

Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi  
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# Instant Deliveries and the Paradox of Proximity: Convenience and Sustainability in the Global City

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# Instant deliveries: an established consumer demand

Ten years ago in China

- On-demand B2C delivery in less than two hours after order
- Food, grocery, parcels
- From large cities in the 2010s to all cities and all demographics all over the world today



# A quarter of delivery drivers in London or Paris are not driving a van or a truck anymore



# Delivery motorbikes in New York



Photo: Sophia Lebowitz|A Whizz e-bike among the many mopeds waiting outside of Wegmans in the East Village, Sept 2025

# Instant deliveries: global market and giant companies

- **US:** UberEats, DoorDash, Instacart, Postmates (Uber), GrubHub (Wonder Group Oct 2025)
- **China:** Meituan/Keeta, ele.me
- **Latin America:** Rappi, iFood
- **European brands:** Delivery Hero (owns Talabat), JustEat-Takeaway, Deliveroo (DoorDash now), Glovo (Delivery Hero)
- **Local brands** numerous



# Glovo in Nigeria

Glovo

Enter your address to know what's near you

📍 What's your address?

📍 Use current location

## Top restaurants and more in Nigeria



The Place



Mama Cass Restaurant



Sweet Sensation



Chopnownow



KFC



Fresh Kitchen  
Restaurant



smallChops.ng



Debonairs Pizza

# Meituan

- €40 bil revenue and €4.6 bil profit (2024)
- 10 million delivery drivers (China)
- Meituan/Keeta: Hong Kong 2023, Saudi Arabia 2024, Brazil 2025, UAE 2025
- Agreement with Walmart China
- Price war in 2025 in China



# Flexible job market: supply and demand of workers instantly modified

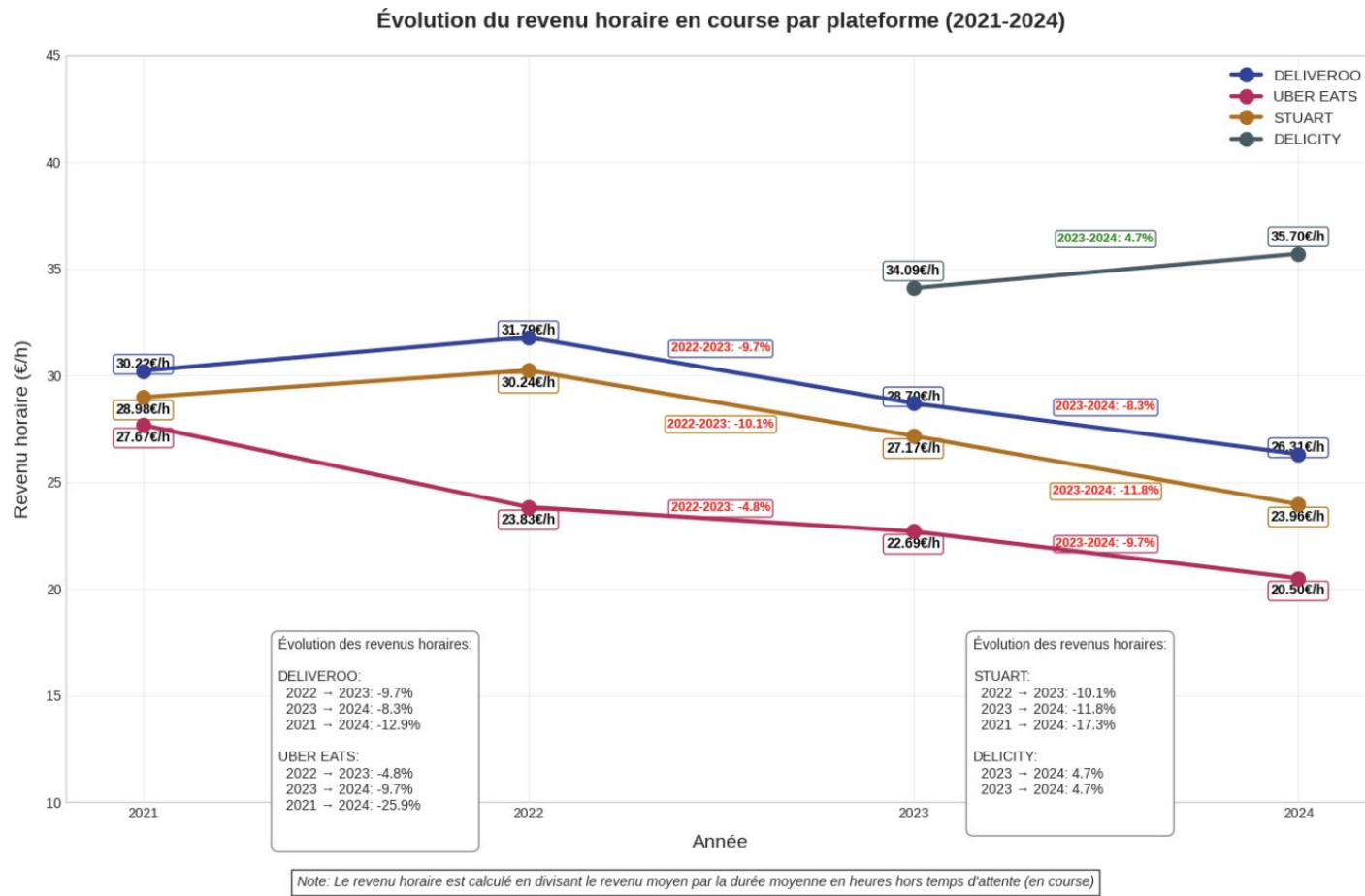
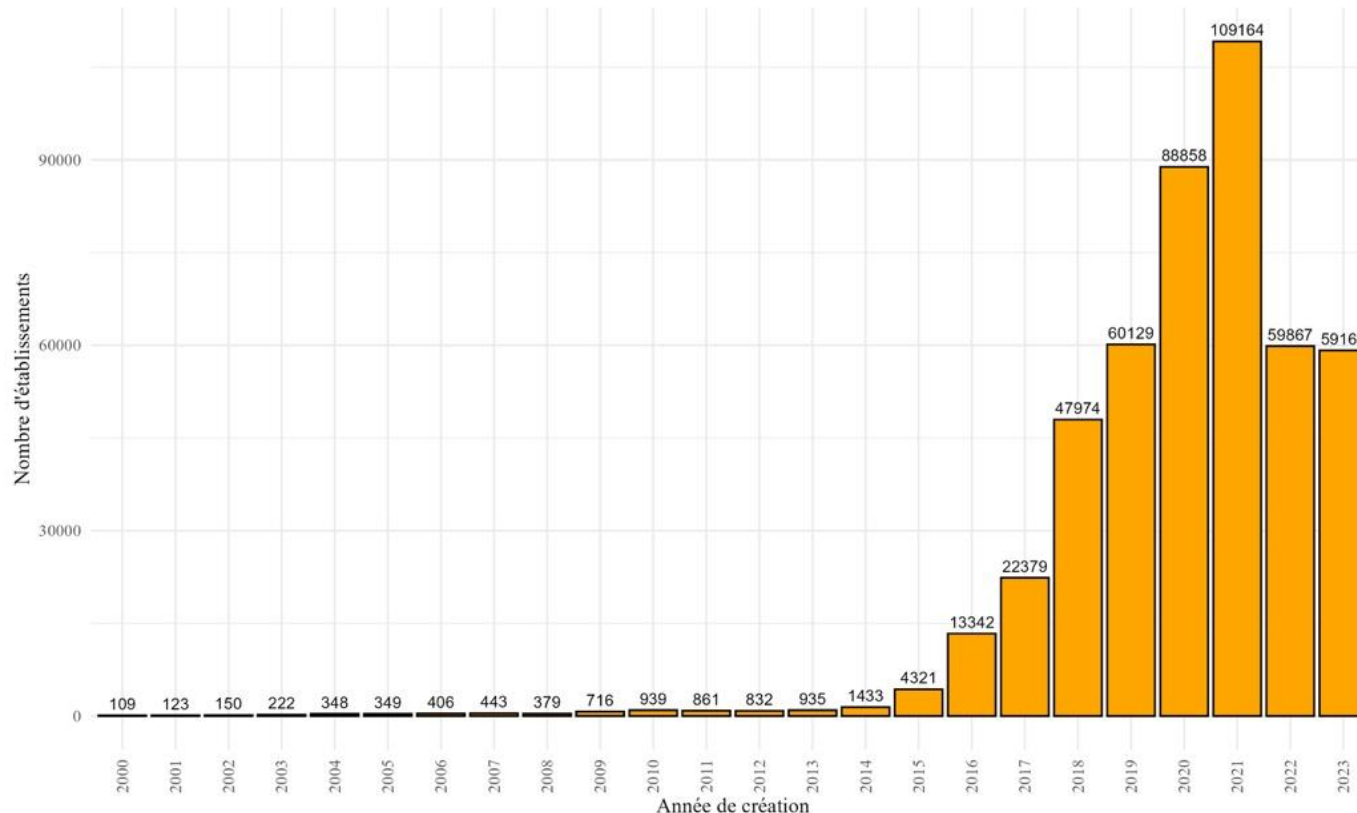


Figure 2 : Évolution du revenu horaire en course - hors temps d'attente (2021-2024)

- Decreasing revenues over the years in Europe
- Today's gigs in Paris: 1 euro per km

# New jobs

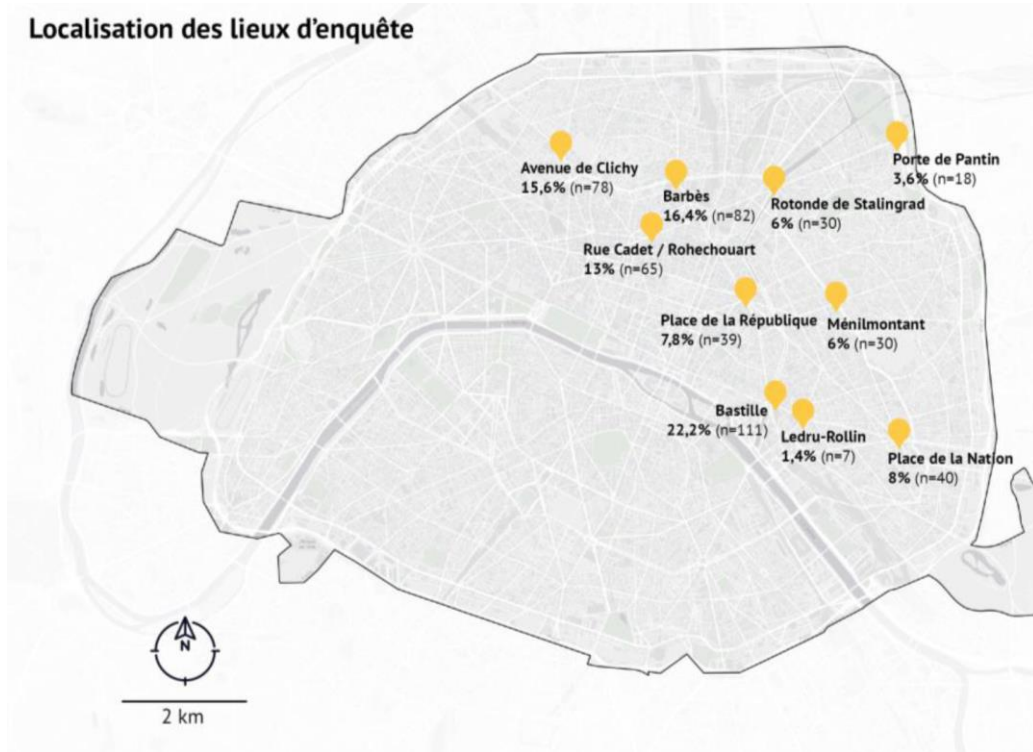
- 80,000 full time equivalent in France including half in Paris
- In most countries owner-operators (free-lance)



Instant delivery owner-operating companies created in Paris 2011-2023

# Paris face-to-face surveys of instant delivery workers 2016 to 2025

Localisation des lieux d'enquête



1. Individual characteristics
2. Modes of delivery and operational data
3. Subjective feedbacks on the job

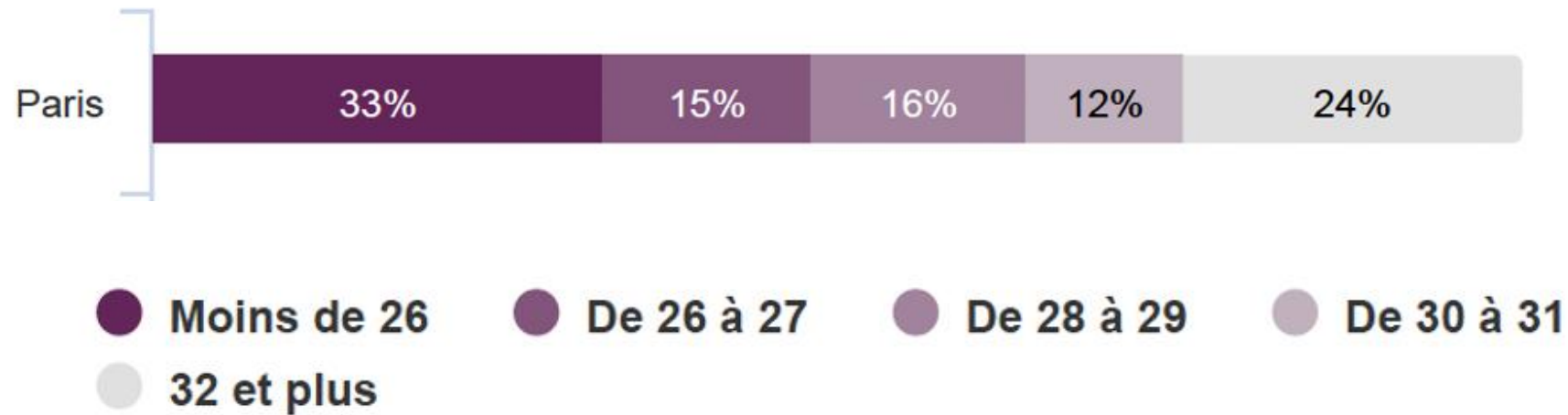
# Nationalities are diversifying

Nationalities, Paris, 2025: Ivory Coast, Senegal, Bangladesh

Q1_ _VILLE	AUTRE	ALGÉRIENNE	BENGLADESH	CONGOLAISE	GUINÉENNE	IVOIRIENNE	MALIENNE	MAROCAINE	SÉNÉGALAISE	TUNISIENNE	TOTAL
Paris	43	44	65	16	34	104	61	32	75	29	503
Lyon	76	196	6	31	19	22	22	47	27	56	502
TOTAL	119	240	71	47	53	126	83	79	102	85	1 005

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# Not so young: average age 28

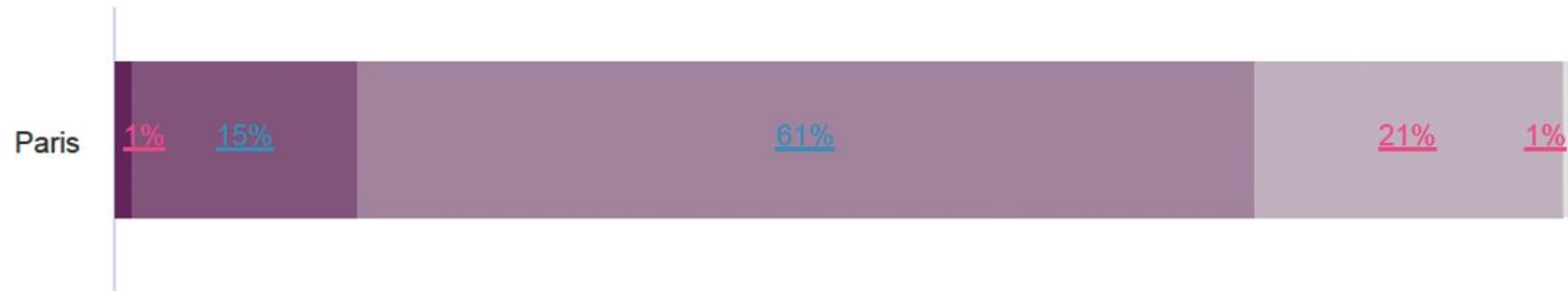


42% have high school education or above

18 deliveries per day

49 km per day

61% earn 1000 to 1500 euros per month



Pourcentage

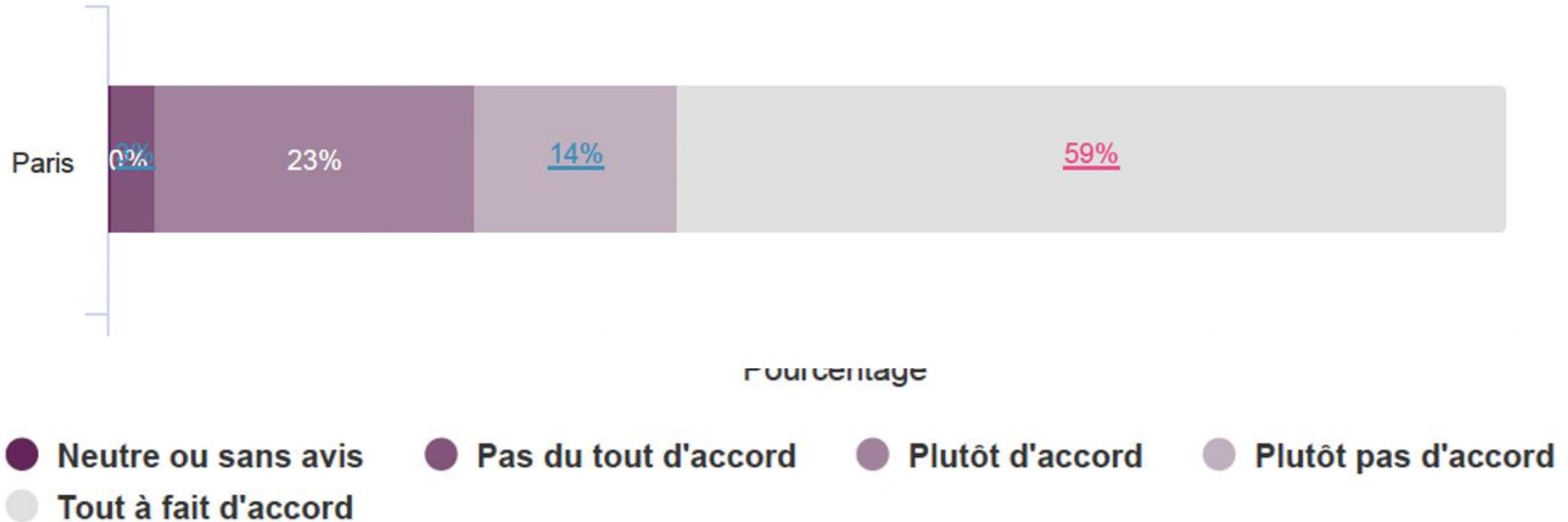
- Moins de 500€ par mois
- Entre 500 et 1 000€ par mois
- Entre 1 000 et 1 500€ par mois
- Entre 1 500 et 2 000€ par mois
- Ne sait pas/Ne se prononce pas

# Problem #1 in 2025: risk of theft

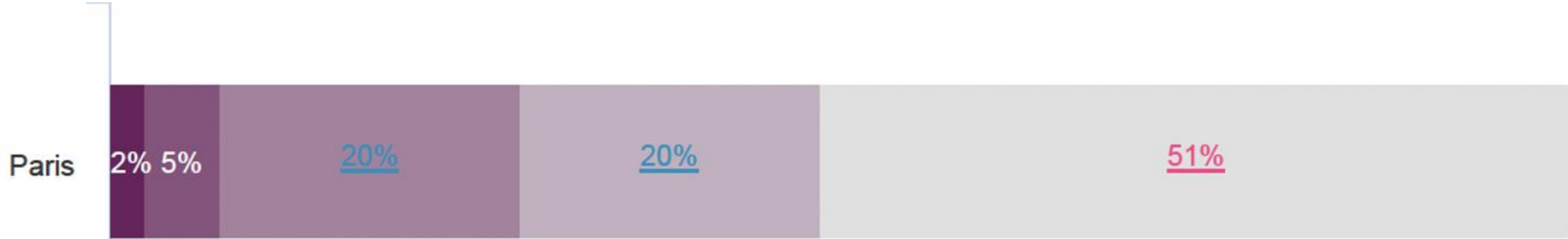


- Neutre ou sans avis
- Pas du tout d'accord
- Plutôt d'accord
- Plutôt pas d'accord
- Tout à fait d'accord

# Problem #2 in 2025: risk of accidents

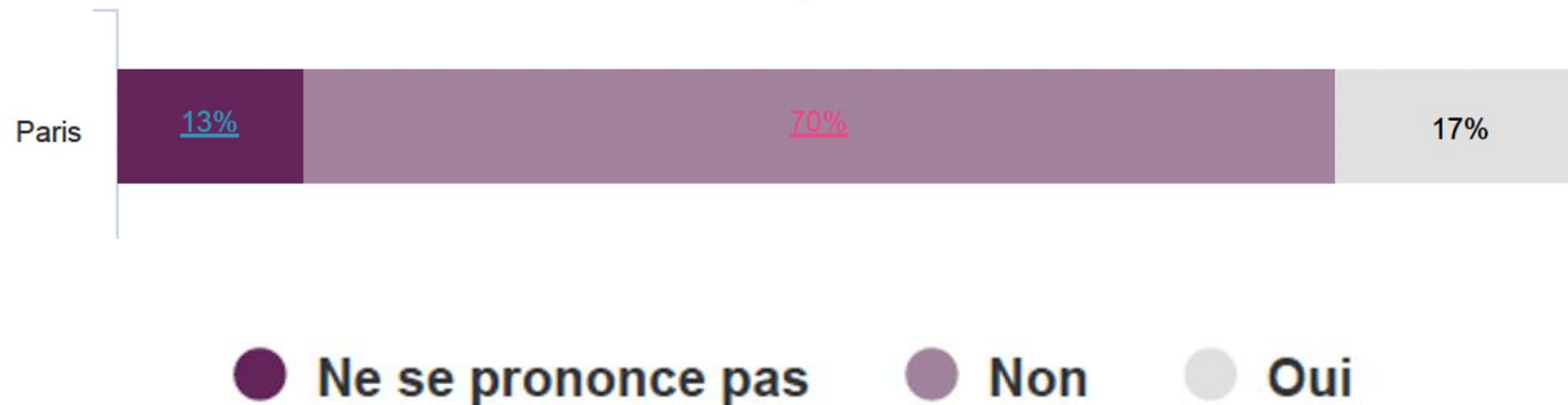


# Problem #3 in 2025: too many delivery drivers



- Neutre ou sans avis
- Pas du tout d'accord
- Plutôt d'accord
- Plutôt pas d'accord
- Tout à fait d'accord

# A huge number of serious road accidents: 17% of drivers had one in last 12 months

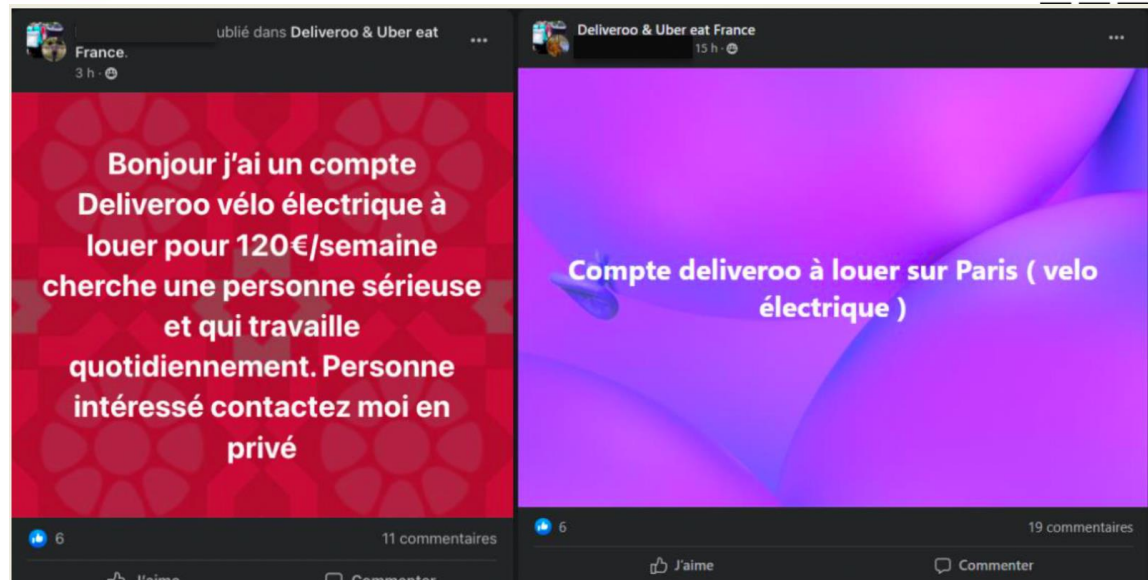


(“Au cours des **12 derniers mois**, avez-vous subi un accident de la route dans le cadre de votre activité de livreur, avec ou sans tiers (chutes comprises) vous ayant occasionné une ou des blessures ?”)

# Illegally using someone else's account: 74% (Paris, 2025)



- Under aged
- Undocumented
- Don't want to wait in line



# Bicycle use (versus mopeds, cars): a comeback

But all electric now!

**2016**  
87%

**2018**  
65%

**2020**  
60%

**2022**  
47%

**2025**  
80%

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# European directive on platform work (2024)

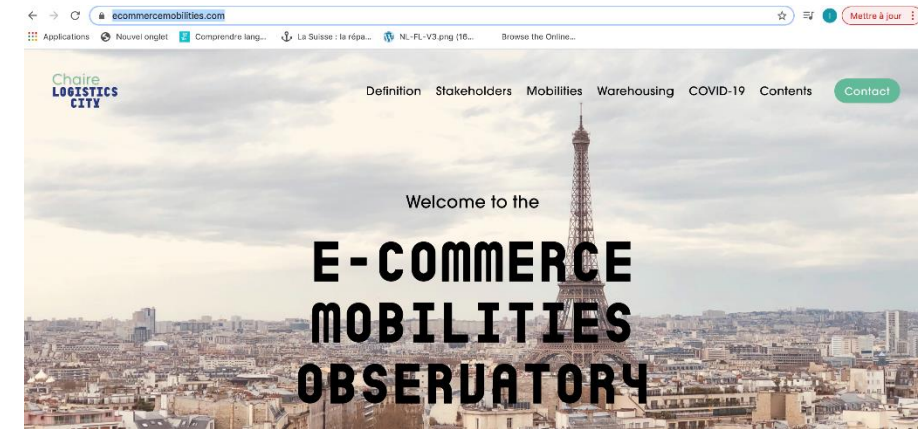
- 'Platform delivery workers are employees unless...'
- Each member State establishes a list of criteria
- Algorithms must be more transparent
- Human interactions compulsory between delivery drivers and platforms

# Conclusion

- Instant deliveries: huge consumer demand, from very large cities to all cities
- Huge number of jobs for low qualification workers
- Issues
  - Accidents
  - Precariousness, working conditions
  - Heterogeneous traffic

# Logistics City Chair, University Gustave Eiffel, France

1. Warehouses, logistics real estate
2. E-commerce logistics
3. Public policies



<https://www.lvmt.fr/chaieres/logistics-city/>

# Ressources

- LOGISTICS CITY CHAIR 2023 Urban and suburban logistics real estate <https://www.lvmt.fr/chaieres/logistics-city>
- Observatory of e-commerce mobilities <https://www.ecommercemobilities.com/>
- Buldeo Rai, H., Kang, S., Sakai, T., Tejada, C., Conway, A., Dablanc, L. (2022) 'Proximity logistics': characterizing the development of logistics facilities in dense, mixed-use urban areas around the world. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*. 166, 41-61.
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- *Urban logistics. Management, policy and innovation in a rapidly changing environment*, 2018 Kogan Page, London (Browne, M., Behrends, S., Woxenius, J., Giuliano, G., Holguin-Veras, J.)
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- Dablanc, L., Schorung, M., de Oliveira, R., Palacios, L., de Oliveira, L., Yaghi, P. (2024) Locational patterns of warehouses in 78 cities around the world, a comparative meta-analysis. Available from: <https://www.lvmt.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Dablanc-Schorung-De-Oliveira-Palacios-Arguello-De-Oliveira-Presentation-synthetique-update-2024.pdf>

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