

Workshop on Webcam Sex Platforms – University of Amsterdam  
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## **Cannot see the wood for the trees**

A mixed-method analysis of broadcaster typology  
in an online exam platform\*

Jean Finez, Jingyue Xing, Pierre Brasseur, Jean-Marc Francony and Anne-Sophie Béliard



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# Introduction

## What is webcams and what it is not?

- Heterosexual men paying women *but not only*
- Broadcasting sexual shows for money *but not only*.

## Who are the broadcasters?

- In terms of gender, sexual orientation or age

## What are their broadcasting practices?

- Length of broadcast, frequency of broadcasting, audience...

## What are their motivations?

- Money, pleasure, leisure...

# A mixed-method analysis

## Quantitative Data

Web scraping from the Live4Desire platform (Cam4.fr).

- Automated data recovery every 10 minutes for one week on all connected users
- 13,100 shows streamed by 4,274 broadcasters declared as being from France.

Three categories of data

- **self-reported data:** age, nationality, gender, and sexual orientation
- **Platform profile data:** date of registration on the site, 'awards', self-presentation, presence of photos, use of social networks...
- **Broadcasting activity data:** duration and time of broadcast, audiences, payment...

## Qualitative Data

40 semi-directive interviews with broadcasters, providing biographical data and information on broadcasting practices

# **The issue of our study**

## **Analysing the variety of broadcasters' practices, success and motivations**

- Beyond the sociology of female professional broadcasters
- Differences by gender
- Disparity of earnings and audience

## **Mapping groups of broadcasters using statistical methods**

- We use Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA)

## **Enhancing the quantitative results with qualitative interviews**

- Giving meaning to statistics in line with mixed-method approach.

# Exam platforms as social fields

## Platforms operate as 'social fields' [Bourdieu, 1984]

- 'Agents' (the broadcasters) struggle to attract scarce resources (the viewers)
- A competition to be visible, to attract viewers or to get tips from viewers

## The notion of 'social field' rather than those of 'market'

- The issue is to stress both the economic, social, and symbolic dimensions of the supply
- A relational perspective: what gathers and what opposes the different agents?

# **The results**

# 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of broadcasters

## A predominant number of male broadcasters

Among the 13,100 shows observed:

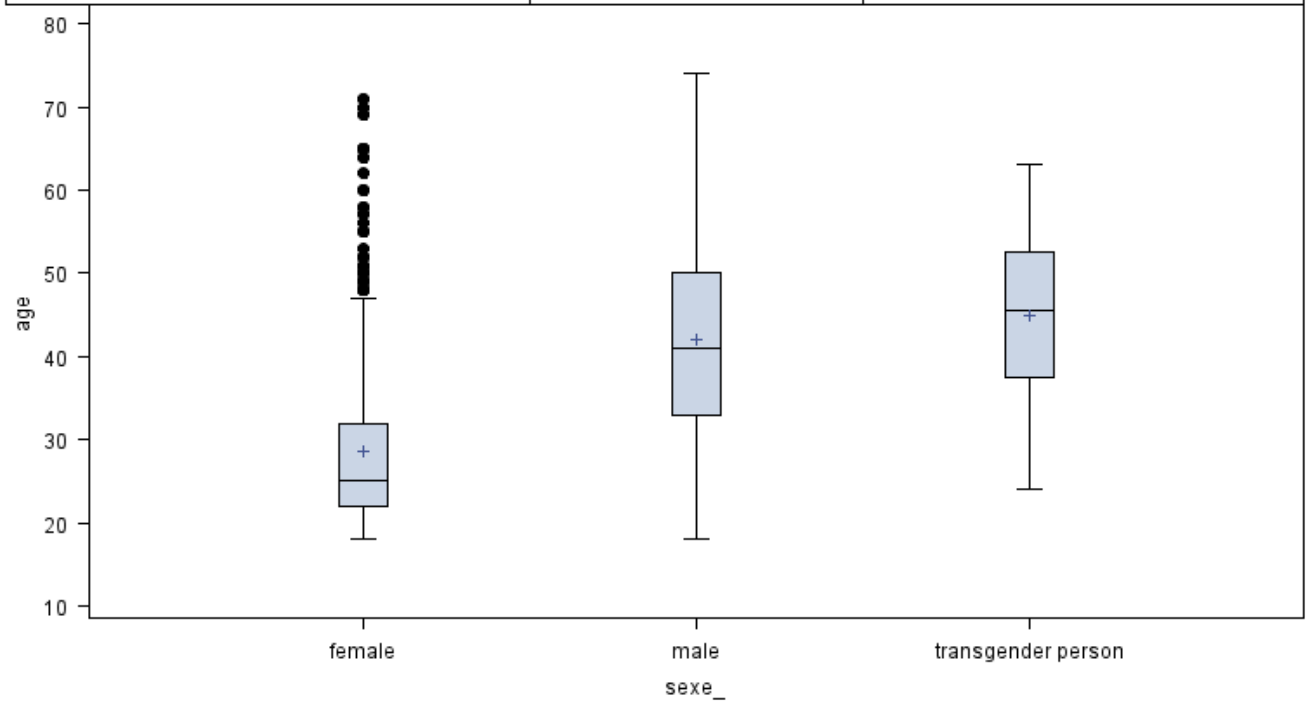
- **79% were broadcast by men**
- 19% by women
- 2% by trans

# 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of broadcasters

Box plot for self-reported age distribution by gender

Overall Statistics					
Min	18	Mean	39.49649	Max	74
Pooled Std Dev	11.56439				

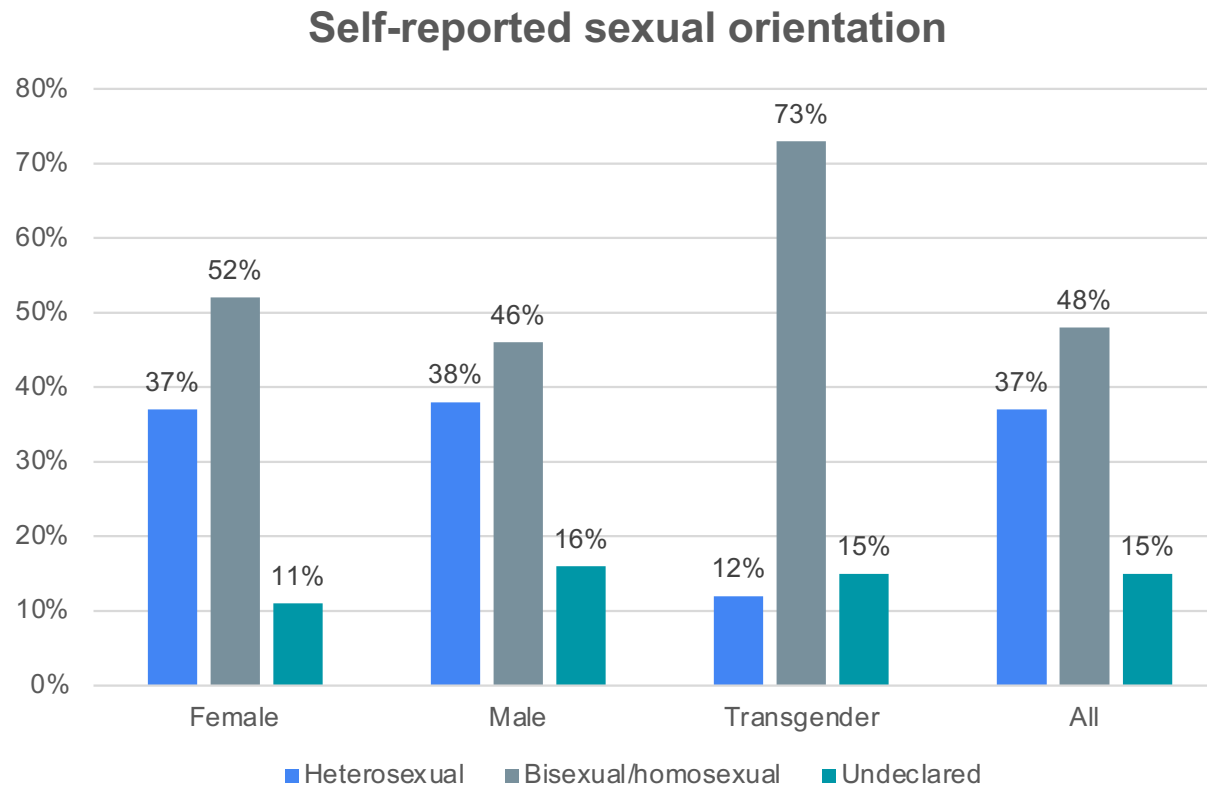
Statistics by sexe				
Min	18	18	18	24
Mean	28.67448	41.97143	41.97143	45
Max	71	74	74	63



Young women vs. older men?

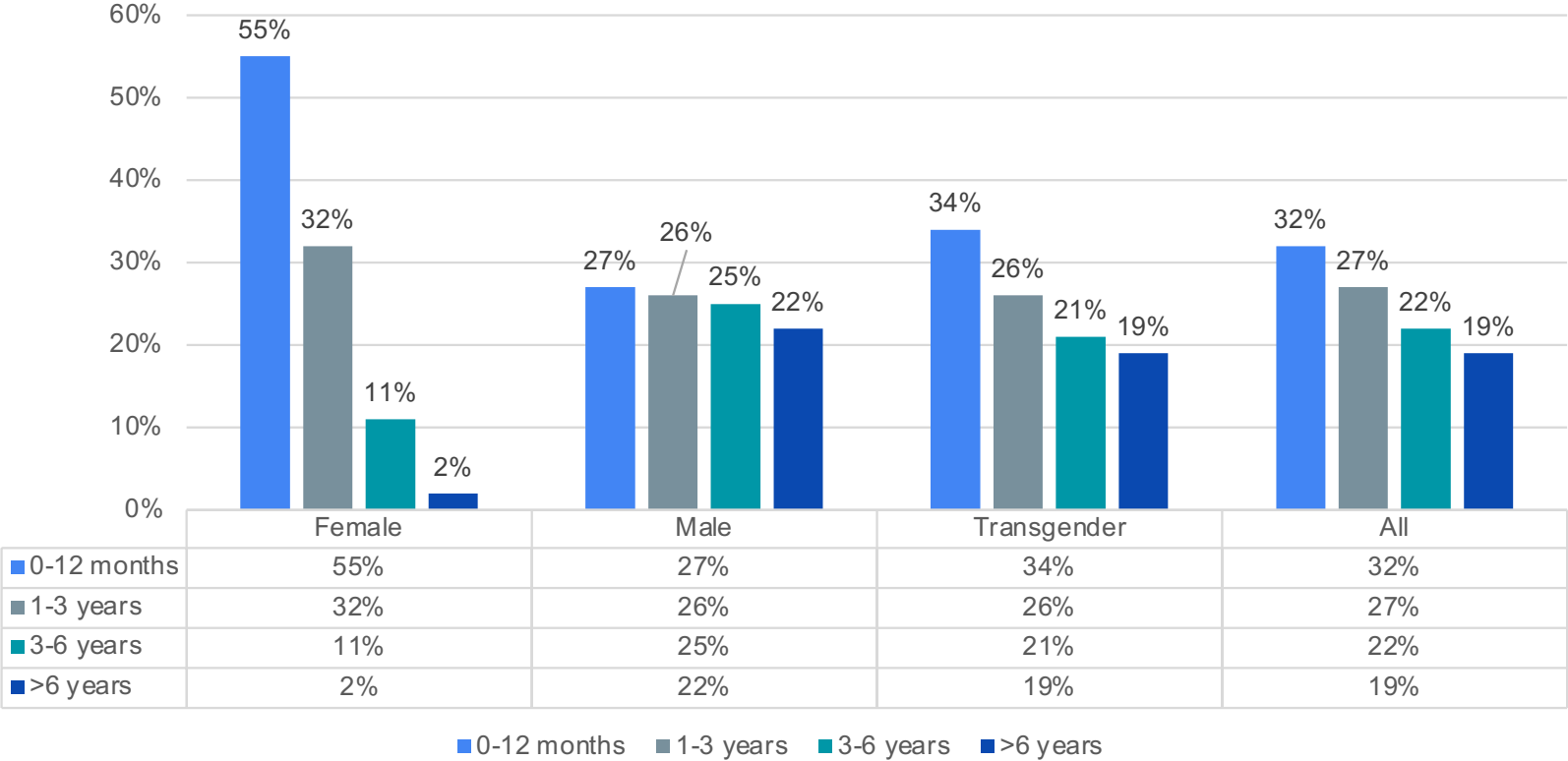


# 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of broadcasters



## 2. Social practices differentiated by gender

Broadcasters' seniority in the platform

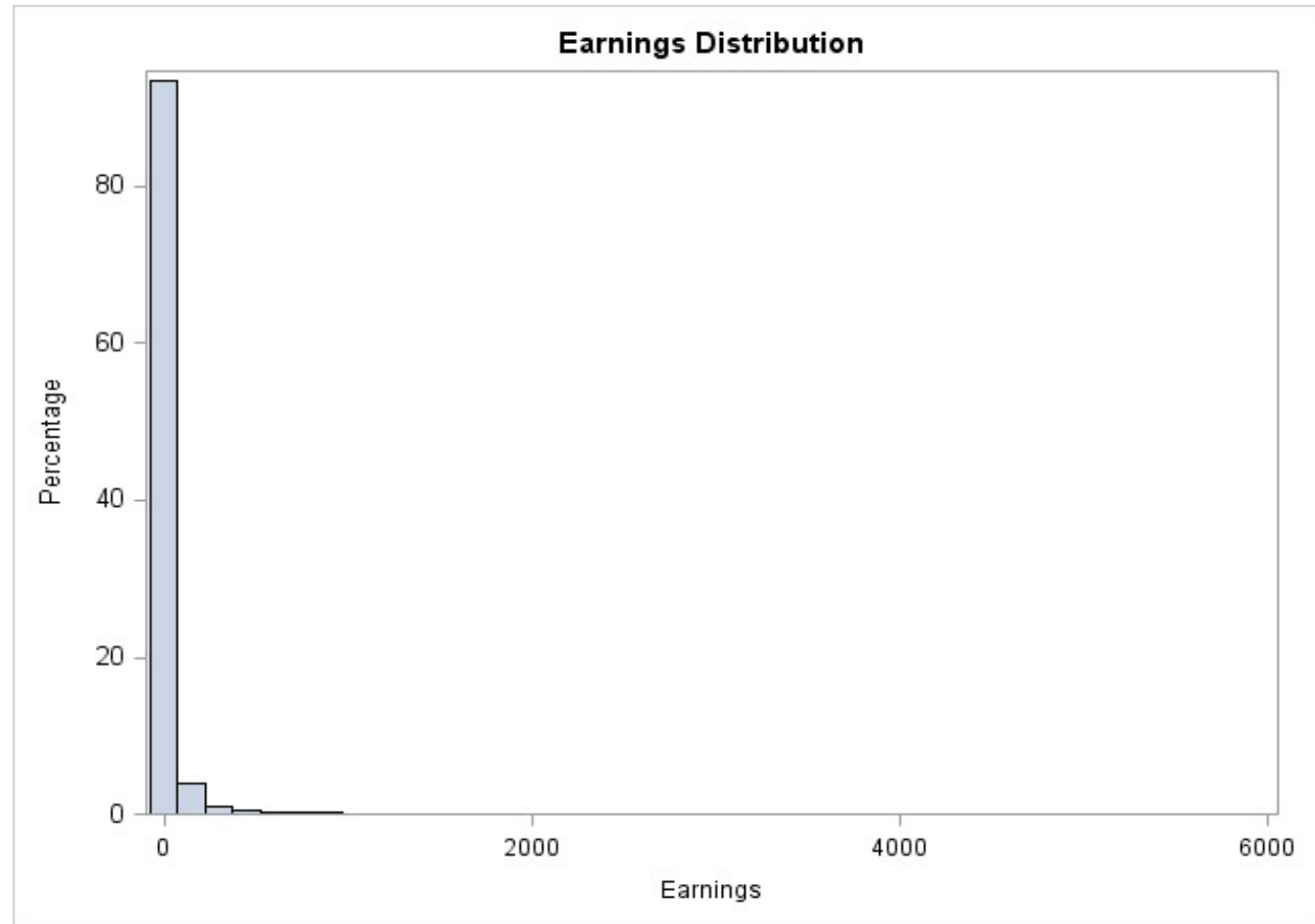


## 2. Social practices differentiated by gender

	Number of shows broadcast during the study period	Duration (minutes)	Set a monetary target for their
Female	<b>8</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>82%</b>
Male	3	54	11%
Transgender	3	71	15%

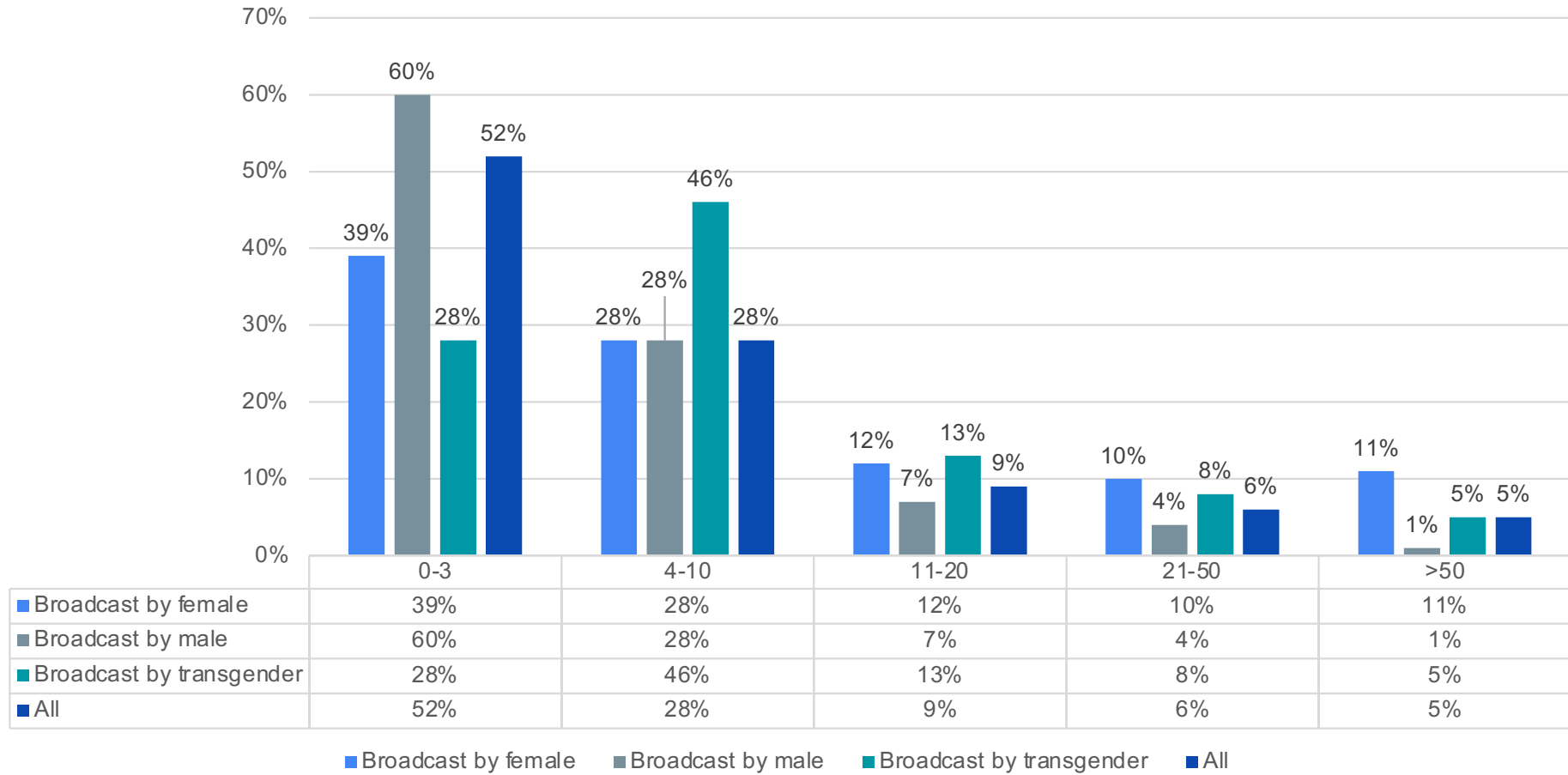
	Have a section 'about me'.	Have a photo on the profile page.	Have a social media link on the profile page.
Female	<b>58%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>20%</b>
Male	27%	37%	4%
Transgender	<b>54%</b>	<b>63%</b>	10%
All	33%	40%	7%

### 3. The success: A significant disparity in terms of audience and earnings



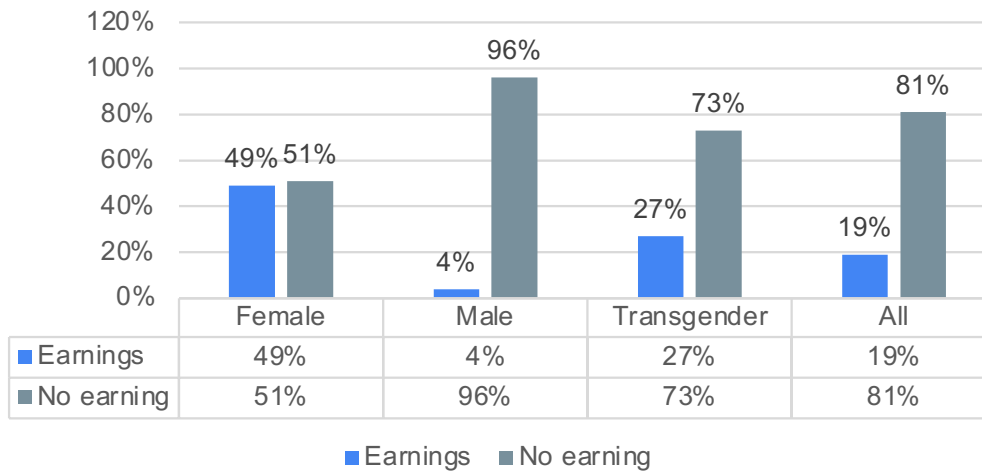
## 4. Gender and age effect on broadcasters' success

Number of viewers per show by gender

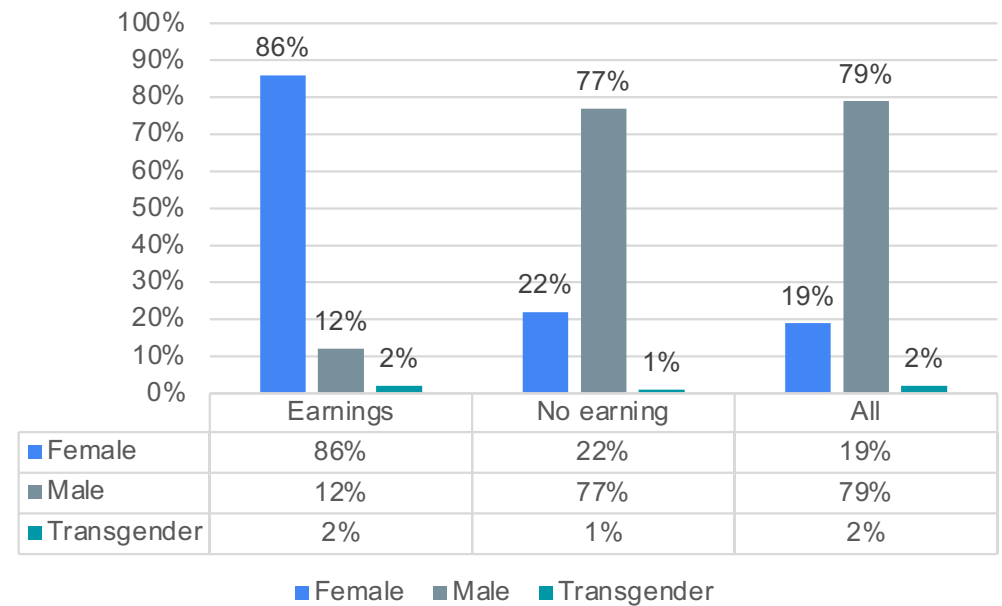


## 4. Gender and age effect on broadcasters' success

Sex cam earnings distribution (1)

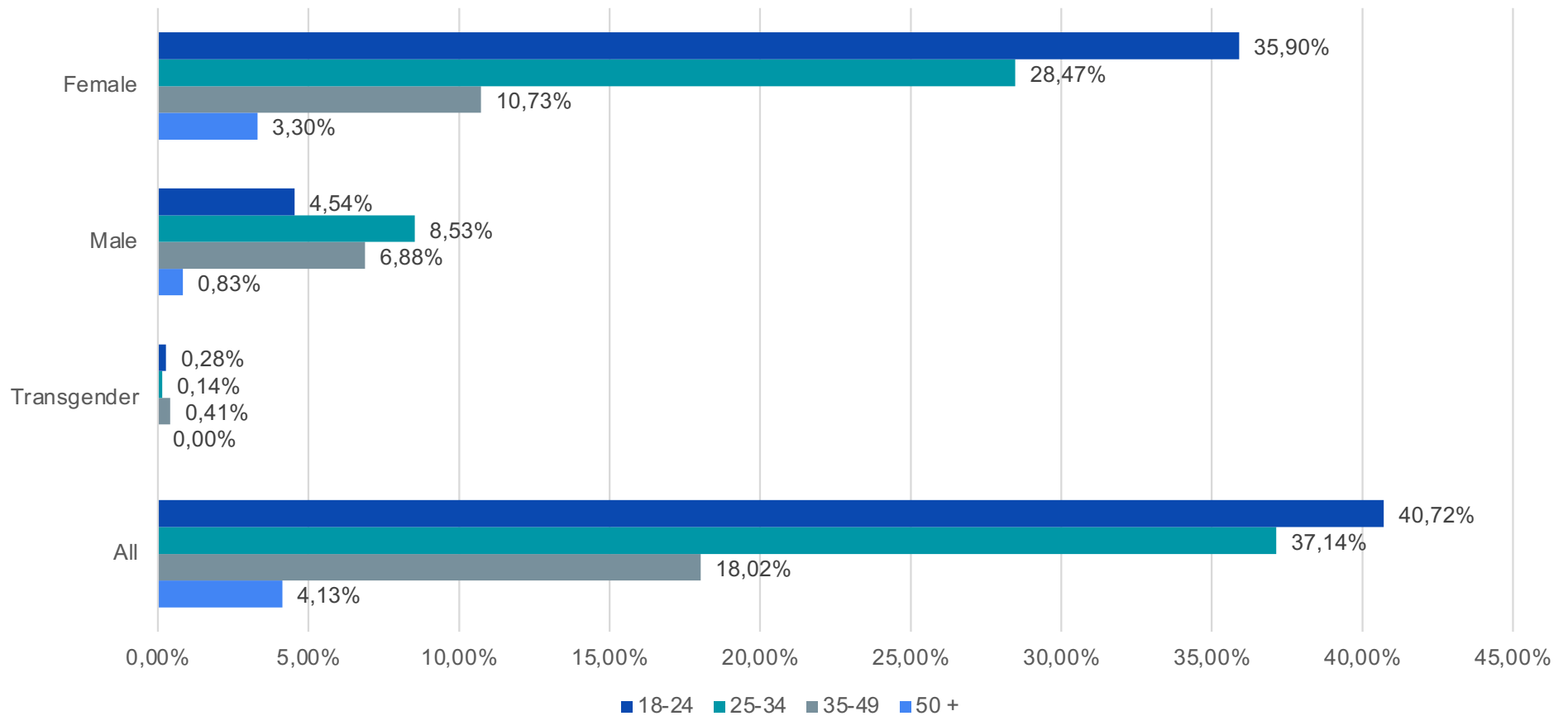


Sex cam earnings distribution (2)

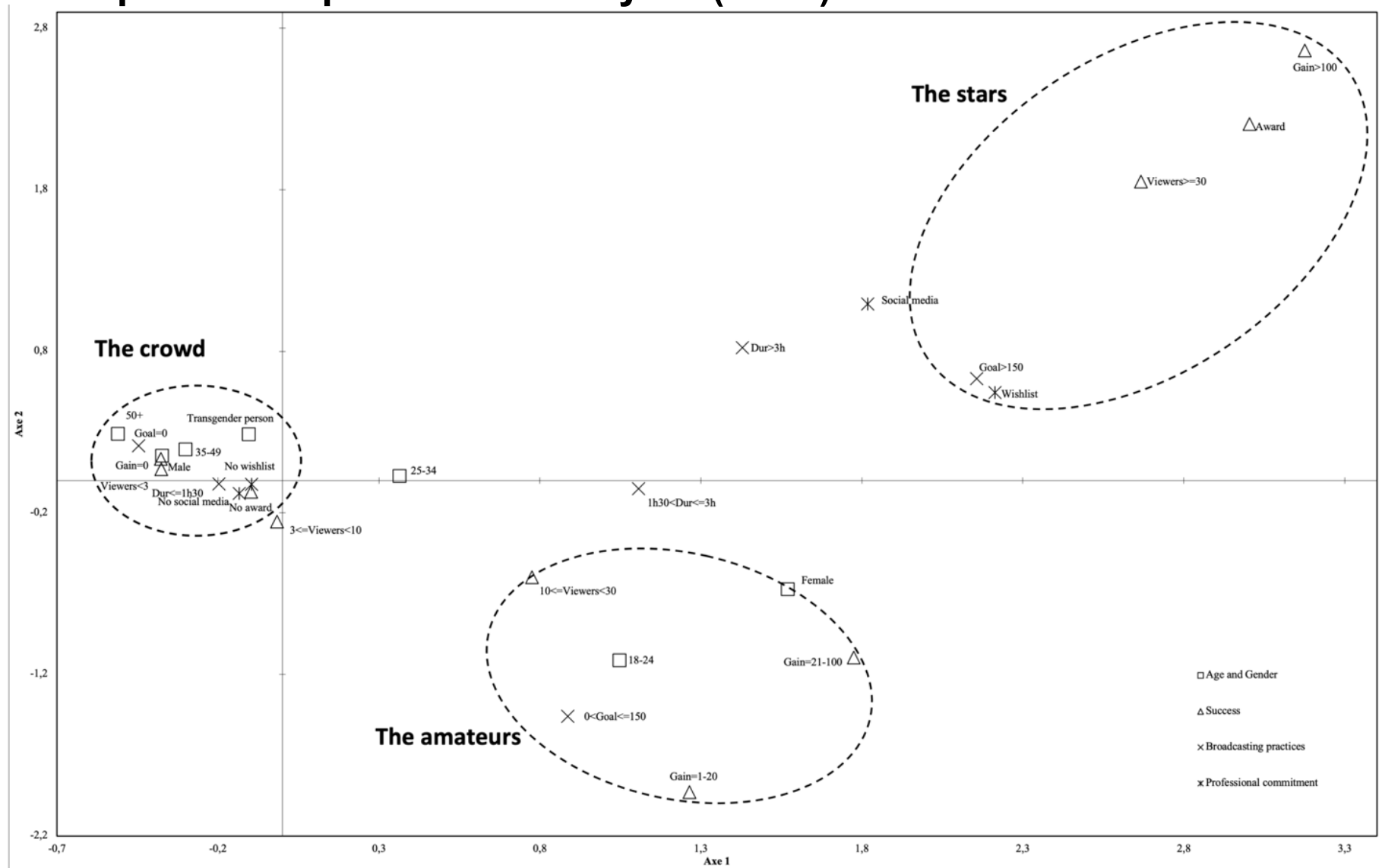


## 4. Gender and age effect on broadcasters' success

Self-reported sex and age distribution of paid broadcasters (n=727)



# 5. Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA)





## 6. Three sex came patterns

		The stars	The amateurs	The crowd	All the broadcasters
Group size		57 (1.3%)	144 (3.4%)	2,262 (52.9%)	4,274 (100%)
Female		<b>83%</b>	66.7%	5%	19%
Male		14.4%	32.6%	<b>94.3%</b>	79.4%
Transgender		3.5%	0.7%	0.7%	1.6%
Age (years)		31.1	<b>30.7</b>	43.1	39.5
Orientation	Female bi	<b>75%</b>	58%	34%	52%
	Female hetero	<b>21%</b>	36%	51%	37%
	Non-declared	<b>4%</b>	6%	15%	11%
	Male bi+gay	<b>75%</b>	59%	40%	46%
	Male hetero	<b>25%</b>	30%	42%	38%
	Non-declared	<b>0%</b>	11%	18%	16%

## 6. Three sex came patterns

	<b>The stars</b>	<b>The amateurs</b>	<b>The crowd</b>	<b>All the broadcasters</b>
Set a monetary target (goal).	100%	100%	7.6%	24.5%
Profile Description	80.7%	66.7%	26.7%	33.5%
Social media	63.2%	18.7%	3%	6.8%
Wishlist	36.8%	15.3%	1.1%	4.1%
Number of shows during the study period	6.9	5.9	3.7	4.3
Broadcasting duration	139 min	88 min	38 min	52 min
Seniority on the platform	25 months	24 months	40 months	36 months

# Discussion

## **First result: plurality of modes of 'presence' on platforms**

- Broadcasting practices (time spent online, frequency of shows), monetary gains, and media success depend mainly on gender. The other variables seem to play a less decisive role.
- Exam is a 'traditional' market and social field:
  - For women, the functions of care (Tronto, 1998), emotional labour (Hochschild, 1979), and sex work for men who pay them for their services (Weitzer, 2009).
  - To the male broadcasters: the privilege of taking purely sexual pleasure with other men or women.
- *Hypothesis*: This gendered division of labour can undoubtedly be related to the sociotechnical devices and algorithms that promote it and the gender of those who manage the platforms.

=> Part of our upcoming survey work

# Discussion

## **Second result: an invitation to think of sexcamming as a social space**

- Webcam platforms are part of a set of social spaces (a less rigid notion than that of the field):
  - The populations studied circulate (the social space of the exhibition, the social space of professional production of pornographic content, the social space of amateur content, etc.).
  - To each social space and to each group of actors that relates to it correspond to specific platforms and media devices, public (Twitter, Snapchat, Tiktok) or not (Snapchat, Skype...), putting in interactions with the actors involved (content producers, spectators, platform managers, etc.).
- It is then a question of identifying and studying them to highlight their overlap and their non-overlap.
- Difficulty = these spaces are dynamic: recompositions are permanent, as shown by the recent development of OnlyFans.

# Discussion

## **Third result: The specificities of platforms promoting sexual content?**

- Do we observe a gendered opposition of practices and motivations that is so structuring?
- Such an approach would also make it possible to question the typology of content producers developed here to see to what extent it could be operational in other platforms.
  - Are there equivalents to exhibitionists, i.e. content producers who escape the platform model?