



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?**

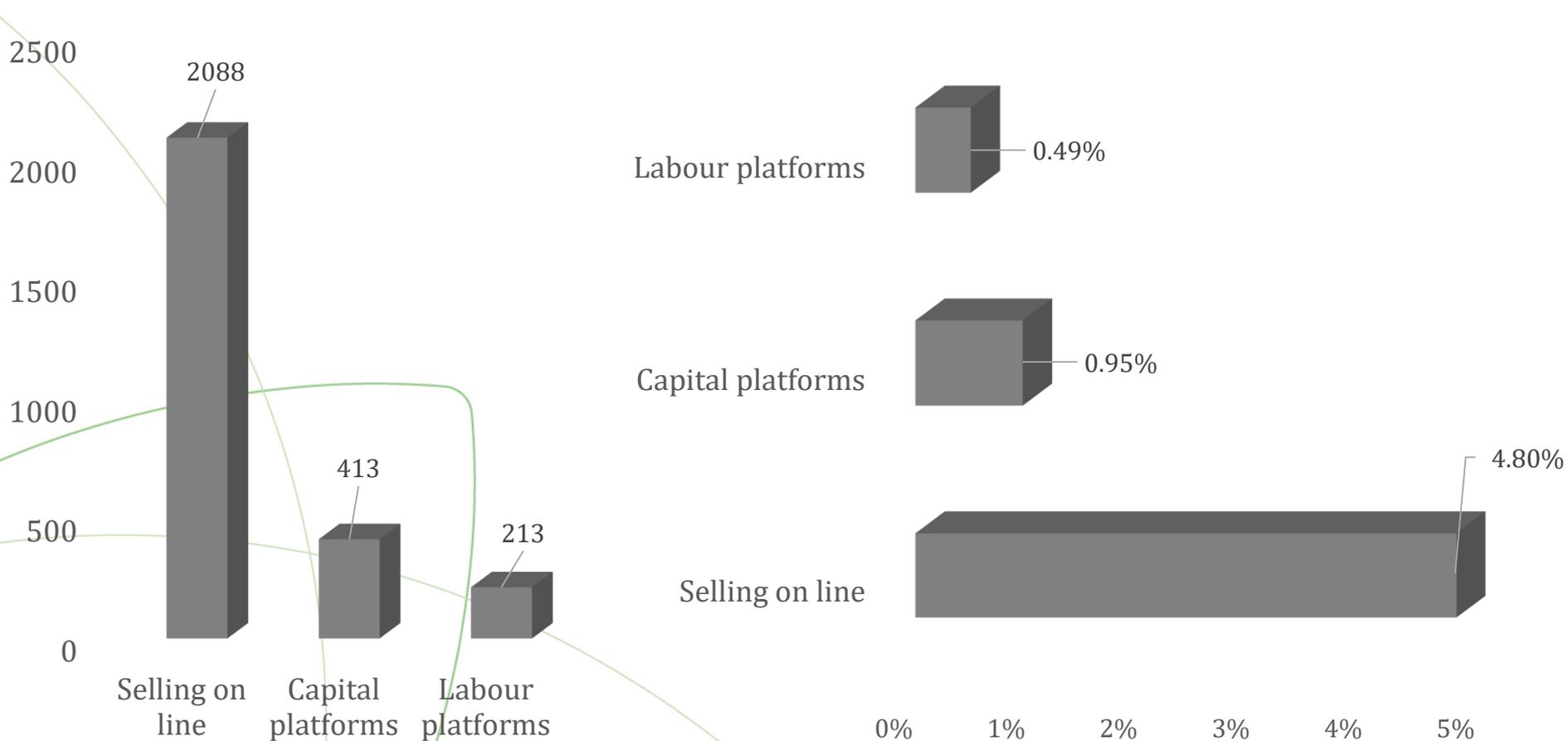
The INAPP-PLUS survey

- ✓ **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?

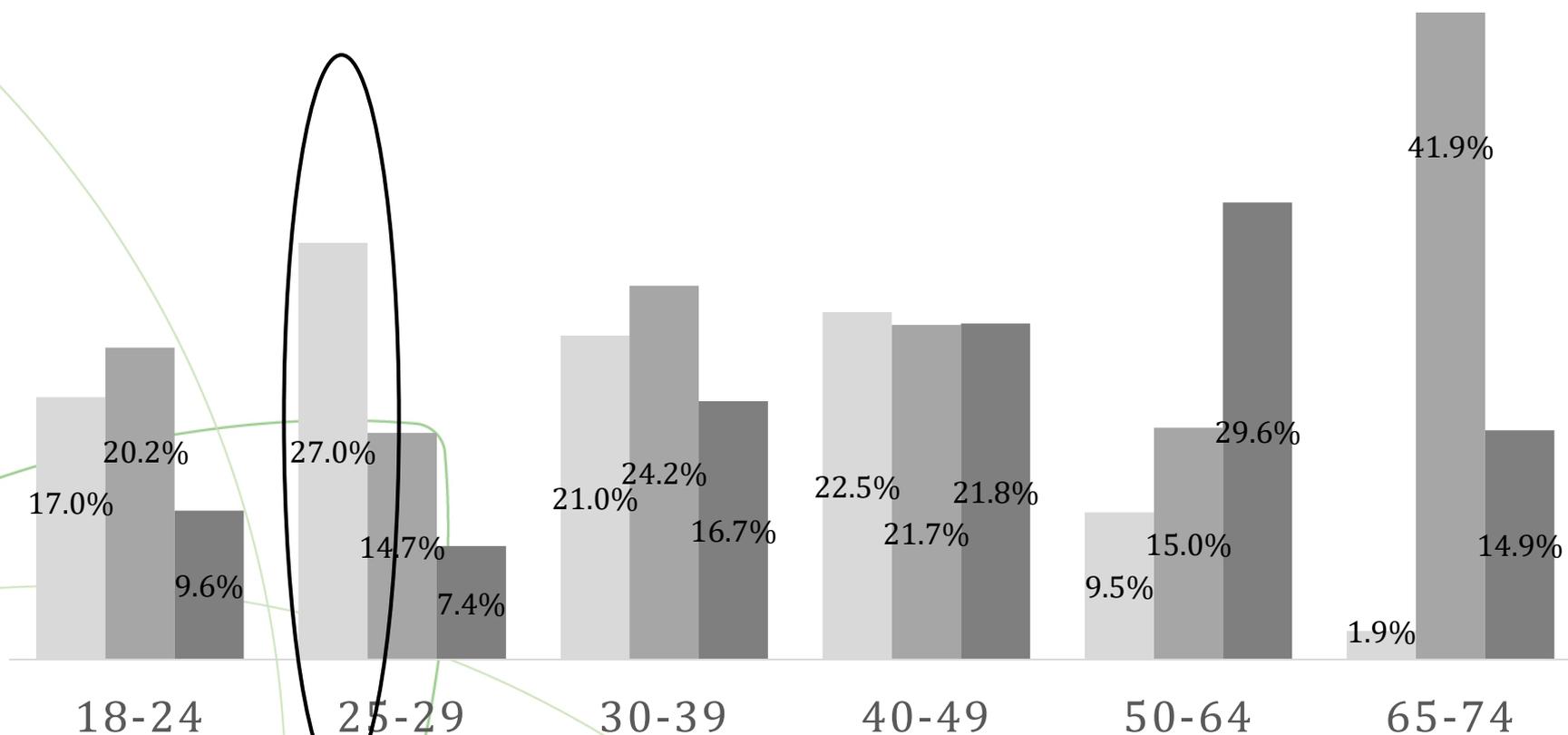
Number of individuals
(thousands)

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



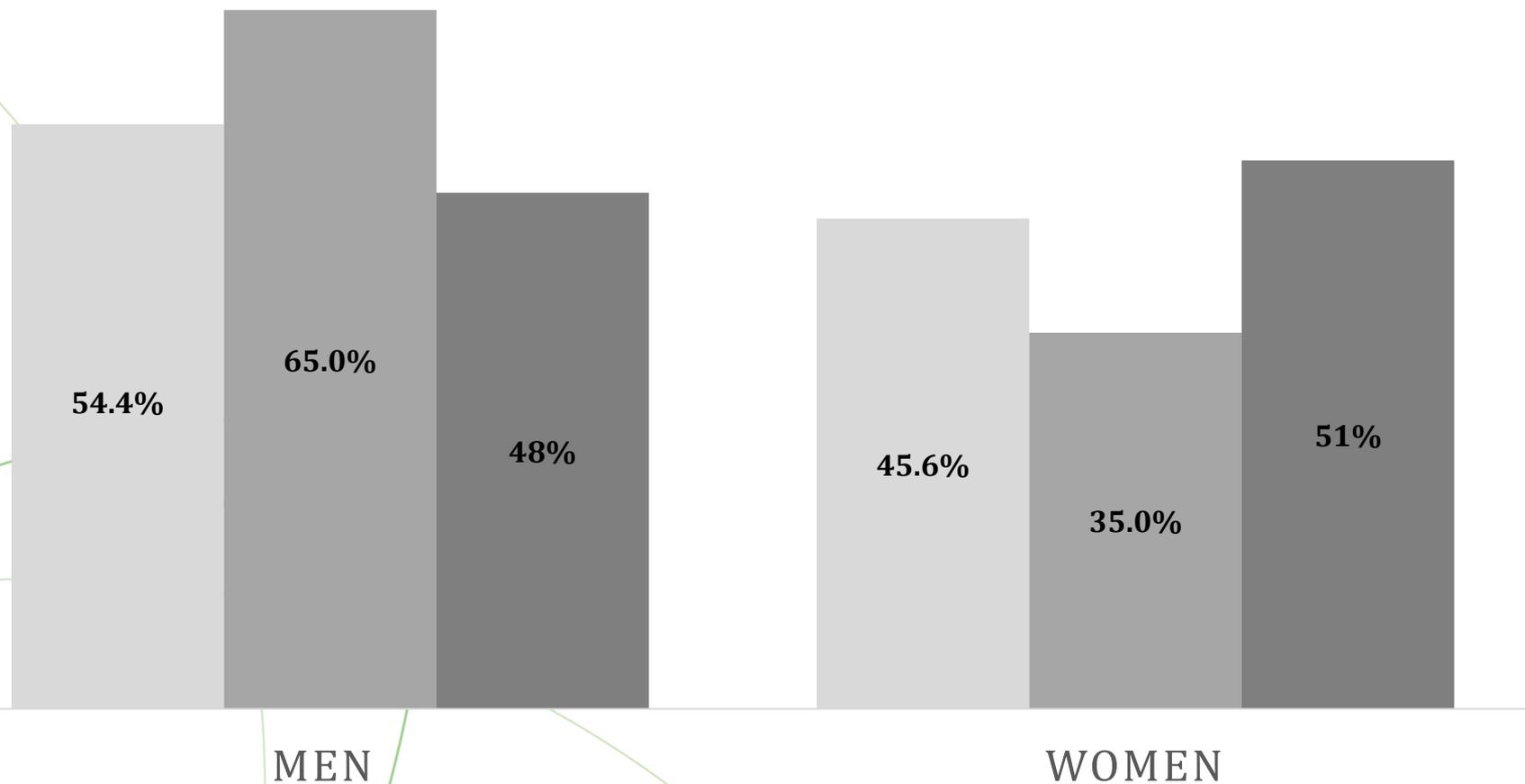
What is the age distribution of platform workers?

■ Labour Platform ■ Platform ■ Total PLUS

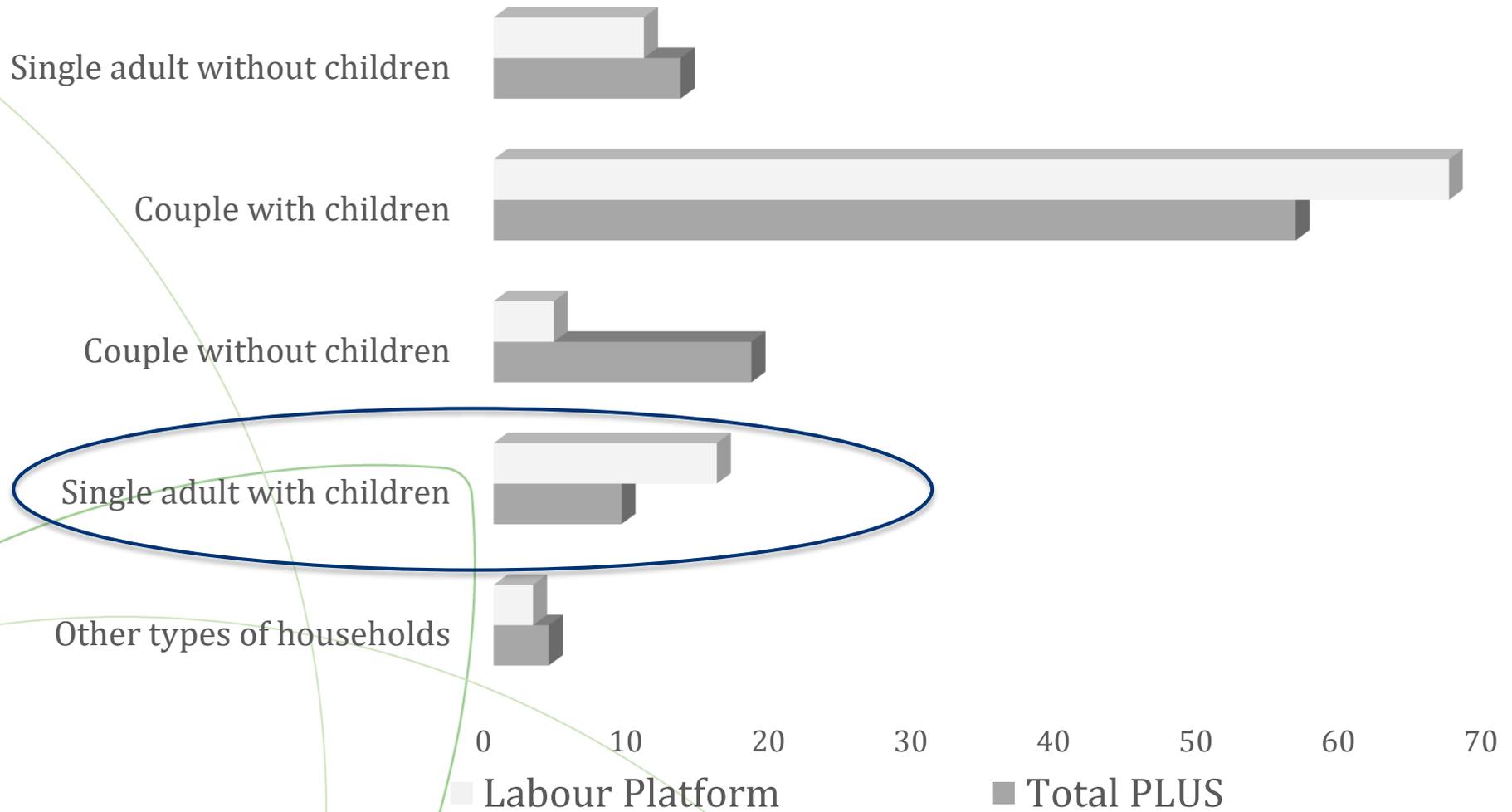


What is the gender distribution of platform workers?

■ Labour Platform ■ Platform ■ Total PLUS

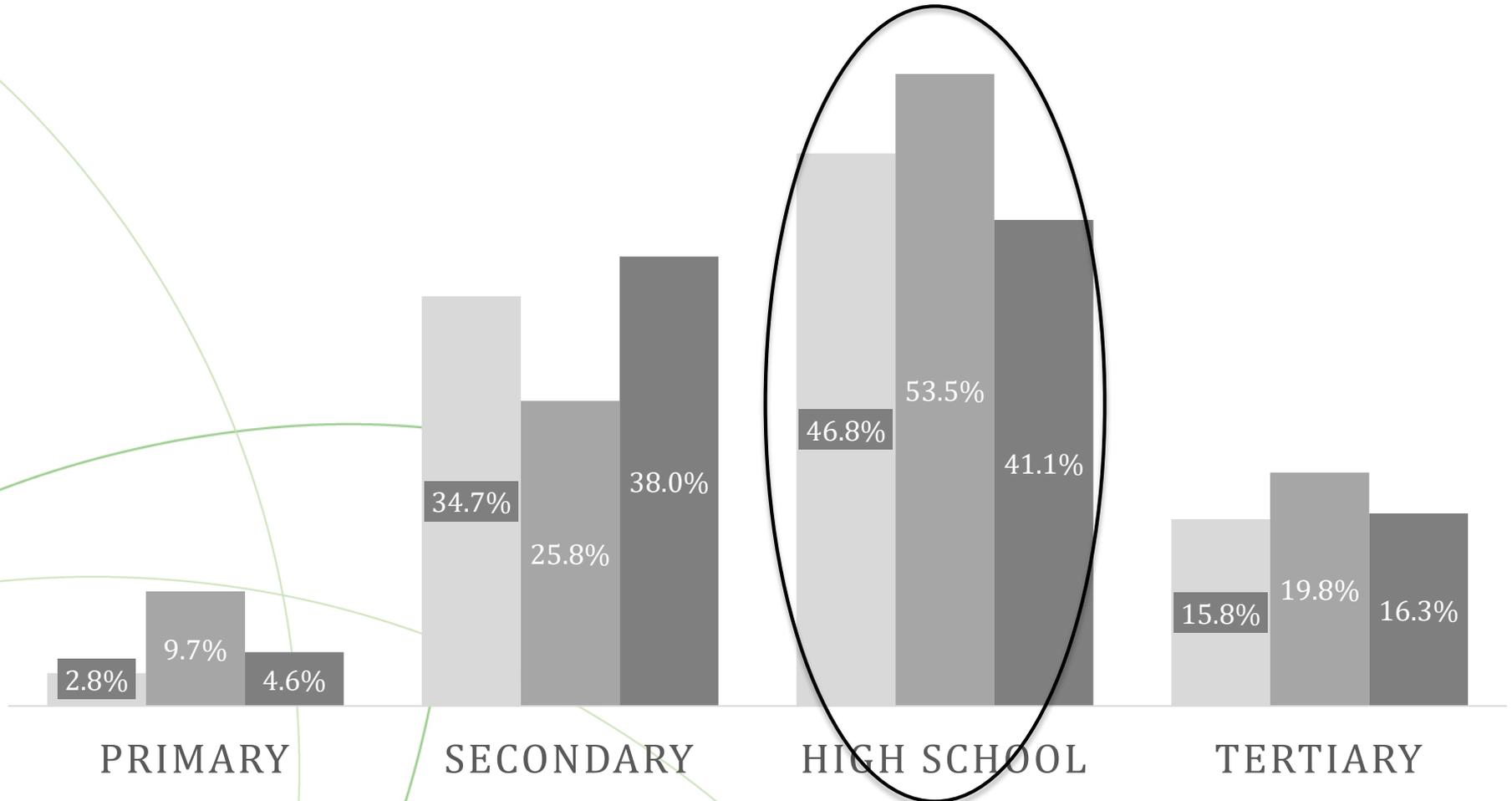


Platform workers by household types



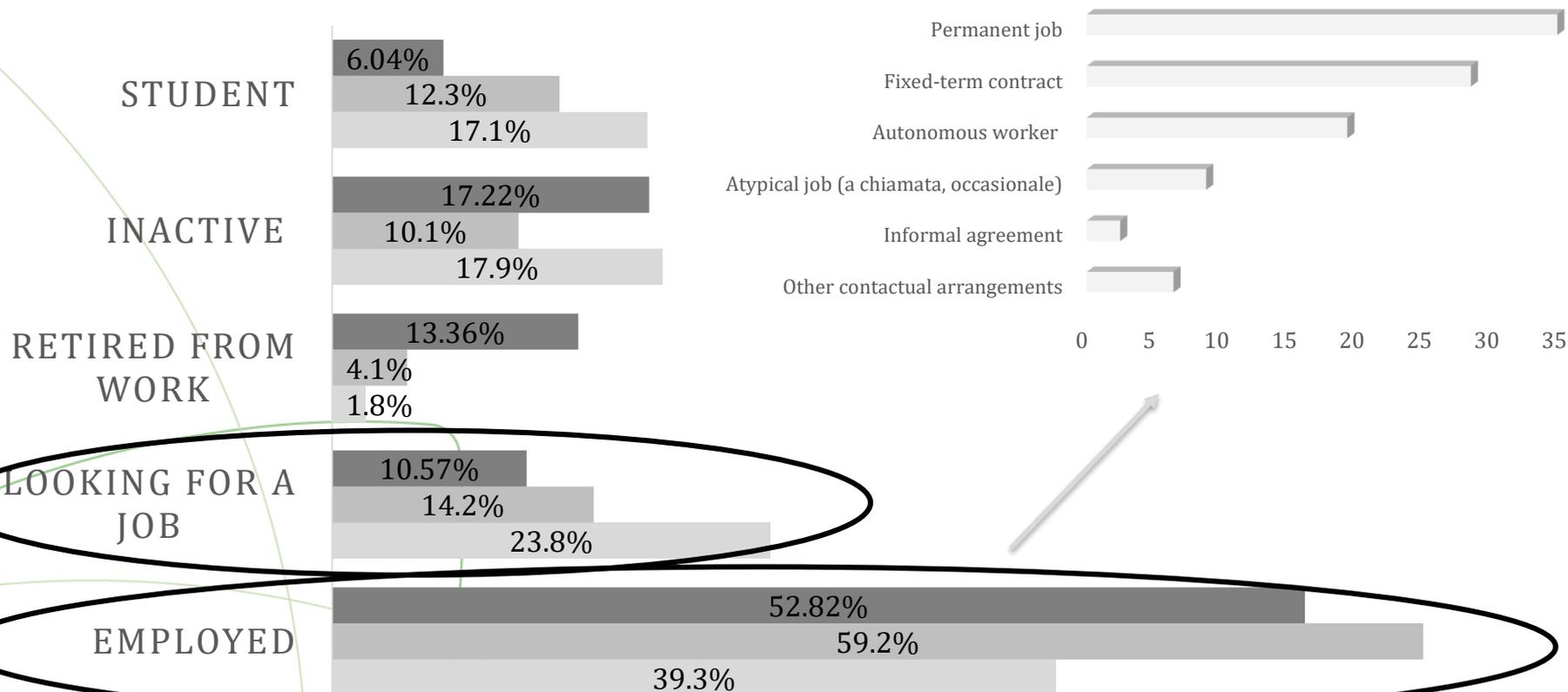
What is the educational distribution of platform workers?

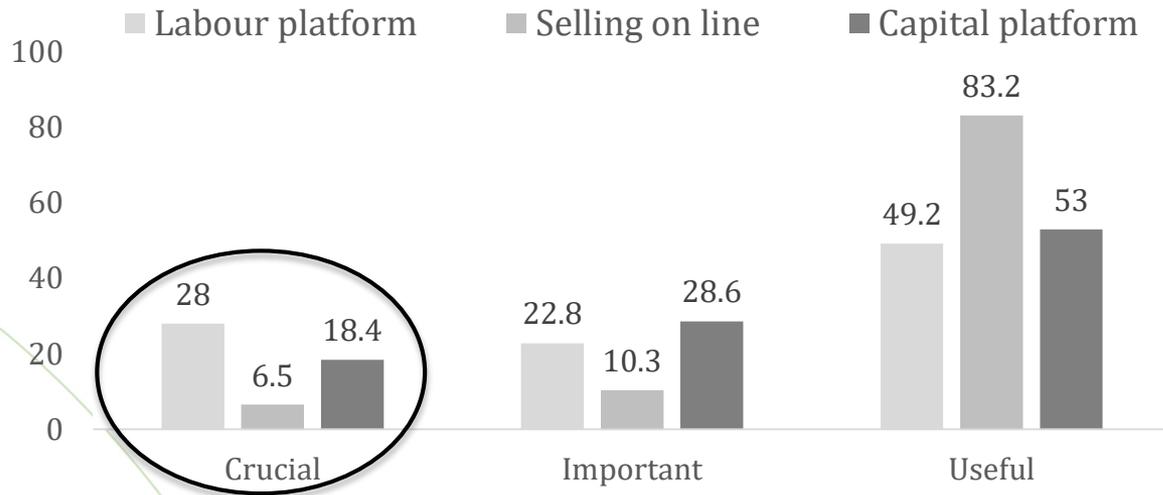
■ Labour platforms ■ Platforms ■ Total PLUS



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

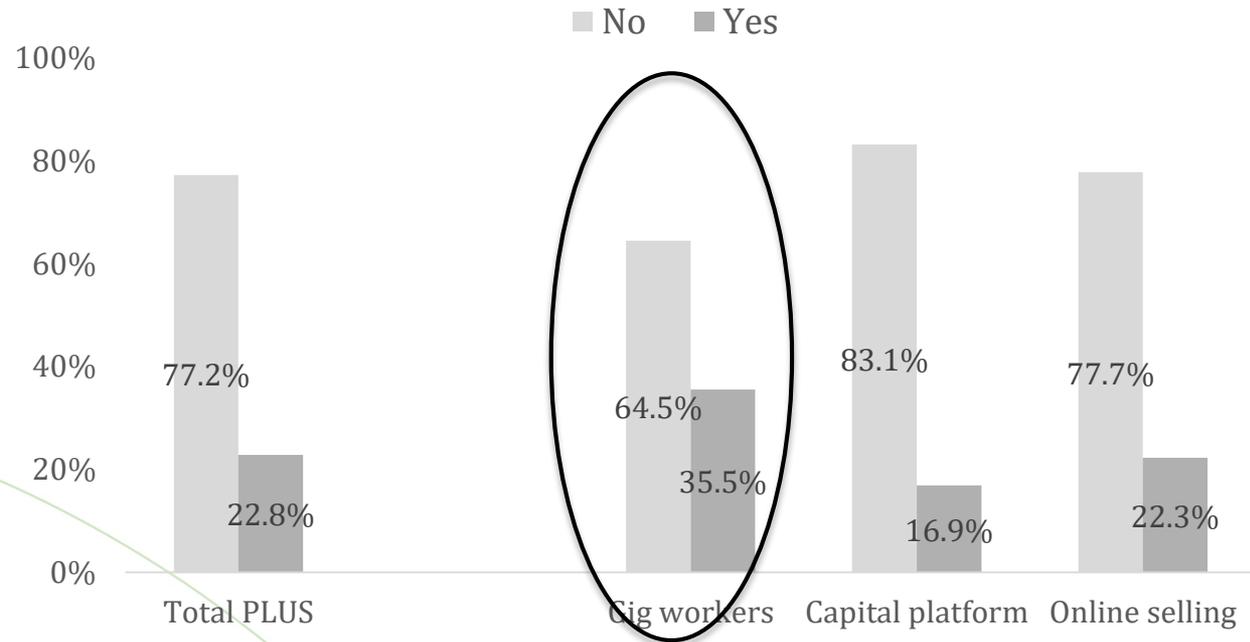
Total PLUS
 Platforms
 Labour Platforms



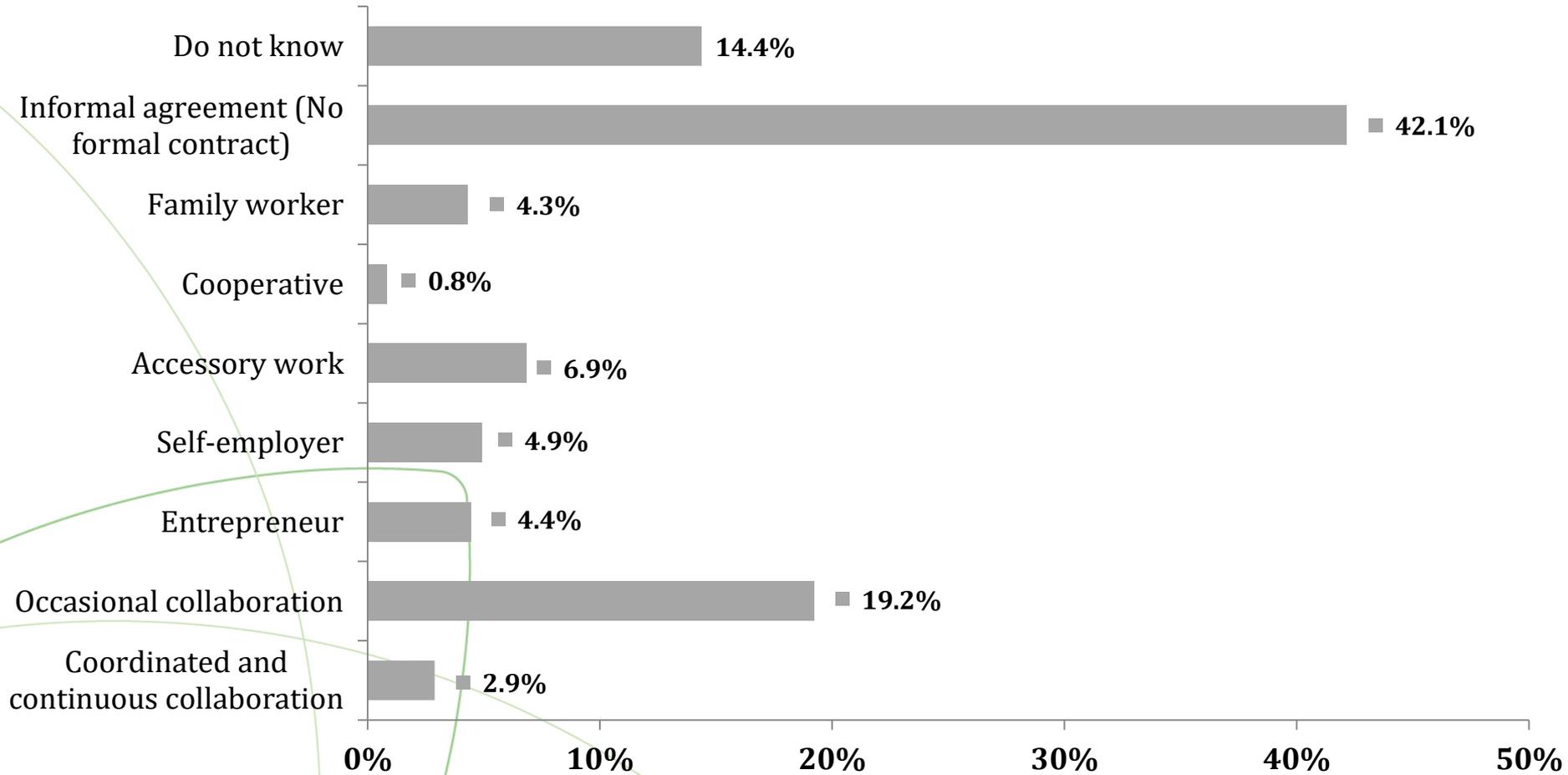


How important is the income earned by platform?

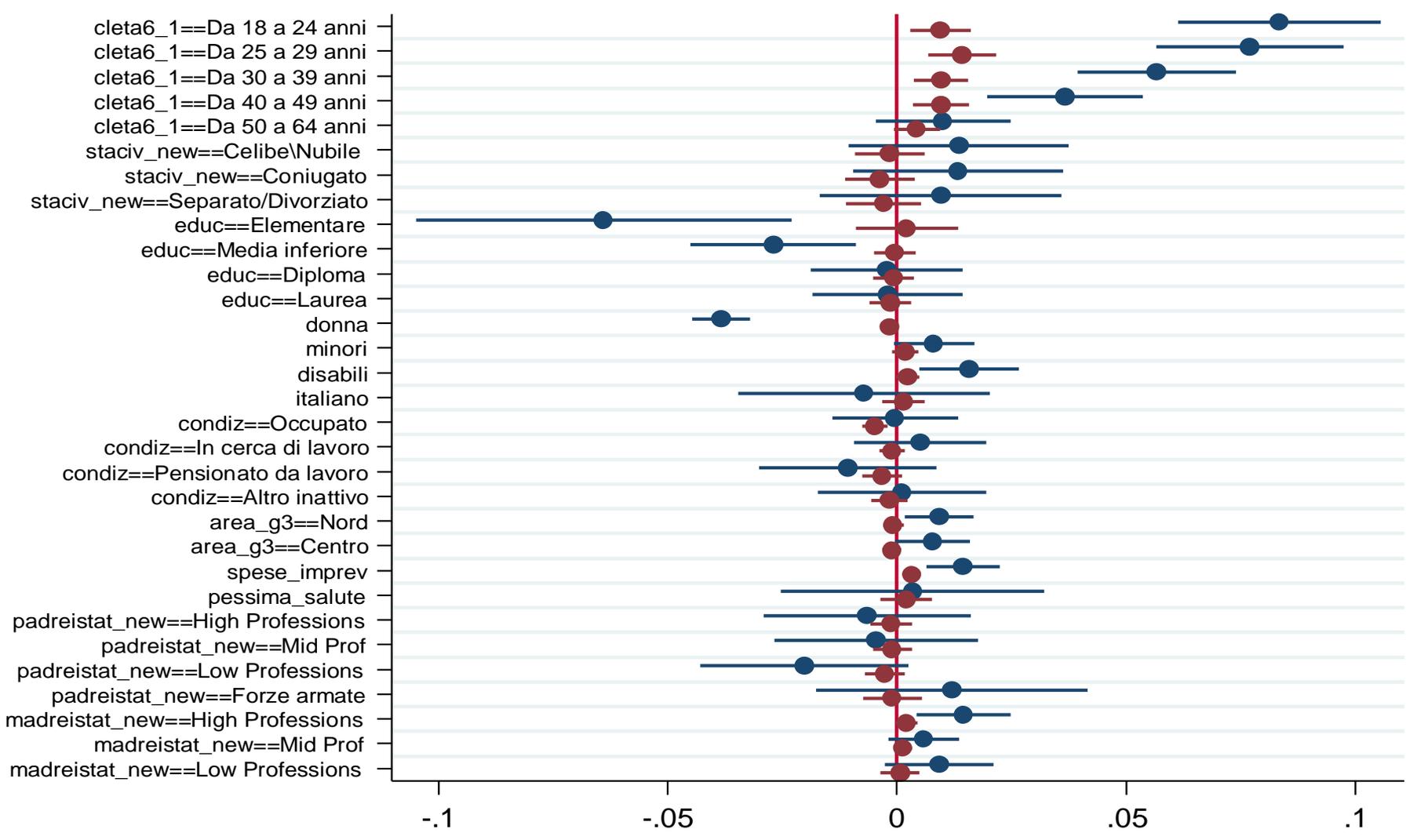
Inability to deal with unexpected expenses (%)



Type of contract (%)

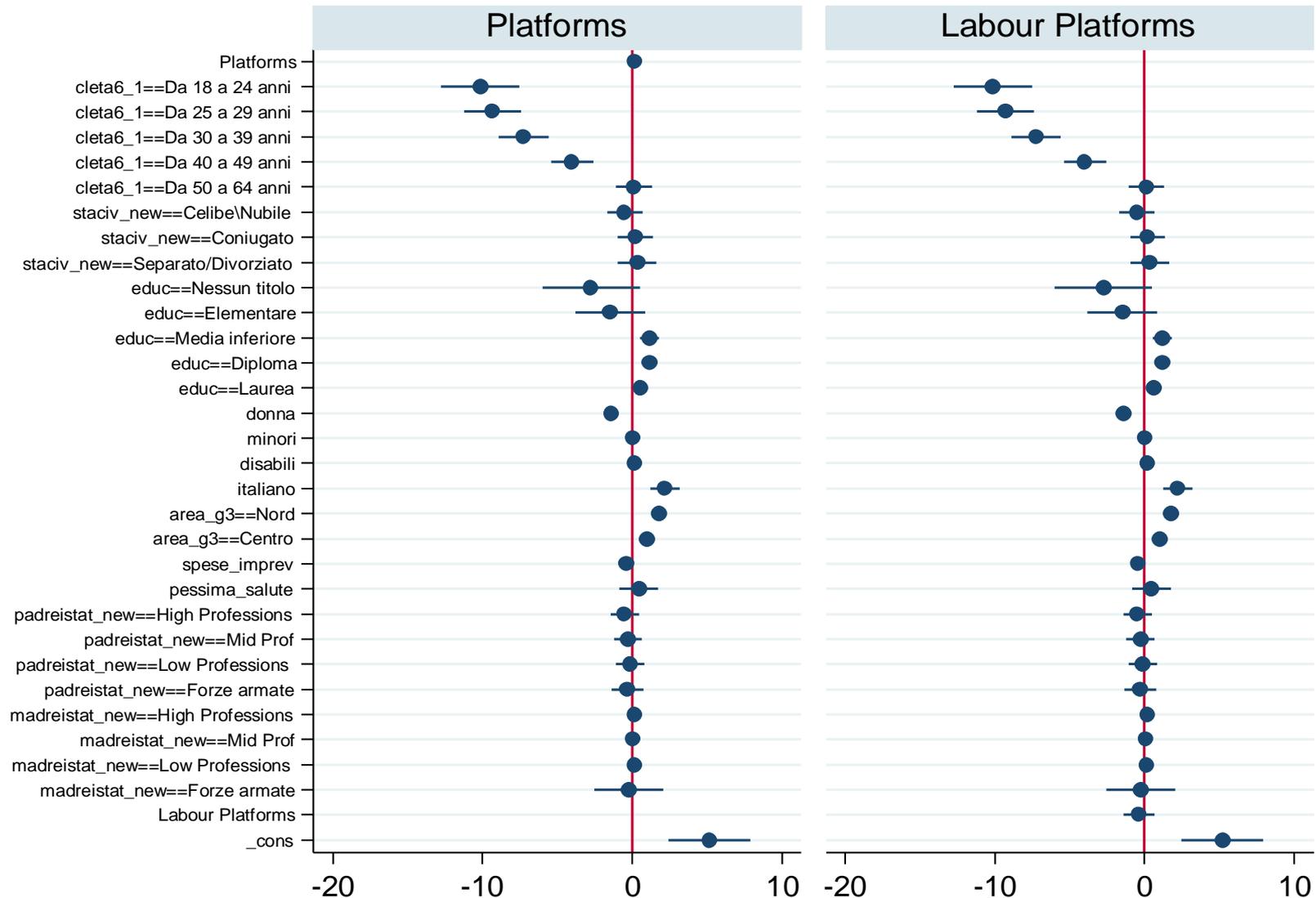


Socio-occupational characteristics of Platform workers: evidence from PLUS (marginal effects from Probit models)



● 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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