Why social mobility?
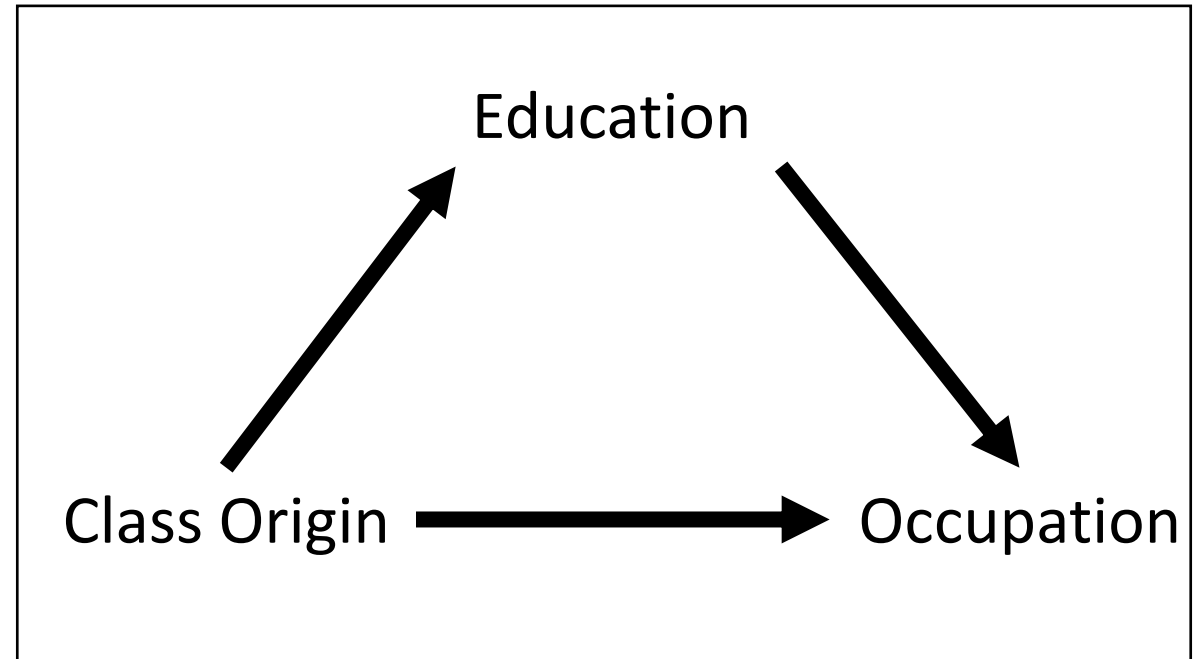
- Meritocratic discourse

- Parental class influences children's life chances:
    e.g. occupation (Friedman & Laurison, 2019; Goldthorpe and McKnight, 2006)

How does parental class influence occupation?

- Direct influence via social ties and cultural resources

- Indirect influence via investment into education

e.g. Goldthorpe (2007)

Why online labour markets?

Innovative hiring practices:

1. **Algorithmic screening**
2. **Digitally mediated** interviews/communication
3. **Skill validation** tests, certificates, ratings

e.g. Kässi & Lehdonvirta (2019); Sanchez-Monedero & Dencik (2019)

Why online labour markets?

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→ Most likely case for diminishing influence of parental class background?

Research questions

1) What are the parental class backgrounds of online platform workers?

2) Do workers from more privileged class backgrounds have higher quality online jobs?

Data

Sampling major platforms:

- Platform assisted random sampling (465)
- Equal quota sampling on country and gender (518)

Respondents (n = 983):

- UK (369)
- Italy (164)
- Germany (132)
- Romania (114)
- Spain (110)
- Finland (94)

RQ1: Parental class background?

**Parental class at child's school-leaving age**

"More privileged"

1) Managerial/Higher Professional
2) Lower Professional
3) Middle-Class Service/Technical

"Less privileged"

4) Small Employer
5) Lower Technical
6) Lower Service
7) Unskilled
8) Non-Working

Dominant Parental Class Background

| Legend |
| --- |
| 1 Managerial |
| 2 Lower Professional |
| 3 Middle Clerical |
| 4 Small Employer |
| 5 Lower Technical |
| 6 Lower Service |
| 7 Unskilled |
| 8 NonWorking |
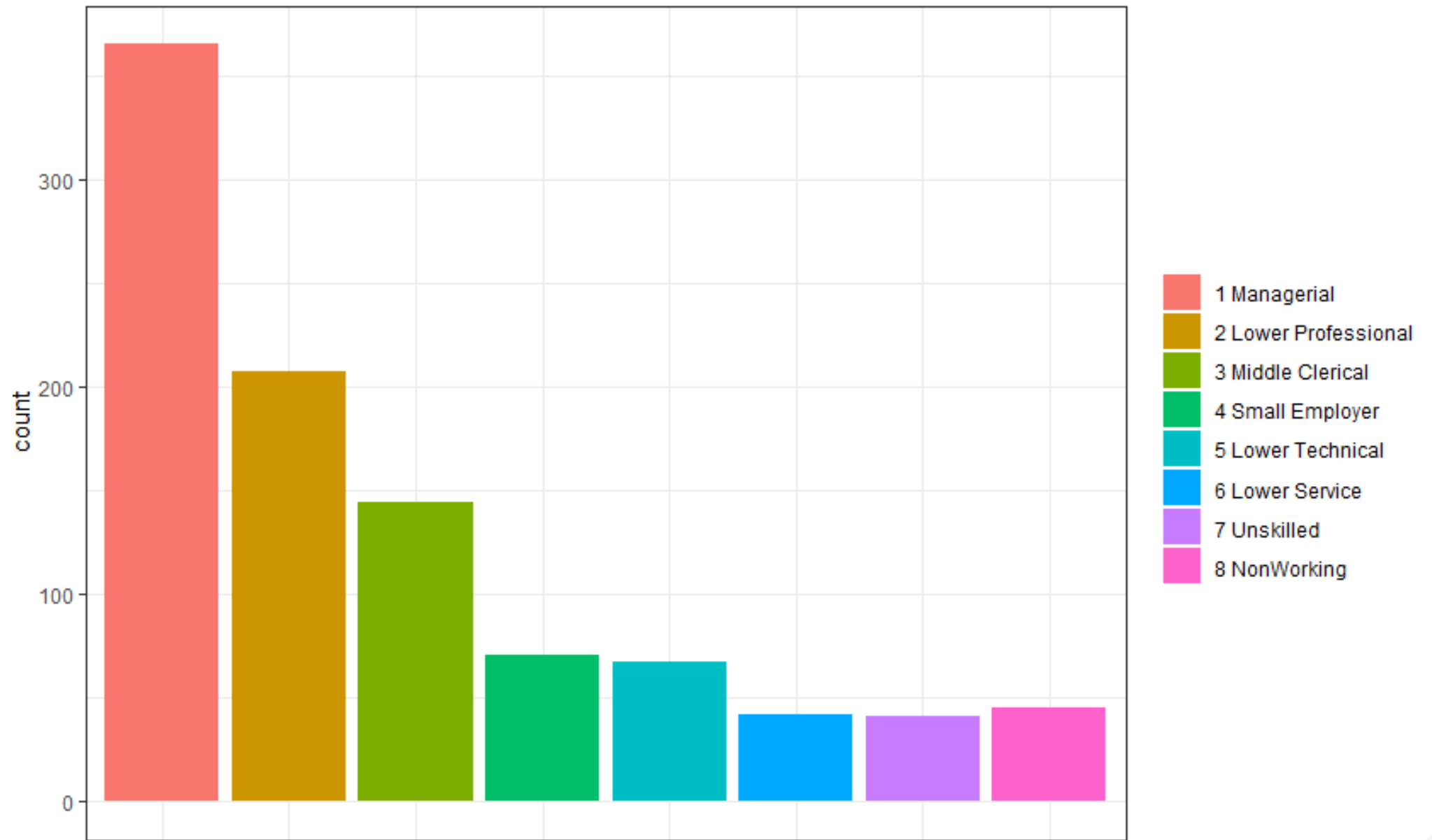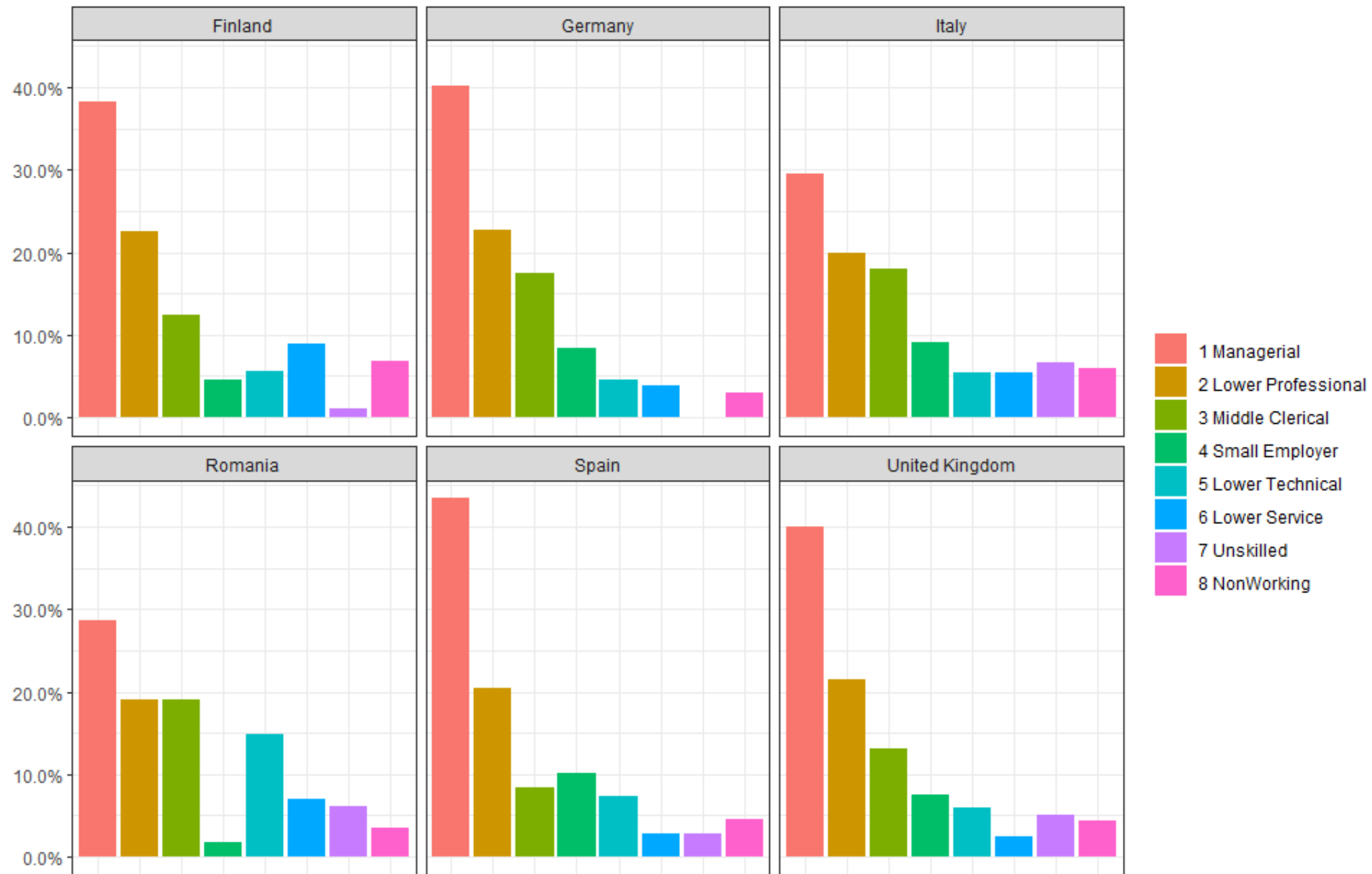
RQ2: Privileged origins → Better Job?

Occupation Category

1) Clerical and Data Entry
2) Creative and Multimedia
3) Professional Services
4) Sales and Marketing Support
5) Software Development & Technology
6) Writing and Translation

RQ2: Privileged origins → Better Job?

Occupation Category

1) Clerical and Data Entry   ←——— **Baseline comparison**
2) Creative and Multimedia
3) Professional Services
4) Sales and Marketing Support
5) Software Development & Technology
6) Writing and Translation

Association Between Salariat Background and Occupation

Relative Risk (v. Data/Clerical)

Occupation

Occupation
- Creative and Multimedia
- Professional Services
- Sales and Marketing Support
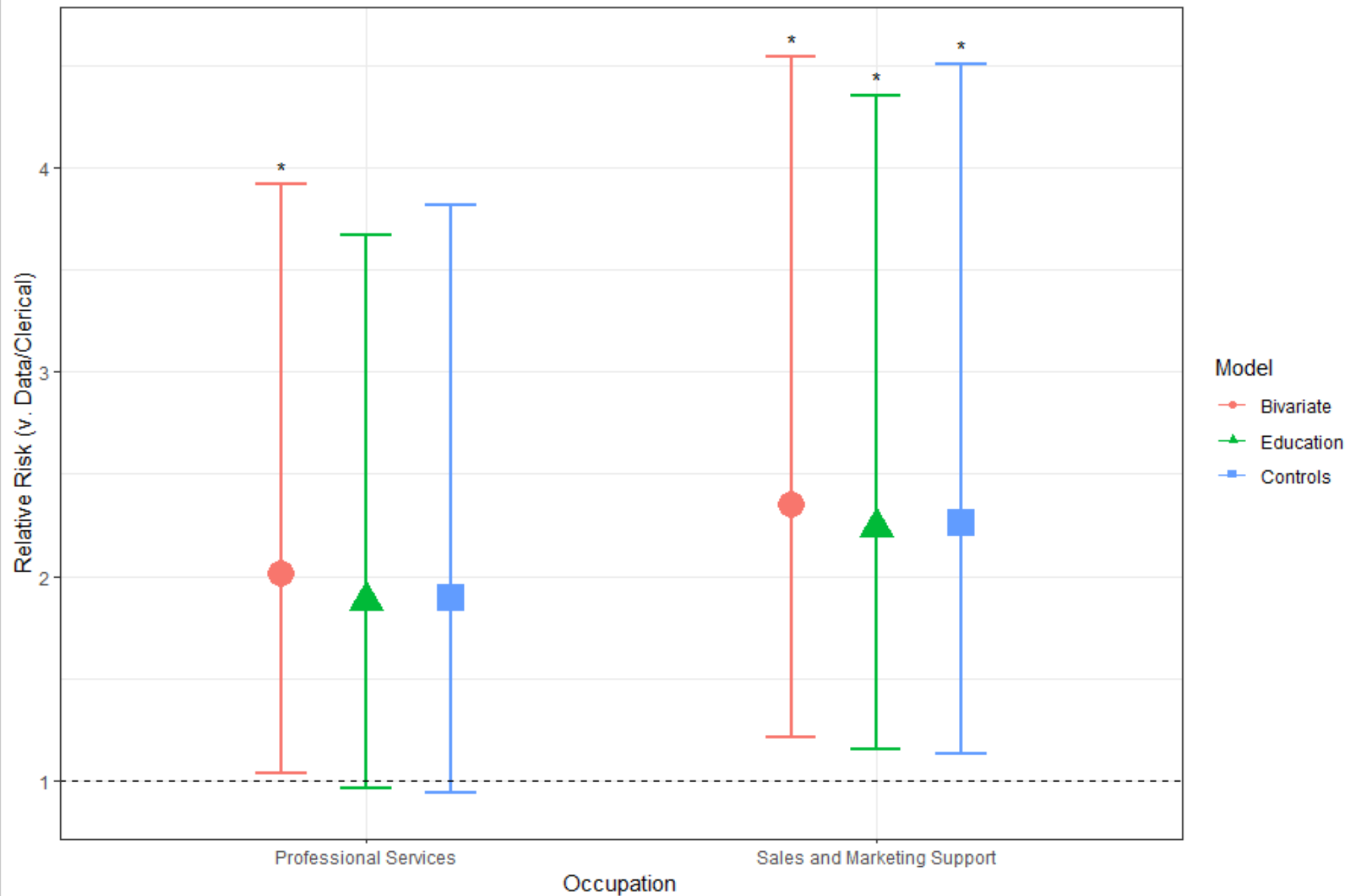- Software Development & Technology
- Writing and Translation
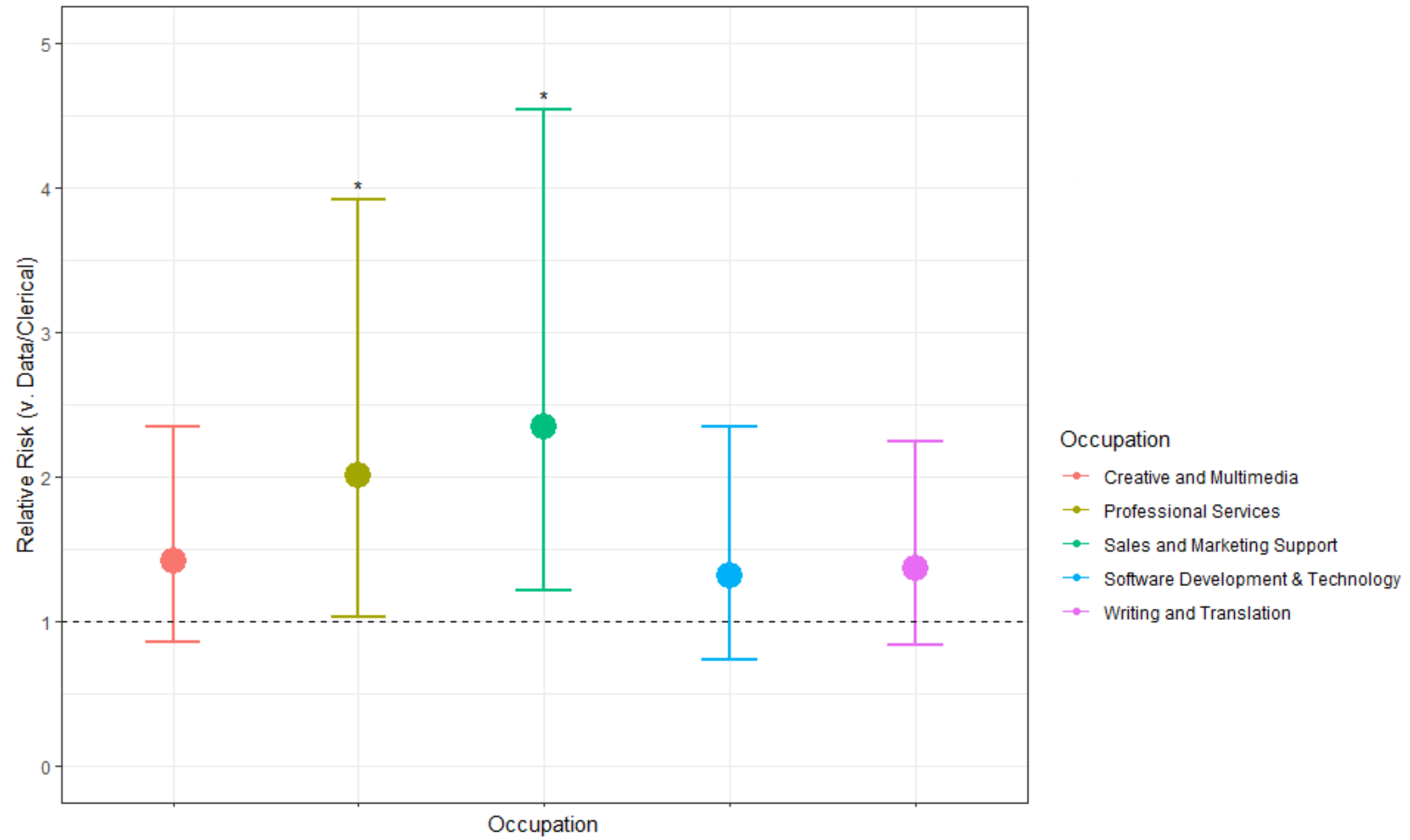
* p < 0.05

Association Between Salariat Background and Occupation

Conclusions

- Online platform workers have **privileged class origins**
    → Digital divide in access?

- **Privileged origins only partially associated with occupation**
    →But, Professional Services / Sales & Marketing
    →Digitalization disrupting class reproduction in hiring?

Limitations

- Sampling: not fully probabilistic
  - Likely biased towards less-earning, less-employed platform workers
  - Analyses yield same results for plaform-assisted and equal quota subsamples

- Conceptual issues: is online platform work an occupation?
  - Or is it a part of an occupation? Or a career phase?