



Human Capital  
Multidisciplinary  
Research Centre



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## Online Labour Market in Russia: Trends and Perspectives

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## ONLINE LABOUR MARKETS

- Digital labour platforms mediate short-term on-demand work
- Who are platform workers? What are their demographic and occupational characteristics? How much does the platform worker profile vary by country? (Berg et al. 2018; De Groen et al. 2018; Huws et al. 2019; Piasna and Drahokoupil 2019; Pesole et al. 2018).
- How did platform workforce evolve? What are the demographic and compositional changes? Filling this gap requires monitoring key indicators over years using a common methodology.
- Freelance platforms (online labour platforms, crowdwork platforms, freelance marketplaces) for creative and knowledge-based work (software developers, graphic designers, writers, consultants, etc.). Online (remote) work.
- Anglo-centric literature on online freelance work (global platforms like Upwork, Freelancer etc.)



## RUSSIAN CONTEXT

- Shared history and common language contributed to the emergence of a Russian-language online labour market that integrates participants not only from Russia, but also from other former Soviet Union republics and from other parts of the world where Russian-speakers reside.
- Legacy of the Soviet economy with restrictions for independent work and private entrepreneurship. Russia has a lower rate of self-employment than most developed and developing market economies (7-8%).
- Some initial delay in ICTs and Internet usage.
- Not only remote work based on ICTs, but also self-employment constitutes an innovative work practice in the post-Soviet context. *Diffusion of this innovative work model?*
- FL.ru is a leading freelance platform (5 million registered users since 2005). Typical general-purpose platform, largely for high and medium-skilled projects.



## DATA

### 4 waves of the Russian Freelance Survey

Method: Standardized online survey at FL.ru

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2019</b>
Dates of data collection	12 Dec 2008 – 3 Feb 2009	25 Feb 2011 – 29 Mar 2011	15 Dec 2013 – 6 Feb 2014	3 Dec 2018 – 2 Feb 2019
Active platform freelancers	8,613	7,179	10,574	2,055
Number of questions	49	54	40	46
Completion time (median), minutes	13.9	12.8	11.1	11.7



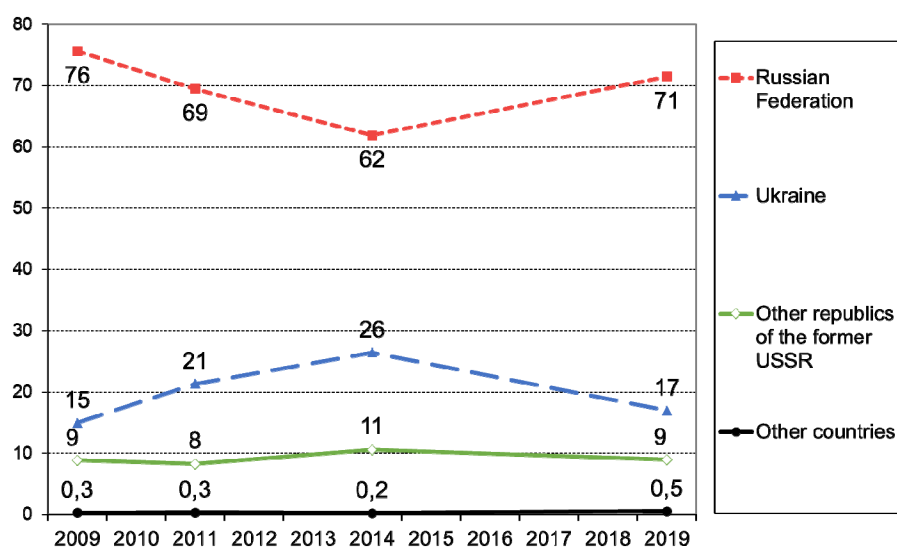
## TRENDS

1. Spatial decentralization
2. Feminization
3. Maturing
4. Rising education
5. Occupational diversification
6. Strengthening freelance careers
7. Platformization
8. Legalization



## Spatial decentralization

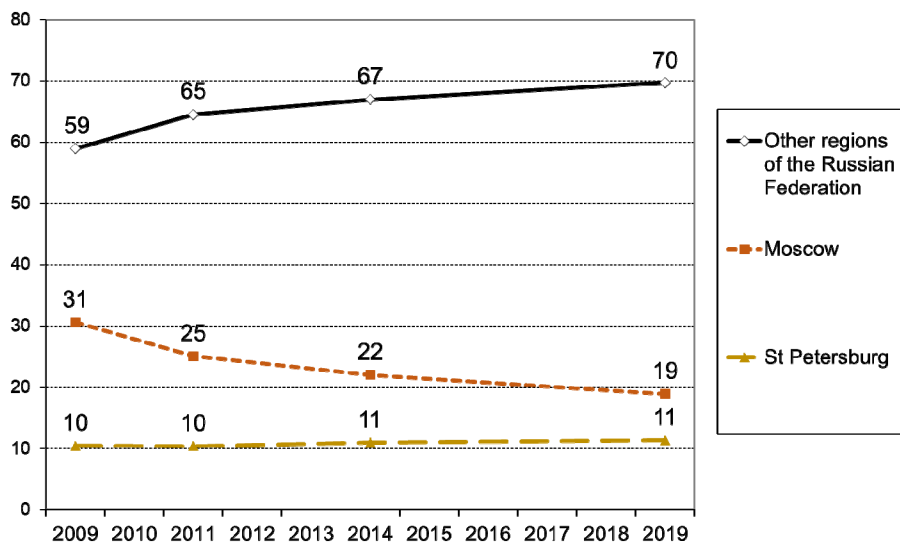
Dynamics in the geographical distribution, 2009–2019 (percentage)





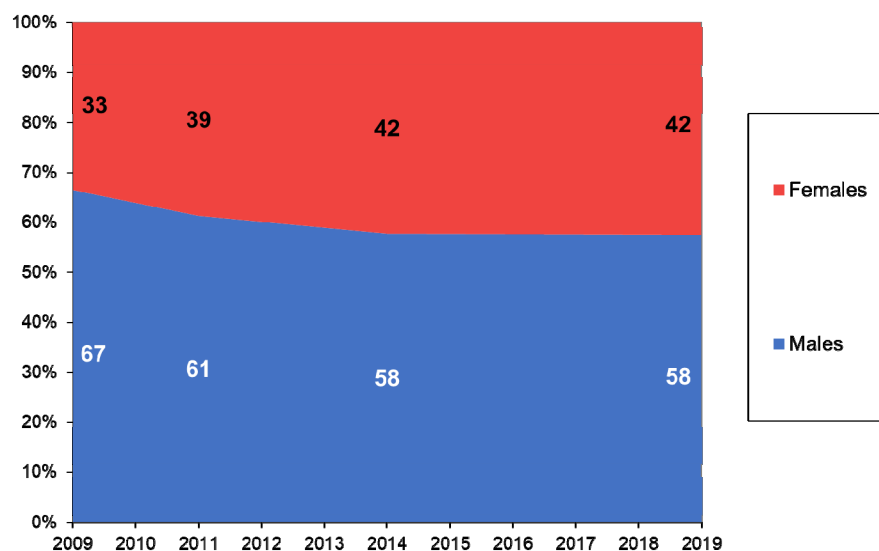
### Spatial decentralization

Dynamics in the geographical distribution of Russian freelancers across regions of the country, 2009–2019 (percentage)



### Feminization

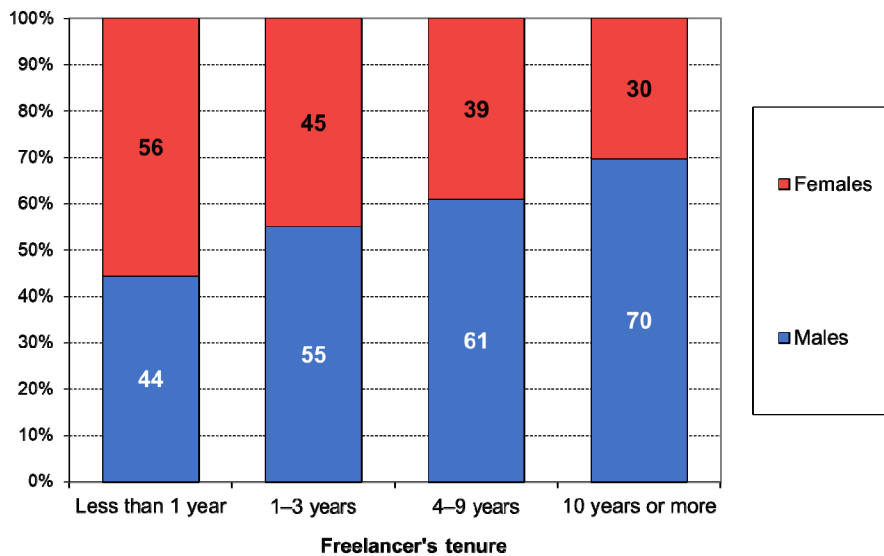
Dynamics in gender distribution, 2009–2019 (percentage)





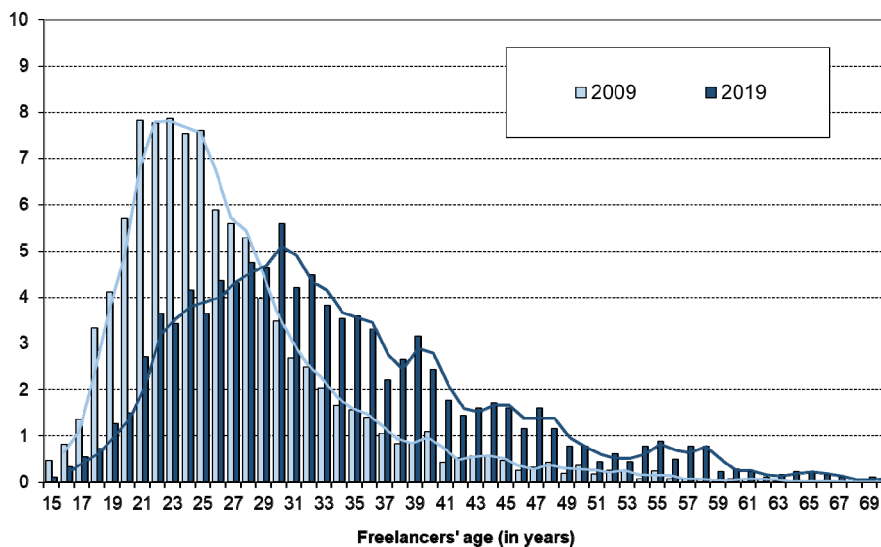
## Feminization

Gender distribution by freelance tenure, 2019 (percentage)



## Maturing

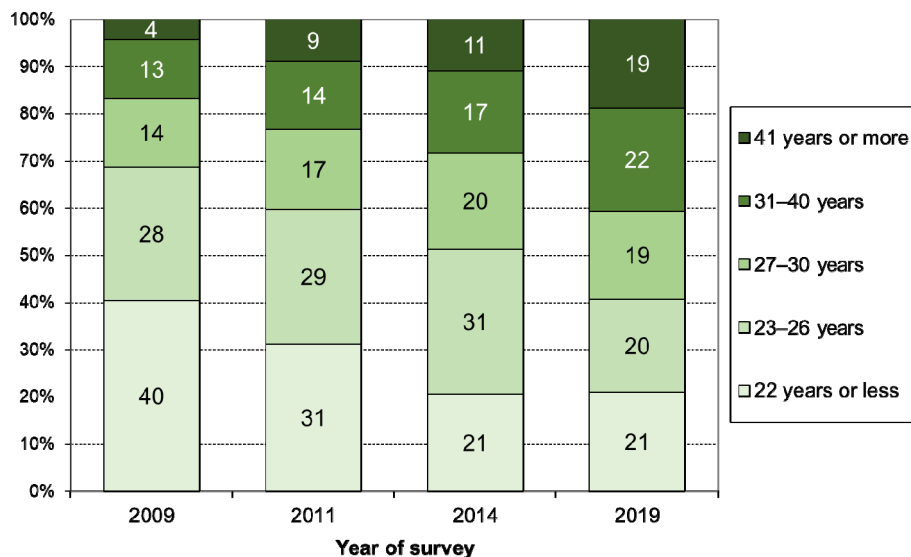
Age distribution, 2009 and 2019 (percentage)





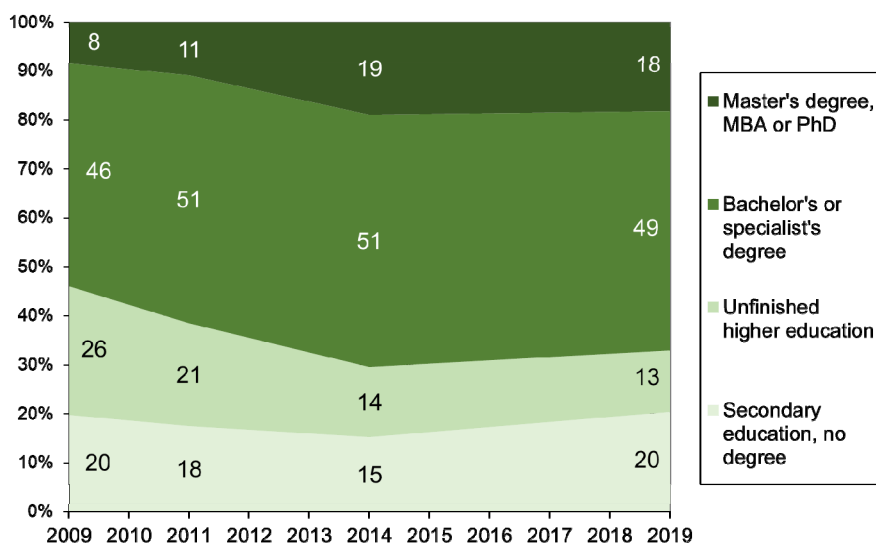
## Maturing

Age distribution of newcomers (freelancers with tenure of less than 1 year), 2009–2019 (percentage)



## Rising education

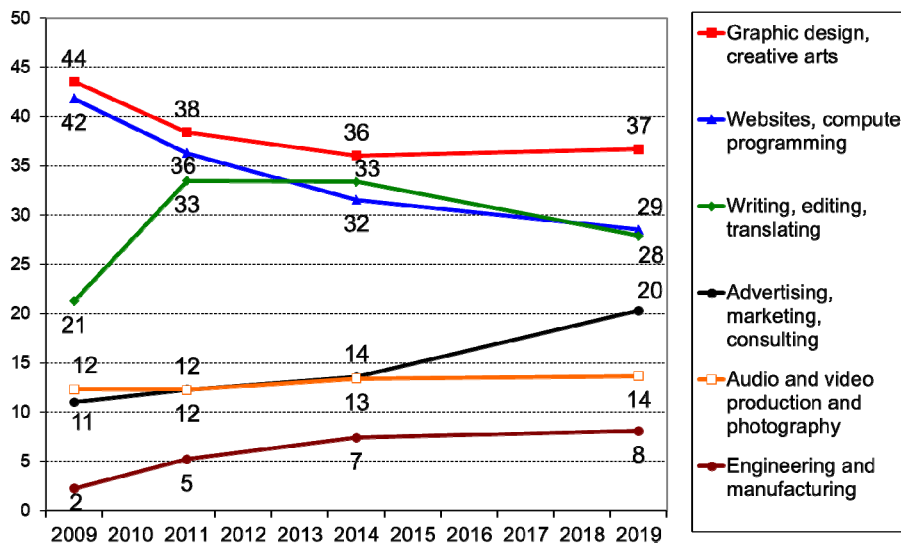
Dynamics in educational level, 2009–2019 (percentage)





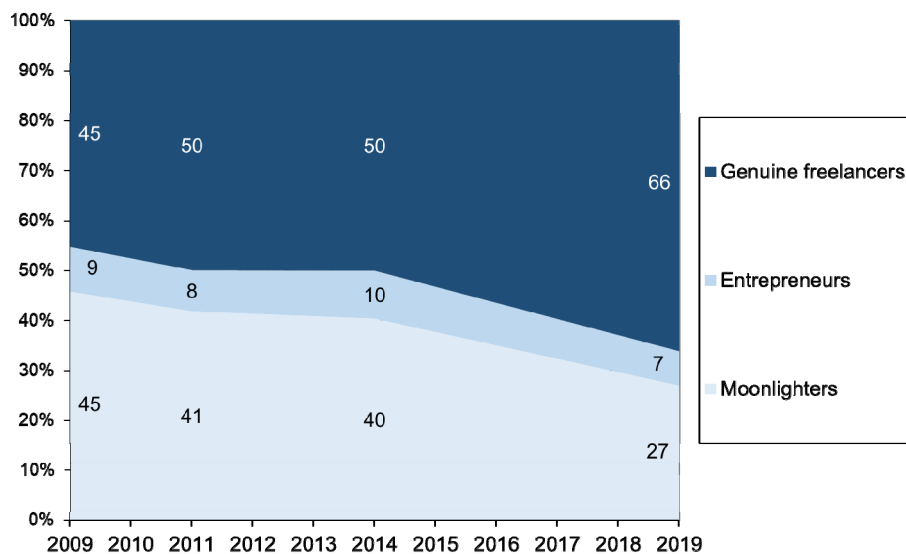
## Occupational diversification

Dynamics in professional skills, 2009–2019 (percentage)



## Strengthening freelance careers

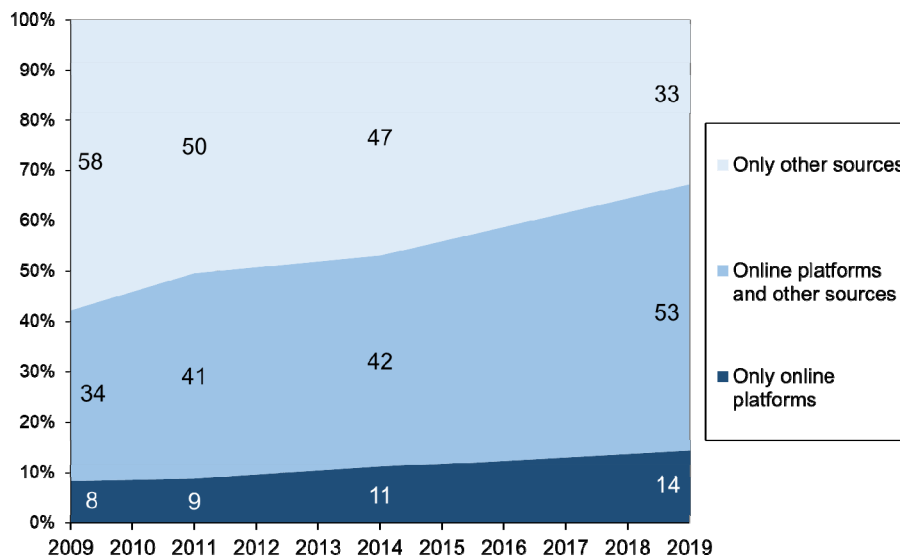
Dynamics in freelancer employment status, 2009–2019 (percentage)





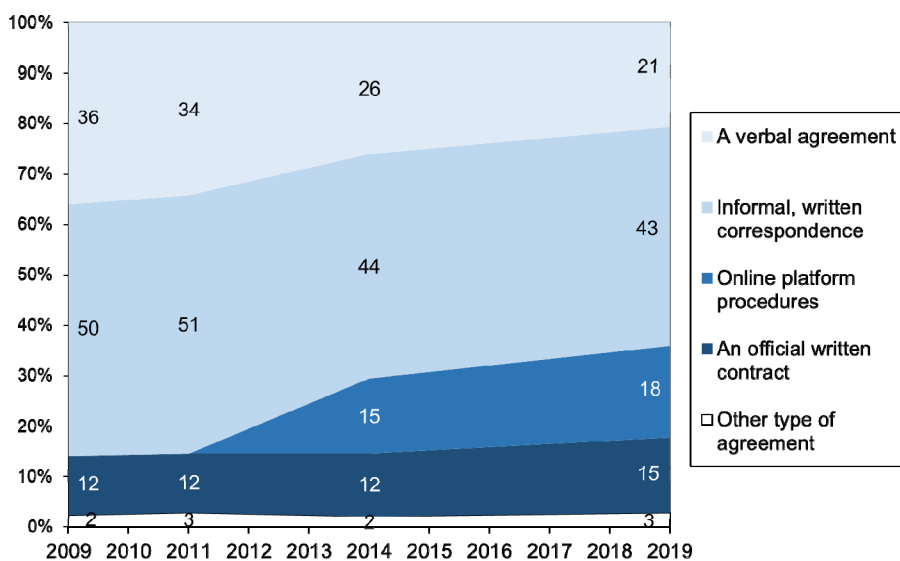
### Platformization

Dynamics in the use of platforms as job search channels, 2009–2019 (percentage)



### Legalization

Dynamics in forms of agreement used between freelancers and their clients, 2009–2019 (percentage)







## CONCLUSION

- Overall, we can witness the process of the diffusion of online freelancing as an innovative work model among the wider population (from enthusiastic pioneers to more typical workers).
- We encourage more research on various sectors and countries that explore dynamics of the platform work.

For more details see:

- Shevchuk A., Strebkov D. [Digital platforms and the changing freelance workforce in Russia: A ten-year perspective](#) // International Labour Review. 2021 (forthcoming)
- Shevchuk A., Strebkov D. [Freelance platform work in the Russian Federation: 2009–2019](#). ILO Working Paper No. 38. Geneva: ILO, 2021.



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