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From discreet resistances to Yellow Vests protests in platform capitalism? An ethnographic survey among bicycle delivery workers

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ABSTRACT
Based on ethnographic fieldwork with Parisian food delivery riders during 2018–2019, this article describes how these gig economy workers appropriate their own work to collectively resist the more restrictive dimensions of digital application control. These forms of resistance are often expressed as the refusal to 'accept everything'. I show that domination is thus rejected by modelling a sense of labour respectability. These silenced resistances make it possible to recode an otherwise unpleasant job. Furthermore, I highlight how psychotropic substances appear to riders as a means of coping and escaping total capture. In a group composed mostly of men who claim a virile self-image, competition combines with peer solidarity in order to numb suffering while involuntary mystifying exploitation. Finally, I explore resistances against the State and the tax system, by introducing some riders who joined the Yellow Vests movement.

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KEYWORDS Delivery workers; platform capitalism; resistance; algorithm; taxes; Yellow Vests

1. Introduction

This article is based on a sociological investigation of bicycle delivery workers. The literature published on the 'gig economy' or 'platform capitalism' so far has focused on two poles: the total domination of *gig workers* by a process to which they can only consent; or spectacular collective actions[1] by precarious workers who manage to mobilise despite precarious conditions (Collovald & Mathieu, 2009). We know about the controversies, protests and media

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coverage associated with this phenomenon. But we know less about what happens in between, in 'the cold times of routine' (Fillieule quoted in Sainsaulieu & Surdez, 2012, p. 350) where ordinary conflict at work can unfold (Bouffartigue & Giraud, 2019). We know less about the practices of delivery workers who partially subvert the social relationship of domination without necessarily seeking to transform it (Sainsaulieu, 2012), idea that evokes well the concept of infrapolitics (Scott, 1990). While this special issue raises the question of discreet mobilisations of subaltern groups, I propose to study how they happen at work and, more precisely, the workplace of delivery workers, often presented as a collective impossible to organise. Straddling the sociology of work and collective action, my research offers a fresh look at the topic of resistance at work, as well as, at the conditions under which could this practices convert into open protests.

After reviewing the literature and demonstrating the originality of our contribution, I present three forms of discreet mobilisation observed in the field. First, I address the *logics of circumvention* in this type of employment that are deployed despite the digital control of platforms. These are ways of resisting the constraining dimensions of work through infrapolitical practices. These resistances make it possible to 'defeat' the platform by appropriating what is considered fair, i.e. refusing 'the rotten job', resting a bruised body, but also increasing benefits for the worker.

Secondly, I will show that *logics of separation* are also present in the *male entre-soi*. To that end, I will delve into how the virile competition between delivery workers coupled with the consumption of psychotropic drugs can constitute an ambivalent critique of the control that labour has on the worker.

Finally, by highlighting certain elements of bicycle delivery workers relationship to politics, I will shed light on logics *of separation and bypassing* of the State, particularly with regard to the tax administration. These logics are essential for understanding rallies by delivery workers as well as the open protests of the Yellow Vests in France in 2018–2019. I will focus on the conversion of work-based resistance into non-work-based publicity, since these new open resistances are not located at work.

2. Methods and fieldwork

This investigation is based on participant observation, involved in one of the meals-on-wheels platforms, of bicycle delivery workers in the Paris region, between the end of October 2018 and the end of April 2019. With an average of 15 h of observation per week, ethnography enabled accessing unofficial and discrete practices and comparing them with official versions.

A study of work situations should articulate 'how work is imposed on workers and how they actively redefine it' (Avril et al., 2010, p. 18). These situations offer an opportunity to explore the immense political territory that exists between submission and rebellion (Scott, 1990).

In order to trace their social trajectories and discuss their relationship to work, I conducted semi-structured interviews lasting about an hour and a half with eight bicycle delivery workers from different platforms. These workers were met in situ, in one of the waiting areas in the south of Paris. This type of interview allows to capture a diversity of cases and to go beyond the figure of the student athlete who works a few hours a week (especially at weekends) on the platforms, in addition to his or her studies. If we were to identify a few properties that unite the delivery workers surveyed, we could say that they are all men, young, relatively unqualified, mostly from working-class backgrounds and most often living in the suburbs.

Summary table of respondents

	Samir	Wissam	Antoine	Bastien	Benjamin	Mamadou	Dogan	Gabriel
Age	22	19	22	33	20	21	24	25
Nationality	Algerian	French	French	French	French	Algerian	French/ Tunisian	French
Diploma	A levels preparation	A levels and BTEC Higher National Diploma preparation	A levels+BA	Youth training in sales	Without a diploma	Without a diploma	Youth training	A levels
Place of residence	Paris (shared flat)	Suburbs (parental home)	Paris (parental home)	Suburbs (parental home)	Suburbs (home of ex-father-in-law)	Suburbs (shared flat)	Suburbs (parental home)	Suburbs (parental home)
Activity(ies)	Delivery worker and student	Delivery worker and student	Delivery worker and student	Delivery worker	Delivery worker	Delivery worker	Delivery worker	Delivery worker
Platform	Deliveroo	Deliveroo and Uber (previously Stuart)	Deliveroo	Stuart	Stuart	Deliveroo	Stuart	Stuart
Seniority	7 months	2 years	6 months	10 months + 4 months Frichti	4 months + 6 months Frichti	4 months	2 years	3 years
Working hours per week (average)	12h	40h	9h	25h	20h	25h	35h	30h
Monthly income (average)	€300 net	€2600 gross	€500 gross	€400 gross	€700 gross	€900 net	€2,800 gross	€1,400 gross
Career path	Shops, construction sites, servers, etc.	Moonlighting and McDonald's	McDonald's, babysitting, summer camps, hoteliers	McDonald's, temping, Carrefour, handling, etc.	Undeclared work, mechanic, bricklayer, plumber, self-service employee, renovation,	Sales, bricklaying, delivery	Waiter at various restaurants	/

(*Continued*)

Continued.

	Samir	Wissam	Antoine	Bastien	Benjamin	Mamadou	Dogan	Gabriel
					cooker, Frichti, etc.			
Parents' occupation	Father a craftsman and mother a housewife	Father a driver and mother a caregiver	Father a nursing assistant and mother a nurse	Father a pastry chef and mother a bakery saleswoman	Mother employed in social services at the town hall	Father a shopkeeper and mother a housewife	Mother on RSA (former caregiver)	Father a sanitation worker and mother a cleaning lady

2.1. From the sociology of platforms to the analysis of worker resistance

2.1.1. The collaborative economy and platform capitalism

Deliveroo, Stuart, Frichti, UberEats, and Glovo are companies that offer a home delivery service for food prepared by restaurants. The delivery platforms are based on the gig economy model, i.e. the economy of small orders, which falls within the spectrum of the collaborative economy (Ravenelle, 2019). As the delivery workers are registered as self-employed, they escape legal subordination while remaining deprived of the rights associated with salaried employment and assume the economic risk of the activity they carry out.

Sarah Abdelnour and Sophie Bernard define platform capitalism as the unequal sharing of the value created 'between the owners of the algorithms, sites and applications that are the platforms on the one hand and the workers on the other' (2018, p. 2). 'The lean platform economy' is the type of platform that, according to the typology proposed by Srnicek (2017), characterises these delivery companies insofar as they outsource all assets, except software and data analysis, and obtain profits precisely by monopolising intellectual property.

Here we deal with what the sociologist Juliet Schor and her team (2020) call the lower end of the hierarchy of platforms (compared to others, such as Airbnb). In this perspective, Ravenelle (2019) constructs a typology based on the qualification barriers and the capital inversion required to enter the collaborative economy. Home delivery platforms are at the bottom of this typology as they do not require a large capital investment (often all that is needed is a bike, a smartphone and a package), nor do they require any prior qualification.

2.1.2. Delivery workers' relationship to work

The social sciences took an interest in profession of bicycle couriers long before the arrival of digital platforms. Wehr (2009), for example,

proposed an analysis centred on the emotions generated by a risky job: 'the voluntary risk-taking of messengers becomes a means of achieving emotional fulfilment. Furthermore, stylistic expressions pay dividends in cultural scrip rather than money'. Sociologists Kidder (2006, 2009, 2011) and Fincham (2007) ask interesting questions about how a dangerous and poorly paid job can be a source of attachment, but they focus exclusively on a subculture of couriers (lifestyle messengers) defined in terms of style and symbols, a dimension that is absent for delivery people on digital platforms. Their analysis remains posed in terms of culture and socialisation and is limited to an incorporation of the cultural signs and styles of the courier sub-group, thus constructing a fixed and static image of the worker.

In France, research has shown the ambivalence of platform workers' relationship to work, including delivery workers. These analyses trace different profiles and types of social trajectories of workers. They show that economically fragile situations can nevertheless subjectively be considered as a good experience, in particular due to the autonomy acquired, in contrast with previous professional experiences (Jan, 2018). But getting around the constraints of work in a sustainable way depends on the social resources available. There is a high price to pay for remaining in delivery platforms: very long working hours, high demands on the body, atypical working hours, discontinuity of income, loss of social benefits, incorporation of a norm of total availability, etc. Fabien Lemozy's work (2019) sought to understand the production of consent within platforms: delivery workers consent to logics of self-exploitation reminiscent of post-Taylorian forms of exploitation of subjectivity (Linhart, 2015). Lebas (2019) shows an increasingly critical relationship between delivery workers and platforms, which are seen as exploiters that do not recognise their work.

2.1.3. What resistance?

Woodcock (2021) has taken a great interest in collective resistance in the delivery sector, where there is no physical workplace, shifting hours and a predominantly migrant workforce on the fringes of trade union and political representation. The British sociologist is therefore part of a tradition that analyses the obstacles and possibilities of collective action in precarious workplaces. His research is based on the close investigation of the protest movements of delivery workers against Deliveroo in London, observing the formation of alternative subjectivities and how the organisation of gig workers becomes possible. Woodcock's work offers

interesting tools for understanding and learning from the new managerial and technological methods of control and surveillance (monitoring, tracking, statistics, evaluation, algorithms, etc.) in a digital sector that relies on the outsourcing of the workforce (Woodcock, 2020).

While there have been a few contributions on appropriation and discreet mobilisation in bicycle delivery or within platforms, these contributions remain rare and mainly focused on the relationship with algorithms: how to understand them and how to divert them. Here the concept of infrapolitics (Scott, 1990) seems appropriate to define those forms of underground resistance which, in an unequal balance of power, limit the appropriation of work without seeking to overthrow power (the platforms). However, talking about infrapolitics cannot lead us to over-interpret every act as political or as conscious choices since they may also respond to other sociological logics specific to the group and since power relations also produce forms of habituation to domination.

Research has shown (at Upwork, Uber or Deliveroo) that workers' infrapolitics involves an accumulation of knowledge about the algorithm that becomes usable in their favour (Bronowicka & Ivanova, 2020; Jarrahi & Sutherland, 2019). The logics of circumvention described are often linked to exchanges of platform accounts or schedules or other practical information revealed in online forums or by messaging (Rosenbalt & Stalk, 2016; Lebas, 2019). My ethnographic survey, with the immersion of the sociologist into groups of delivery workers, enables deepening our knowledge of these logics of circumvention by grasping what is rarely mentioned during interviews.

3. Resistance and tactics to circumvent algorithmic management

I will first show the type of atomising digital governance the delivery workers are facing and how they nevertheless manage to build small work collectives, turn the algorithm to their advantage and put aside what they consider their unrewarding job.

3.1. The algorithmic panopticon

As mentioned, recent sociological studies on bicycle delivery workers have pointed to the system of control, the incentive to speed up and the strong individualisation of the work to which they are subjected.

The work of delivery workers is not controlled by the presence of a boss or a foreman, but at a distance via new information and communication technologies which give an innovative character to the forms of supervision and intensification of work (Baudelot & Gollac, 2003; Gaborieau, 2012). Couriers face algorithmic management using an 'algorithmic panopticon', according to the expression coined by Pasquinelli (2015) and later used by Woodcock (2020) to analyse how delivery workers internalise the managerial pressures of platforms. These pressures are manifested in the real-time monitoring of work (through geolocation), monitoring satisfaction rates and statistical evaluation of delivery workers.[2] The internalisation of the constraint by the algorithm strongly reduces costs and reduces the need for a physical supervisor.

These working conditions undoubtedly complicate the construction of work collectives (Linhart, 2015), of a group identity and consequently of forms of subversion. Indeed, one might think that with the absence of a common workplace, with everyone logging in at different times and places, the workforce would be totally atomised. In a similar way as in some precarious service jobs, our fieldwork demonstrates that building strong social links appears to be a difficult task in an environment where *turnover* (*exit*) is so frequent. Thus, for example, Bastien, 33-year-old delivery worker from the suburbs who has done a lot of odd job, considers that the absence of a common physical space makes it extremely difficult to maintain close relationships: 'given that we are not in fixed places, it is obviously less easy to meet and talk to people'. The self-accelerating practices[3] (Lemozy, 2019) to which they are led are, according to Mamadou, an obstacle to building relationships at work: 'when we work we have to do a lot of orders to earn a lot of money, so we don't have much time to talk, so "hi, hi, it's okay"'. Gabriel, another delivery driver, describes an atmosphere based on competitive relationships: 'we are not really colleagues, the platform puts us in competition in a way'.

3.2. (Re)creating a work group

In practice, the *self-help* logic of self-entrepreneurship, which accompanies the gig economy, translates into a mandate to 'become self-employed in order to solve one's own difficulties of access to employment and sufficient income' (Abdelnour, 2017). Delivery workers are left to their

own devices and to compete for time slots or errands, while relationships with customers or restaurant owners are naturally episodic and ephemeral.

Nevertheless, I was able to identify that even in this type of profession where the conditions of employment are not conducive to the creation of social ties, work collectives or simply the sharing of experiences (Graham & Woodcock, 2018), some informal collectives are nonetheless created. Faced with the atomisation of the platforms' employment conditions, delivery workers propose to inject some sociability despite a context that is *a priori* unfavourable. These collectives are formed around the restaurants that have the highest volume of orders. They thus allow the recomposition of spaces of sociability that give rise to a virile masculine camaraderie:

> When someone arrives they greet each other, they give each other fist bumps, they sometimes give each other affectionate pats showing that they feel like colleagues after all. It's a time invested in drinking coffee, smoking a cigarette or a joint, making jokes, comparing each other's bikes, seeing which one is the fastest, discussing good ordering areas, restaurants that keep people waiting, annoying customers, making fun of the one who is still waiting and hasn't made a high volume of orders, and showing up if one doesn't stop having errands and making money.
> (Field journal, January 2019).

This atmosphere, although sometimes ephemeral, is valued positively by delivery workers like Benjamin: 'there is a good atmosphere eh. That's what's cool. We say hello to each other, we go and talk a bit, that's what's good, we bump into each other … '. Antoine thinks that there is also a pleasant atmosphere but he feels more united and inclined to talk with the delivery workers who ride their bikes:

> If it's a bike, I'm always going to talk to the bikes because I'm a bike, I feel closer to them, we have the same problems and everything. I respect less the scooters (laughs) because they stay seated on their scooters, while we are struggling.

Dogan, with the Stuart platform, had initially found a place to go in the south of Paris and to meet frequently with the same delivery people:

> In general, when you go to a place like the KFC, the guys are often together, here a little less because there is the work and it's less busy, but at the time there were sometimes 7–10 Stuarts inside. So it's quite a Stuart community, from the start there was a good atmosphere.

Despite the fact that they have a globally positive view of work, particularly due to the autonomy they feel, they are not without weapons for

criticising platforms. These informal groups give them the opportunity to make hidden transcripts explicit (Scott, 1990). They thus make certain criticisms about the distance of the runs or the poor functioning of the application, but also about the unequal relationship maintained by the platforms through changes in the mode of remuneration of self-employed workers. Gabriel complained about it between two races:

> At first, I thought that auto-entrepreneurship and all that was the future but it's not. It's a big scam. They can change everything as they want. That means, today you can get paid €10 an hour and tomorrow you can get paid 2€. Today you can be paid 2€ an hour and tomorrow you can be out of work. They have all the power over you.

3.3. Cheating the platform and refusing the rotten job

'Agency' is defined by E.P. Thompson as the ability of subjects 'to overcome the limitations imposed by "circumstances"' (1959, p. 89). The ethnography of the delivery work situations reveals discreet mobilisations that activate this *agency* while putting forward a logic of circumvention that certainly renounces direct confrontation with the platforms, considered too powerful. The fact of not having the boss on one's back, a consubstantial element of management by algorithm, not only leads to a subjective feeling of autonomy, it proves to be constitutive of these resistances. The delivery personnel translate individual hypotheses about the algorithm into collective theories (Bronowicka & Ivanova, 2020), but they do so within affinity groups welded together by professional sociability in a protective logic, according to the idea that if this knowledge is shared by everyone, it would become useless.

The modes of work appropriation observed among delivery workers help us understand a relation with work formed on an informal, counter-intuitive experience. For example, they very often use undeclared vehicles such as motorbikes,[4] electric velo-bikes and sometimes scooters. It is common to hear delivery workers share with others which vehicles are best in terms of speed, economy, and also fatigue reduction. There is also frequently a circumvention of the rules on the hiring of foreignworkers[5] that does not necessarily involve the *sweating system*, i.e. a cascade of subcontracting. Thus, Samir and Mamadou, both undocumented migrants, work with the account of a third party. Samir works with the account of a friend of his cousin to whom he transfers 20% of his earnings (which is almost equivalent to the contributions to be paid for the provision of commercial or artisanal services). Mamadou admits that he

works with the account of his cousin, who is French. In return 'he takes 25% for taxes'. As in the case studied by Hugues in this dossier, illegality appears to be a form of non-frontal popular mobilisation, circumventing the obstacles of access to formal work.

One way to reduce waiting or uncertainty is to work for at least two platforms. As Wissam, who is registered with Deliveroo and Uber, explains:

> With Deliveroo the negative point is that you can't connect whenever you want. Then there's a negative point that's coming, which is that they're lowering the prices, but that's fine … After all, we do everything. All my friends, we all do at least two applications.

Seeing delivery workers on the street with a Deliveroo bag, for example, does not imply that the driver is necessarily working with that platform (as required by it). Working for different platforms makes it possible to cope with a drop in work at one of them, or to refuse less profitable runs and protect oneself from the risk of dismissal. This accumulation informally allows one to free oneself from excessive dependence on the exclusivity requirement of certain platforms, as analysed by Caveng (2014) in the case of temporary survey workers or Brugière (2019) in the case of Uber drivers.

The desire to maximise income coexists with the resistance that constitutes the group's social relations. The subterranean resistances noted by Jounin (2009), such as absence, absconding or lateness, among construction workers often seem ill-suited to this work context, which requires availability and pays by the job. In the informal space of observation, however, delivery workers manage to help each other by mobilising 'tricks' to pay less contributions, or by informing each other of the areas where 'it rings most' at lunchtime or in the evening, in search of techniques to avoid the total control of the platform and to be able to rest.

Wissam, a delivery worker for more than two years, is thus integrated into a group of delivery worker friends with whom he often meets at the KFC. This group of males, like the 'factory culture' (Beaud & Pialoux, 1999), plays the role of a collective mode of appropriation of work, enabling it to be 'shaped' and its more restrictive dimension to be circumvented. This shows that actors are not passive in the face of the black box (Scholz, 2015) of an algorithm often perceived as arbitrary (Griesbach et al., 2019).

Wissam explained to me that discussions with the group allowed him to benefit from the accumulation of social capital in the workplace.

Following a prior exploration of how the algorithm works, of *sensemaking* practices (Jarrahi & Sutherland, 2019), with his colleagues, they learned a strategy for manipulating it, 'controlling' the runs and thus reducing uncertainty:

> Here we are able to manage runs. We manage our stuff very well. Sometimes we manage … There was a period when it rained a lot, we came, we put ourselves in a dead end, under a porch, we smoked [pot] and talked. That's how we came up with the idea, by talking a lot.

This system, which reveals the acquisition of 'algorithmic skills' (Jarrahi & Sutherland, 2019), was explained to me a month before by Wissam, when we both found ourselves in between two runs, while seeking to retain this knowledge in a small and selective circle:

> Wissam: 'If I tell you something, you won't tell anyone, will you?'
> Me: 'Yes, don't worry, what is it? A secret? (laughs)'.
> W: 'No' (laughs as he finishes rolling his joint).
> Me: 'A tip?'
> W: 'Yeah, that's it'.
>
> The idea is that if you stand behind the KFC (in the cul-de-sac) a delivery worker will ring first for a KFC order because they are right next to the order shelf. 'There are just four of us who know, well now five (laughs)'. This strategy is a good way to get one last order in for the night before going home and a way to reach the bonus. Wissam explained to me how he and some of his Deliveroo friends had a strategy for chaining orders together: there was one who didn't want to work and would stay there when the one(s) who was working delivered. So the one who wasn't working would accept the KFC order (knowing that he was the first to ring the bell) when the other one came back. Once he got there, the first one would ask to have the order unassigned and automatically the first one to get it would be his friend (located closest to the shelf).
> (Excerpt from field diary, December 2018 at KFC dead end).

If these strategies can be analysed as simple tactics to intensify activity (Lemozy, 2019, p. 4), they can also be understood as ways of not accepting 'everything' and not letting themselves be dominated without resistance. These tactics play an ambiguous role for actors. They are at the same time a way to maximise profit (or minimise exploitation), to increase autonomy and to challenge the platform's domination. According to Willis (1981), one of the features of working class culture is that, despite domination at work, its members seek signifiers and, by reframing the imposed signifiers, impose their own. He adds that members of the working classes 'carry out their activities and try to enjoy them, even when they are essentially controlled by others'. Like the domestic help

personnel studied by Christelle Avril, delivery workers may also have a relationship to work that is defined by a 'refusal to submit to the work situation without resistance, reflected in a desire to control the work process' (2012, p. 93). If this resistance does not take on a public, overtly antagonistic dimension, it is nevertheless a manifestation of a deliberately discreet tactic. These forms of muted resistance reduce (over)work and oppose it with a working dignity. This tactical choice results from the awareness of a balance of power that is completely unfavourable to the delivery workers, as expressed by Wissam:

> If they try to turn it upside down you can't do anything. You know, they're pulling the wool over our eyes! We were paid €5.75 a ride and now it's by distance and you can go down to €4.80 and we can't do anything.

Wissam further explains how, by talking with friends, he developed a skill for deceiving geolocation, and thus avoids submission to the risks of the 'platform market':

> In fact, you have to be very quick, like when you get your errand, you cut your location and you activate it immediately and for three seconds you see where you are going. Because when you relocate, the system locates you everywhere and you can see with Stuart when you are next to the restaurant. You can see where you're going and then when you relocate, it makes a circle, because by the time the phone understands where you really are … In fact, your phone thinks you're next to the restaurant because you're all over Paris … And when there's an errand that's too long, well …

The Deliveroo drivers interviewed have also found a way to avoid the statistical penalty when they do not go/will not work at the time they booked the slots, similar to Uber drivers who seek to avoid the drop in their acceptance rate (Lee Min et al., 2015). These delivery workers show that they can 'game the system' (Bronowicka & Ivanova, 2020) by logging into the tuned zone and then returning home without accepting orders, knowing that once home they are away from the 'zone' in which most orders are assigned. As Antoine explains: 'If it's within 24 hours what I do is I activate the application and then I stay at home and refuse the orders. Go to the zone and go home'.

Saving face or increasing income is not the only motivations. The delivery worker's body is sometimes put to a severe test. There are strategies that reveal a political rationality defending interests in the broadest sense: refusing orders or choosing to take a shorter order is also a way of resting the body, of countering the injunction to speed up, of interrupting the vicious circle of speed and endurance, by restoring a certain control over the

rhythm of work. Sometimes they refuse distant orders because they are 'lazy', or because it is just 'undignified' to deliver so far away (sometimes outside the delivery zones). This can be understood as an ability to modulate 'the rotten job'. In a quest for respectability of work it is recurrent to hear 'they are crazy', when they receive an order from far away, and/or 'that's a pak pak[6] order'. This refusal motivated by physical and moral considerations (because 'it's unworthy') is expressed by Samir and Mamadou:

> When it's far away, knowing that I'm working with a bike, I cancel for distance reasons. On Deliveroo you can do that. There are orders that we can't accept. If a restaurant takes 15 minutes, I also cancel.

> When there are long-distance orders, I cancel them because you lose a lot of time. Because it's better to do two orders that are close than to do one order that is very far away.

4. Building a defensive self: 'Having a point'

In this section, I would like to show how delivery workers construct a symbolic material space of autonomy through a masculine *entre-soi* that enables them to cope with boredom or drudgery. Through psychotropic drugs and virile competitions, delivery workers engage in forms of resistance to work that also can, in some cases, mystify their exploitation.

4.1 A joint to join up

This strategy of separation and reparation serves to make the work experience different from what the hierarchy requires, injecting a different meaning into a potentially alienating situation.

> After doing three errands, around 8:30 pm I head for the dead end where I often find the delivery workers waiting for orders or taking a break. There is Wissam, Sid and another one I don't know. They make fun of a sign they've put up in the dead end where it says that peeing is forbidden under penalty of a fine. Wissam laughs and says 'but this is our place! (laughs)'. They pass a joint. After pulling on a joint, Sid says: 'Finally, a bit of calm, it feels good, I've been waiting for hours.' Wissam looks at me and answers: 'What? You've been going since this afternoon without anything?'
> (Extract from field diary, March 2019).

If the use of alcohol between bike messengers has been reported by other investigations (Fincham, 2007), here it is common to see delivery workers waiting in front of restaurants smoking cannabis. This use of cannabis highlights the often blurred boundaries between resisting and simply

keeping busy, and thus a use of infrapolitics that would consider the dominated always in a reactive position. We think, as Sébastien Chauvin (2010, p. 194) mentions in the way that Marx (1976) thought about religion, that psychotropic drugs here have an escapist and political function at work. They constitute both a way of escaping and countering the psychic and physical hold of work. These practices are integrated into 'individual or collective defence strategies' against suffering (Dejours, 1998).[7] Bodies are enrolled but not without resistance.

When you're a delivery worker and you find yourself alone, smoking or listening to music become ways of fighting an overwhelming sense of loneliness and meaninglessness, of keeping up with work by making time 'pass' more quickly.

Moreover, smoking and 'sharing joints with colleagues' in the trade has also become a way of recomposing, maintaining and strengthening group cohesion. It is an important ritual for socio-professional integration within a group and a way of coping with constraints and hardship together. If there are profiles that were already using cannabis before joining the platforms, the employment conditions of these platforms seem to invite them to reinforce or start using it:

> I started to smoke, and the world changed completely for me. I realised that there were a lot of people smoking, whereas when I wasn't smoking I didn't see that. (…) Since we met the mates, in fact, whenever we don't have an errand to run, we instinctively head here. What can I say? It's good to have a point where you have mates because if you don't have a spot and don't have an order, even if you receive an order notification during the minutes when you don't have an order, you don't do anything. Whereas now, during the three minutes I don't have an order, I'm coming back and when I come back I get a notification for an order, maybe, but I always know that I have to come back here. By doing this, I feel less lonely.

The social use of cannabis is not embedded in the personality or in the customs of the socio-professional environment, but in these particular working conditions; it takes on its meaning here as a form of anaesthetic, of putting aside the repetitive, stressful, monotonous and isolating aspect of the activity. Although it is mostly consumed collectively, its use expresses a search for effects in the execution of tasks that one does alone and whose harshness one wishes to reduce. By using cannabis, one succeeds in *doubling up* or at least automating tasks to the point of being able to escape from solitude or the feeling of meaninglessness (Gupta & Jenkins, 1984). However, these moments of sharing a joint or a coffee are also moments of *slowing down* the pace of work.

Even if the phone is ringing, and despite management's requirements, the delivery workers take the time to finish their drink or their joint, privileging these collective scenes over the economic or managerial imperative. The game also appears as an ambivalent way of resisting work.

4.2. Playing between men: Between defence and domination

Analyses in the psychodynamics of work point out that in occupations that are more exposed to danger, 'when [there is] a constraint or an injunction to overcome fear, individual and collective psychic processes call more on defensive virility' (Dejours, 1998, p. 147). Risk, power, total speed (objectified by figures and statistics) become the raw material of competition in a masculine and virile self.[8] As in sports practice (Messner, 1990), the work of the delivery workers allows the expression of both physical strength and virility. By trivialising risks, offering challenges and playfully competing with each other, workers seem to anaesthetise suffering, danger or boredom: 'men place themselves in the position of active agents of a challenge, a provocative attitude or a derision of risk, in other words, they reverse the subjective relationship to pathogenic constraints' (Molinier, 2000, p. 30). Despite the self-control induced by a numerically supervised job, moments of chatting outside restaurants become instances of 'relaxation', which also expose a 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1987) in a subordinate position: demonstrations of strength, of competition, of circumventing control through mockery in the form of hidden speeches or exposing how they directly yelled at 'the restaurant owner who took too long' or 'threw the burger' at a 'disgusting' customer. This is what Wissam explained one day when I met him as he was talking to his group:

> I announce my race number, then he tells me 'Okay, there's no problem, wait', I wait 10 minutes, there was an order there, I ask for my order, he tells me he is doing it. I waited and after 10 minutes I arrived and I told him again 'where is my order?' and he said 'give me your number' and in fact it was the order that had been there for 10 minutes … And then I insulted the guy, who does this son of a bitch think he is?
> (Extract from the February 2019 field journal).

Scenes were observed of these types of downward *gamification*[9] in the male social circle:

> I'm sitting inside the KFC, in the corner on the right as you walk in. I look at my phone, it's almost 9:30pm. (…) 2 minutes later Sid comes in singing and he

> sits down with us. He's happy because he's at 8 orders already tonight and since he's been working since the beginning of the day he'll surely get the big performance bonus … He shows us the screen of his phone. 'But how did you do it? You're so lucky, brother,' says Amid, returning with his order. (…) Amid has just bought himself an electric motor for his bike: 'You'll see with this. I connect to Deliveroo and Stuart and in two hours we meet here and see who wins'. Sid laughs and leaves, kicking Amid's bag: 'Come on, come on, stop showing off! See you later bro!'
>
> To have made the most orders and to show 'the numbers of the day' is a game that I think I have played with myself by trying to make the highest number of orders as fast as possible to 'show off' to others.
> (Field diary extract, January 2019).

The sport socialisation in the profession, family socialisation in a working-class environment and delinquent practices in certain cases[10] reinforce and enhance an agonistic use of the body. The agonistic capital specific to the world of gangs operates here in situations that do not involve fighting strength (Mauger, 2009), but rather performance competitions that are the basis of a quest for respect.[11] This is a different extension of the oppositional culture identified in other surveys among men from working-class backgrounds (Bourgois, 1995 or Willis, 1981), outside the factory or the classroom.

The game between peers is a sublimation, a reappropriation of the absurd managerial logic of statistics —which is somewhat reminiscent of the violence of school grades for individuals with a short school career and an anti-school culture—, a way of recoding the official laws of algorithmic control from alternative practical schemes, of deriving symbolic gratifications from them. The institution of work as a game makes it possible to fight against boredom, drudgery or routine and thus to cope with thankless work. Burawoy (1982) showed how the *piece-rate system* was incorporated by workers in a *making-out* game where they aspired to obtain productivity bonuses. It is thus a game that also promotes effort and maintains hegemony (Griesbach et al., 2019). This sense of *agency* and autonomy helps them to consent to the platform's framing and remuneration. As Burawoy adds, the games

> do not only engage workers in the defence of the rules and the consequent production of surplus value, but also in the mystification of the conditions of its existence, that is, of the relations of production between capital and labour (2012, p. 176).

Manly dispositions adjust to the consent to the intensification of labour as well as to its *reframing*.

Lastly, it is through the male *ethos* of the couriers that the learning of virile values is reinforced and 'where the popular masculine habitus associated with the use of physical strength as a labour force crystallises' (Mauger, 2009, p. 248). The 'tolerance constraints' of the relational dimension of the job require self-control, a psychological effort to renounce a certain 'pride', which is stated by the respondents when, for example, in relation to possible disputes with customers or restaurant owners, Mamadou speaks of 'restraint', Antoine of 'knowing how to stay calm' or 'dealing with it' and Baptiste of 'trying to manage'.[12] However, these constraints, which involve a certain amount of emotional work (Hochschild, 1983), do not necessarily contradict the values of virility (Schwartz, 2011), even if they can undermine the most brutal expression of hegemonic masculinity. These contradictory binds mean that delivery workers manage to 'maintain an agonistic disposition, while building a playful and controlled relationship to the practice' (Oualhaci, 2015: 121). Adopting a psychological register, Benjamin explains that

> It's not only tiring for the muscles but also for the head, it's stressful", he says. It is "mental fatigue that you have to manage, working with clients and people is sometimes good but sometimes you end up with assholes. When there are problems, you have to try not to let anyone take advantage of you (…) It doesn't only tire the muscles but also the head, it's stressful.

Highlighting the psychic dimensions of work is also a way of 'ennobling their work, highlighting its hidden pains' (Schwartz, 2011, p. 354) and building a respectful working-class masculinity. This dimension allows for the highlighting a part of the work, which is not attainable by everyone, as Wassim explains:

> Psychologically it's very hard, not just anyone could do it. You know why it's very hard psychologically? Because you're on your own and you have to deal with a lot of pressure, you know.

Despite a job where one has to 'give service', delivery workers rarely feel that they are doing something socially useful and reject the standard of service quality (Brugière, 2019). Instead, it is the pride of doing a physically and mentally hard job that is emphasised. They thus escape the deontology of a service profession, that make some workers aware of their social utility or of the importance of the left hand of the State (Bourdieu, 1979; Cartier, 2003).

5. Resisting the state and temptations to join the Yellow Vests

As we will see, the feeling of just doing a 'livelihood' and the invisibility of the State's social counterpart is important when it comes to consenting to a fiscal effort that in the eyes of the delivery workers seems disproportionate to the physical effort provided. Moreover, the agonistic relationship to labour, the gendered competition between men, and the opposition to the State convey here virile values that connect well with the Yellow Vests *ethos*. In this last part I will show how, under certain conditions, discreet resistance to the State and taxation join worldviews that can explain how workers sometimes take action in non-work protests such as the Yellow Vests movement in 2018–2019.

5.1. Resisting taxes quietly, living without the state

Relationships with public institutions and the administration, as a form of ordinary relationship to the State, shape relationships with politics (Buton et al., 2016; Siblot, 2006; Soss, 1999; Spire, 2016 or Kumlin, 2002). The self-employed – and in this case micro-entrepreneurs – are confronted with State institutions through the *Régime Social des Indépendants*.[13]

This small group of self-employed people share a common distrust of taxation and in particular of social security contributions. Micro-entrepreneurs have to pay their contributions to the RSI, at a rate of 23% of their income.[14] Unlike employees, for whom the contributions are paid by the employer and deducted from the payroll, bicycle delivery companies must pay the contributions voluntarily after being paid. In addition, the process is entirely paperless, which contributes to a feeling of mistrust towards this distant institution – the tax authorities (Spire, 2020).

Secondly, the visibility of the disbursement that will reduce their remuneration generates resentment towards the tax levies (Spire, 2018). Many discreetly resist the public authorities by deciding not to be subject to these regulations and by not declaring their turnover,[15] as many Uber drivers do (Brugière, 2019). They generally justify this on three sometimes intertwined grounds. They consider that the money collected will go mainly to a handful of self-enriching individuals, identified with members of the political class, that it is a form of unfair capture of their earnings from hard work and, lastly, that there is no palpable or desirable counterpart. Tax evasion is experienced as a form of survival

and/or is defended in terms of a kind of 'working dignity', of not letting oneself be 'robbed' of the fruits of one's labour, and is therefore not interpreted as an immoral act.

The levying of social security contributions may indeed seem unjustifiable to delivery workers who are committed to a 'work ethic', as Dogan explains:

> It's a gross salary, so in fact if you make 2,000 you have to pay 400€, so that's a big minimum wage. If the guy earns 3,000 and you take away the contributions, you take away the taxes, at the end he has 2,000, even though he has worked hard.

This feeling is accompanied by the impression of not receiving benefits commensurate with the tax effort. They do not see the compensation and this invisibility of benefits and this resistance is ambivalent when it leads them to be careless about future social protection. As Bastien, annoyed by the high levies and the weak counterparts, puts it:

> If we were rewarded we wouldn't pay 20%, we'd pay much less. It would be easier to get aid, we would earn bonuses, whereas the State is all for themselves and nothing for the others.

Dogan considers that this levy is unfair because it represents a substantial part of his turnover and because he does not see what he could gain afterwards: 'The contributions are useless (…) If at least there was a real counterpart behind it, you would really have a real insurance or something that means that if you get hurt, you really have … ' Gabriel added that this moment was experienced like a guillotine: 'When you pay 24% you don't feel a return eh. You feel that you are working and that 24% is taken from you and that's it. That's too much. It's enormous. It's a bit of a guillotine, the taxes'.[16] Dogan says that 'the contributions are useless' and he tells us that he experienced this minimal compensation after an accident:

> I've already been injured, I spent two weeks in bed before I could get up, and I didn't get anything. (…) Because with my guy at €16 a day, what do you want me to do concretely? 4,000 or 5,000 euros a year for 16–22 euros a day if you get injured … Well, no.

Wissam understands that the money collected will mainly go 'into the pockets of people who are doing well':

> I think they take advantage of it too because believe me everything we pay for it doesn't come back to us. They keep it, believe me. (…) It doesn't go into our debts, it goes into the pockets of people who are doing well.

Speaking about taxes and contributions, he exclaimed: 'I keep my money for myself, 25% is theft!' This 'theft' of the 25% is denounced, in different ways, by many delivery people and most of them try to escape it.

This critical relationship with State institutions and this resistance to taxation as a confiscation of hard-earned wealth is an ambivalent element. While it may be a sign of collective class resistance,[17] it can be found as individual behaviour among the self-employed who are in search of social ascension through economic capital (Mayer, 1986 or Lejeune, 2018). Dogan proudly reminds us that he does not receive social assistance,[18] that he does not need anything from the State and that, in the end, it is a zero-sum game: 'I work for myself. I give them nothing and they give me nothing'. It would be better to move away from the State and decide to use forms of individual protection:

> I have an insurance policy that covers me if I ever get hurt (…) I don't pay for it, I am insured. Their only argument when they ask you to contribute is 'at least you're insured, you're taken care of' but I don't need that in fact, I can pay €60 on my own and I don't need to contribute €400 a month (…) I prefer to put that aside and, if one day I get injured, I have my money to live on, you know?

5.2. Towards open protest outside work

This relationship to taxation reveals representations that are adjusted to the mobilisation of the Yellow Vests. The interviews were indeed conducted between November 2018 and March 2019, i.e. during the movement that began on 17 November 2018.

In addition to not paying the contributions (because he has loans and 'other stuff to pay'), Benjamin opposes it by arguing a class connivance between the State and 'the upper-class people' who keep some of this money. He spontaneously refers to the Yellow Vests movement in which he participates:

> Benjamin: 'Afterwards, when you pay, they put a lot of money in their pockets.'
> Me: 'Who puts a lot of money in their pockets?'
> B: 'Well, all the managers, all the money managers. It's like the story of the Yellow Vests, you have to follow that to understand. In fact, you simply have the people of the highest society, we'll say, you have the people of middle society and you have the

> people of high society, the high society who are rich. In fact, the State acts as if there were a circle, a circle of people, it's always the same people who elect the same type of people, basically, it's as if it were a closed circle.'

For Bastien, this is a survival strategy as he still has to pay back his bank overdraft, but he considers this rate of levy to be very unfair: 'It's the smallest workers who pay the most. We as couriers pay 20% tax and when you look at the president, the ministers, the MPs, how much they are taxed'. These representations are in line with the dualism that Mayer (1986) found among the self-employed in the shop: the 'big people' (here including the political class) and 'the little people' (including the bicycle couriers as 'small workers'). This feeling of being overtaxed is used to justify his position on the Yellow Vests, which he explains in the interview: ' That's also why I'm going to demonstrate at the weekend because being taxed at 20% on what you earn is unbearable (…). We rebel against their taxes'.

Resistance to taxes among these popular micro-entrepreneurs 'feeds resentment towards the State and can lead to discourses stigmatising taxes, the administration and the political class in the same block' (Spire, 2018, p. 144), which finds resonance in the Yellow Vests movement. If they identify a 'them' to be rejected by 'us', it refers to the political class and State institutions.

This logic of separation or these discreet bypasses can be the ferment of participation in an open protest outside of work, for a lack of collective structures to express the suffering inside. Scott (1990), against the safety valve thesis, argued that infrapolitics was not the anaesthesia of acts of public subversion but the necessary antechamber to it. The ambivalent character of the resistances described here is, however, only partially found among the Yellow Vests since it is the anti-tax component that mediates between the world of work and the social movement.

While the absence of 'youth from the cités' in the Yellow Vests movement has been pointed out by the media, field surveys have shown that it has been able to successfully unfold in contexts with a high proportion of descendants of immigrants (Marlière, 2020) and in the suburbs of large conurbations (Devaux et al., 2019). In the group we surveyed, suburban, yet non-racialised delivery workers, such as Bastien, Gabriel and Benjamin,[19] exhibited sympathy for the Yellow Vests movement and they participated in a demonstration for the first time in their lives. They did not participate in roundabout occupations, which are more common in rural

or peri-urban areas, but they gradually became accustomed to the ritual of demonstrations during the first rounds of the movement. There appears to be a structural homology between the social position of the bicycle delivery workers and the population engaged in the Yellow Vests, locating both in the 'bottom right' quarter of the social space[20] sketched by Bourdieu in *La Distinction* (Beaumont et al., 2018; Bourdieu, 1998; Coquard, 2019). Researchers have emphasised the important presence of the private sector employees (Monchatre *in* Fillieule et al., 2020) or the significant mobilisation of subaltern employees and 'little' self-employed people outside the classical repertoires of collective action (Collectif d'enquête sur les Gilets jaunes, 2019, p. 882). While delivery workers may, in this quest for immediate high incomes, legitimise the economic order, they remain highly critical of the instituted political field[21] and seem predisposed to engage in a movement whose demands were originally focused on purchasing power. This protest against the State, which can respond with tax breaks, has given rise to an 'unlikely' alliance between small-scale wage earners and the self-employed, as opposed to more corporative movements that emphasise the distributive capital/labour conflict. In a context where the State has shown a very weak capacity to negotiate with the private sector, 'lowering taxes appears to be the only conceivable demand for increasing the purchasing power of low incomes' (Bendali & Rubert, 2020, p. 195).

This challenge to the State and its representatives was carried out through repertoires of action that broke with the social struggles of the workers' movement. The demonstrations of the Yellow Vests were often wild, that is to say, without a declared route or an ordered procession, passing through the 'beautiful districts' and the places of power (Chevrier, 2020), which seduced our respondents. This transgressive character contrasted with the uselessness, emphasised by the other delivery workers, of the usual demonstrations, according to Gabriel:

> A demonstration is never useful … The Yellow Vests really moved because it was breaking things. A demonstration that is framed by … where people will just walk from point A to point B … It doesn't make things move. All the demonstrations that have taken place in the last 10 years have never served any purpose.

Bastien and Benjamin saw it as a movement that was not political and unified the interests of the people. Benjamin agreed with this monistic conception of the people 'seen as an indivisible entity that partisan quarrels would tear apart' (Bedock et al., 2020, p. 228) against representative politics that all opposed:

> I find that right now there really is a common interest, it's really the people. And there is no leader (…) It's the only cause I found worthwhile. For me, the Yellow Vests are like a revolution, you could say. It's a cause that's worthwhile (…) it's not politics, it's the people.

Yet the racialised delivery workers Dogan, Wissam, Mamadou, and Samir continued their discreet mobilisations without engaging in more structured collective action. Migrant workers were critical of taxes, which they refuse to pay, but they are not challenged by the Yellow Vests or other mobilisations. They have expressed in different ways that 'time is money' and that they therefore have no time to think about activism. Their condition as racialised people also intersects with their membership of the more precarious class fraction. As Talpin (2020) points out, minorities in working-class neighbourhoods face higher costs, particularly in terms of discrimination, to engage, including a higher likelihood of being checked. Mamadou, recalling his transitory legal status, did not consider it: 'I don't know if I have the right to participate and I won't risk it'. Dogan emphasised the costs of collective action in relation to the necessary income from work: ' If it's to ask me to go and demonstrate instead of going to work, it's obviously not going to fly, "time is money"'. As Talpin (2019) reminds us, in order to understand the reasons for participation, we need to take into account the expectations that people have about the possibilities of getting something out of it. Collective actions are seen by Wissam and 'his people' (the *poor* [neighbourhoods]) as a waste of time, as unprofitable in the short term:

> We weren't brought up to complain, that's not our place. Like, in our poor neighbourhoods in Paris, you'll never see anyone complaining. (…) Nobody. Because we don't even have the time. The time you waste demonstrating, well, you could spend it doing something else that could improve your life.

He sees no point in getting involved with or for a group of people (like trade union) with whom he does not share a sense of belonging and without knowing what immediate benefits he might gain:

> It's all about family, only family. That means, if you're not my family I don't owe you anything. (…) If tomorrow I'm asked to get involved in some kind of voluntary work, I won't be able to do it because what will I gain? I'm not going to help people I don't know.

'Family' and 'real mates' are the difference within a wider network of inter-knowledge. This is not to say that they are doomed to individualism, but that they stand for a different kind of solidarity, a restricted solidarity of the resourcefulness between his delivery mates.

The transition from hidden tactics at work to protest action is therefore not self-evident for these delivery workers. Their class socialisation, their distrustful relationship to politics (including the State, the police) or to collective action makes them conceive of the public arena of protest as a lost game from the start. The perception of an even more unequal balance of power than within the platform and the concept of defeats of previous collective mobilisations also shape the relationship to politics and *the agency* of the respondents (Gaventa, 1980). Moreover, the expression of workers' interests, manifested in the discreet resistances described here, does not the resonate with the broader frame of mobilisation of the Yellow Vests movement, that does not place work or the 'poorer' workers of the 'neighbourhoods' at the centre of its concerns.

6. Conclusion

The ethnography of a collective of bicycle delivery workers has enabled us to delve into the different discourses and practices that testify to the discreet mobilisations to resist the symbolic and material appropriation of their work despite their subordinate position in the hierarchy of platforms and the often ambiguous form that these resistances take.

Despite the objective difficulties, delivery workers succeed in constituting work micro-collectives that become spaces of sociability that are highly valued. These spaces are forms of mobilisation against the total control of the work process by the platform. In particular, I was able to observe infrapolitical practices linked to the use of forbidden vehicles, the sharing of accounts to overcome the barriers erected against foreign delivery workers, ways of reducing dependence on demand, of refusing the rotten job, of resting despite the punishment based on the evaluation of piecework and the hijacking of the application to their benefit.

In these informal spaces techniques of autonomy emerge through the constitution of a form of masculine counterculture that proves to be double-edged: as a way of collectively redefining the meaning of work with a virile charge that is not without affinities with the Yellow Vests movement and as a game to thwart it.

Therefore, they develop a very critical discourse towards politicians and the State in general, which they associate in particular with social contributions that are often perceived as unfair. Their desire to become autonomous and to resist the State is based on a conflictual relationship with a distant tax administration whose counterparts they do not perceive.

The result is discreet resistance to the administration and world views that partly explain why some people joined the Yellow Vests movement.

This article exposes how sometimes a part of discreet mobilisations can connect with open protests elsewhere, here the Yellow Vests, other times by joining the professional demands of the delivery workers' unions. By decompartmentalising the territories of political and protest actions, we can trace the process, rather than the hermetic barrier, between discreet resistance at work and collective action in a sector in full legal and media turmoil.

Notes

1. Although these are highly publicised, they remain an extremely small minority within this ever-growing sector. Tensions have increased since the COVID-19 crisis, when the delivery platform sector became 'essential' in several countries, while its workers often reported high exposure to the virus (WIN, 2020).
2. These performance statistics are fundamental to accessing slots on some platforms.
3. Studies in work psychodynamics show that workers tend to speed up their movements in jobs where the pace of work is subject to that of the machine and where it is rarely possible to invest meaning into the activity.
4. In fact, couriers using motorised vehicles can only carry out their activity if they are registered in the National Register of Transporters. This registration gives rise to the issue of an authorisation to operate and then a transport licence.
5. Since 2018, foreigners with a student residence permit can no longer become self-employed.
6. Used at some delivery groups, the expression 'pak pak' refers to the imaginary and ethnicised archetype of the delivery worker who is prepared to accept anything.
7. According to Christophe Dejours studies in occupational psychopathology, these defence strategies are constructed collectively by the workers, but they have a paradoxical and ambivalent role: although they are necessary for the protection of mental health, they also constitute a trap when they desensitise suffering (Dejours, 1998, pp. 43–44).
8. Following Rivoal's (2017) remarks, we share here the desire to disconnect manhood and masculinity. Manhood is a non-dynamic cultural ideal, which describes valued properties such as physical strength, violence or authority, but is not connected to a specific gender.
9. The term usually refers to the game mechanisms put in place to make working conditions more acceptable, to motivate staff or to increase productivity.
10. Wissam recalls that he comes from a 'very poor background' where, apart from school, it was usual to engage in delinquent and lucrative practices such as 'bank robbery (laughs). Selling illegal products, drugs, all that, basic stuff. Things that bring you money because we were really poor.'

11. This competition often moves to the delivery workers' Facebook groups, where they post screenshots with their monthly and weekly statistics to see who delivers the most orders and therefore makes the most money.
12. It is common knowledge among delivery workers that some have been 'disconnected' (a category native to the platforms for referring to the dismissal of a driver) as a result of conflicts with restaurant owners or customers.
13. The social security scheme for self-employed workers in France.
14. Or 5.8% for the first year, taking advantage of the reduction in social security contributions available to any self-employed person under the age of 26 or unemployed (ACCRE). However, the possibility of making this request often goes unnoticed by delivery workers.
15. Antoine was the only respondent who said that he paid the contributions.
16. The interviewee highlights the revolutionary imaginary and in particular the historical link in France between revolution and the rejection of taxation.
17. 'The State compresses and the Law cheats, the tax bleeds the unfortunate; no duty is imposed on the rich; the right of the poor is an empty word!'(words taken from *the Internationale*, by Eugène Potier, 1871).
18. Moral dispositions and patterns of self-classification, as well as of distinction, are often found among the contemporary working classes, who are anxious to distinguish themselves from the lower classes and the 'assisted' (Schwartz, 2009).
19. Antoine, the most educated, participated in the climate protests. On the other hand, Samir says he demonstrated in Paris against the former Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika.
20. From the working classes to the middle classes with low educational attainment but with the possibility of earning a satisfactory income. These trajectories are based more on the accumulation of economic capital and thus shape their political behaviour and social aspirations.
21. Only Antoine and Benjamin claim to have voted in the last presidential elections.

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