is not even registered in the INPS archives (Rapporto INPS 2018)

Heterogeneous organizational models (Guarascio e Sacchi, 2018)

- ❖ Collaborazioni coordinate e continuative (atypical contracts)
- ❖ Prestazioni di lavoro autonomo occasionale (occasional short-term arrangements) (only registered if above 5000 euro per year)
- ❖ Freelance of crowdwork → few information
- ❖ Partite IVA (registered at Gestione Separata but unknown details about the companies they work for)

- ✓ Platforms contributed to push further the process of **production fragmentation** and **task externalization** (Cirillo and Zayas Molero, 2019 and Tubaro and Casilli, 2019; Drahoukoupil and Piasna, 2017)

- ✓ Risk of social exclusion for platform workers due to the potential lack of: appropriate contractual status, social protection and adequate income levels
- ❖ 78% of platform workers willing to pay to improve social protection for illness – (INPS 2018)

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