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DELIVER US FROM CRIME? ONLINE PLATFORMS, GIG JOBS, AND OFFENDING

We investigate the impact of on-demand food delivery platforms on local employment and crime rates, exploiting temporal and geographic differences in their rollout across France. Using a staggered difference-in-differences approach, we find that the introduction of a food delivery platform in a given area significantly boosts job opportunities for unqualified and low-skilled workers, particularly among young people and individuals of migrant descent, as reflected in the increase of registered riders. This surge in gig jobs this creates is accompanied by small but significant reductions in male migrant unemployment and welfare claimant rates. Additionally, we observe substantial declines in recorded crime, particularly in violent offenses, low-skilled thefts, property destruction, and drug-related incidents. These findings suggest that the gig economy creates valuable pathways to employment for those who often face barriers to labor market entry—namely low-skilled workers, youth, and migrants—thereby encouraging their participation in lawful economic activities.