



INTERNATIONAL MAX PLANCK RESEARCH SCHOOL  
on the Social and Political Constitution of the Economy  
Köln, Germany

Marcin Serafin

# The Temporal Structures of the Economy

The Working Day of Taxi Drivers in Warsaw

Studies on the Social and Political Constitution of the Economy

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The Working Day of Taxi Drivers in Warsaw

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Published by IMPRS-SPCE

International Max Planck Research School on the Social and  
Political Constitution of the Economy, Cologne

<http://imprs.mpifg.de>

ISBN: 978-3-946416-14-2

DOI: 10.17617/2.2218692

Studies on the Social and Political Constitution of the Economy  
are published online on <http://imprs.mpifg.de>. Go to *Dissertation Series*.

Studies on the Social and Political Constitution of the Economy

## Abstract

Why do taxi drivers work when they work? Unlike those in many other occupations, taxi drivers do not have fixed working hours. This raises the question of what influences their working time. Based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative research conducted in Warsaw between November 2012 and June 2013, this dissertation argues that the working time of Warsaw taxi drivers is anchored in four “temporal structures”: *earning time*, *waiting time*, *political time* and *domestic time*. First, taxi drivers’ working time is dependent on the demand for their service, which structures their *earning time*. I argue that, since taxi drivers are coordinating agencies, their *earning time* is dependent on multiple superior coordination agencies that make up the multi-layered temporal architecture of Warsaw. Such agencies include the religious calendar and the state calendar. Second, taxi drivers’ working time is shaped by a temporal structure of *waiting time*. I trace the origin of this structure, showing how *waiting time* is linked to the emergence of capitalism in Poland in 1989. However, while the introduction of capitalism created the structural conditions for *waiting time*, I argue that *waiting time* is reproduced every day as taxi drivers have to cope with the uncertainty of demand for their service. Third, taxi drivers’ working time is anchored in *political time* since they try collectively to improve their working conditions through voice. I distinguish between different forms of voice, showing how and why the political actions of taxi drivers have been largely unsuccessful. Finally, taxi drivers work when they work because of a temporal structure of *domestic time*. Taxi drivers’ working time is shaped by the temporal order of their family life, which is often in conflict with the rhythm of the market. I describe how the gendered nature of *domestic time*, characterized by an unequal division of household labour, enables male taxi drivers to work long hours. By providing an explanation for taxi drivers’ working time, which highlights the temporal dimension of social life, this dissertation shows the need for economic sociology to study the impact of time on economic practices.

## About the author

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Studies on the Social and Political Constitution of the Economy



**The Temporal Structures of the Economy:  
The Working Day of Taxi Drivers in Warsaw**

Inauguraldissertation  
zur  
Erlangung des Doktorgrades  
der  
Wirtschafts-und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Fakultät  
der  
Universität zu Köln

2015

vorgelegt  
von

Marcin Serafin

aus

Stockholm, Schweden

Referent: Prof. Dr. Jens Beckert

Korreferent: Prof. Dr. Clemens Kroneberg

Tag der Promotion:

“Sociology is the qualitative and discontinuous typology based on the dialectic of the total social phenomena in all their astructural, structurable and structured manifestations. It studies all the depth levels, scales and the sectors directly with the aim of following their movements of structuration, destructuration and restructuration and rupture, finding their explanation in collaboration with history. If a shorter definition is desired, it could be said that *sociology is a science which studies total social phenomena as a totality of their aspects and their movements, capturing them in a dialectic of microsocial, group and global types, in the process of becoming and disintegrating.*

Out of this dynamic conception of sociology, emerges the problem of time in which the life of the social framework, total social phenomena and their products, and particularly their structures unfolds. This problem is absolutely primary to sociology. The social structures themselves are not stable, but are discovered, on the contrary, to be involved in a perpetual movement. Moreover, the scale of social time wherein they move is very often divergent from the time scale in which the subjacent total social phenomena live.”

Georges Gurvitch, *The Spectrum of Social Time* (1964: 11, *emphasis in original*)

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## Acknowledgments

This dissertation could not have been possible was it not for the help and support of a number of individuals and institutions. I would like to thank Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies for making my research possible. The institute provided with me the financial and organizational support throughout the whole period but it also created a scholarly community that shaped my way of thinking. I would like to thank Prof. Jens Beckert for his thoughtful supervision and for giving me both the intellectual space to develop my ideas while at the same time guiding me through the process. I would like to thank Prof. Patrik Aspers, Prof. Asaf Darr, and Prof. Clemens Kroneberg, who were members of my supervisory board and read a number of chapters, providing me with helpful feedback. I would like to thank Prof. Sigrid Quack for helping me to frame my research question and prof. Wolfgang Streeck for teaching me to appreciate the canon of social science. I would like to thank Prof. Richard Swedberg for taking the time to talk about my project. I would like to thank Prof. Janos Kornai reading one of my chapters.

I would like to thank the scholarly community at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies. I would especially like to thank Felipe Gonzalez, Markus Lang, and Aldo Madariaga. Much of what I know about social science I learned from them. I would like to thank Timur Ergen and Martin Seeliger for reading my work and providing me with feedback.

I would like to thank my parents for their support and understanding during the last months of writing this dissertation.

Finally, I would like to thank my partner Zofia Boni for her affection and support; for being my toughest critic and my best friend. She was always there when I needed her the most. Although writing this thesis was hardly easy, she sure did make it much easier.

## Introduction: Economics and Sociology

“For, to explicate the links between two disciplines one must first be able to show how they differ in their descriptions of similar events.”  
Terence Hopkins, *Sociology and the Substantive View of the Economy* (1957: 275)

Why do we need economic sociology, if there is already a science called economics? This is a fundamental question that sociologists studying “economic phenomena” should be able to answer. And although this question has been asked and answered many times before, it remains important, because the answer to it is always dependent on the current state of economics. Economic sociology, which as a sub-discipline developed in opposition to economics, is bound to regularly revisit its critique, making sure that it is still valid.<sup>1</sup> Thus, if Max Weber famously argued that sociology, as a historical science, is “destined for *eternal youthfulness*”, in the sense that it will always return to its findings and question its basic assumptions, economic sociology is destined to remain a toddler.

If now is the moment to return, yet again, to the question about the relationship between sociology and economics, a topic that has been discussed so many times before (Beckert, 2002, Bourdieu, 2005, Löwe, 1935, Parsons, 1991, Swedberg, 1990), this is because over the last years economics has undergone important changes. The development of behavioural economics and experimental economics, symbolically recognized with the awarding of Nobel Prize to the representatives of both approaches in 2002, and the recent financial crises, followed by soul-searching among economists, have transformed the discipline (Kirman, 2011). The current state of “the dismal science” is different from what it was when economic sociology was developing in the 1980s or even from what it was just a few years ago. Ideas of the irrational economic actor, the role of emotions, heuristics, and the cognitive biases in the creation of market bubbles, so foreign to the neoclassical thought, have been gaining popularity and have begun to be incorporated into mainstream. This raises the question whether economic sociology is still relevant and, if so, how can it contribute to our knowledge about social life in a way that economics is unable to?

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<sup>1</sup> Most of economic sociology emerged as a critique of economics. This is both true for the old and the new. There is new branch of economic sociology that is much less oriented towards economists and this is the “New new economic sociology” that developed out of science and technology studies.

Answering the question about the relevance of economic sociology and its relationship with economics can be done in two ways. The first one is to compare sociological and economic theories, establishing the differences between the two social sciences (Beckert, 2002, Swedberg, 2003). The other is taking on an empirical objects studied by economists and showing, *in practice*, how the two approaches differ (Bourdieu, 2005, Zelizer, 1995, Zelizer, 2012). This dissertation will be an example of the latter approach, although I will not refrain from discussing theories.

There are certain benefits in taking on empirical case studies. Firstly, the field of economics is very diverse and arguing against “the economic approach” when the profession is so divided and self-critical would be difficult, while focusing on specific research makes the object of the critique much more concrete. Secondly, sociological or anthropological discussions of economics often appear as frontal attacks that are usually not very constructive. Often they are not even very original because, as Bourdieu pointed out, “there is no critique of the assumptions of economics, no challenge to its shortcomings and limitations, that has not been expressed somewhere or other by an economist” (Bourdieu, 2005: 15). Focusing on empirical case studies forces sociologists not only to think about what we perceive as shortcomings of the economic approach, but simultaneously to take a more positive approach and show how we would go about analysing the same phenomenon. This type of comparison, at once methodological and theoretical, is an example of what Andrew Abbot called a “circle of critique” (Abbott, 2004). For Abbott a “circle of critique” is the situation when knowledge about the social world is enriched by authors using different approaches – in terms of theory, methods, and epistemology – to study the same phenomena. This approach has been used both by economists and sociologists. On the one hand the work of Gary Becker and the birth of “economic imperialism” was the result of economists using their tools of rational choice theory to explain phenomena previously seen as belonging to the domain of sociology. Education, family and even addiction suddenly became “economic phenomena”. On the other hand work done in economic sociology went in the opposite direction showing that markets, money, and credit should be understood as “social phenomena”.

In this dissertation the comparison between economics and sociology will be done through studying the question: why do taxi drivers work when they work? The decisions taxi drivers make regarding their work has been a subject of a very recent and still on-going debate within economics (see Appendix 1). The debate revolves around the question of how taxi drivers make their decisions regarding work time. On the one side of the debate neoclassical

economists, who argue that taxi drivers are rational, utility maximizers. On the other side of the debate are behavioural economists, who argue that taxi drivers use heuristics. I want to contribute to this discussion and provide a sociological explanation of a phenomenon which is puzzling for economists.

By providing an explanation, I aim to engage economic sociology in a discussion with behavioural economists. It would be difficult to say something new about neo-classical economics from the perspective of economic sociology. One can only restate, possibly in new ways, what has already been said so many times before. This is not true with regards to behavioural economics. As a recently emerged discipline, established about twenty years ago, behavioural economics have only begun to be discussed in economic sociology or, for that matter, in sociology in general (Etzioni et al., 2010, Etzioni, 2010, Etzioni, 2011, Zelizer, 2012). This discussion is still ahead of us and engaging with behavioural economists by studying the working life of taxi drivers is a good place to start, their studies of taxi drivers are considered to be a central finding of the discipline (Altman, 2006, Camerer and Loewenstein, 2004, Camerer et al., 2011).<sup>2</sup>

However, the fact that studying the working time of taxi drivers helps re-establish the relationship between behavioural economics and economic sociology is not the only reason that makes taxi drivers interesting. This is important as different authors have recently argued that since economists have not shown any interests in sociology, sociologists should stop engaging with economics and just continue with their own work. I do not agree with this point of view. Not because I believe that economists will start reading our work, but because engaging with economic research is a good way to develop sociological ideas.

Engaging with the topic of why taxi drivers' work when they work allows us to develop sociological ideas regarding the role of time in the economy. Just like asking a "where?" question forces researchers to think about space, asking a "when?" question (why do taxi drivers work *when* they work?) allowed me to theorize and study the role of time in economic life. In this dissertation I argue that the case of taxi drivers' labour strategies enables us to think more deeply about the role of temporality in economic life. I argue that even with the

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<sup>2</sup> Also the work on taxi drivers is the type of research that is closest to sociology. Within behavioural economics one finds different kinds of research. One type is based on laboratory experiments often done on graduate students. The other is based on fieldwork outside of the laboratory. Choosing a study based on laboratory experiments done on graduate students and showing how economic sociology differs would not be very difficult, as they share little in common (methodologically, theoretically and epistemologically).

rise of behavioural economics, economic sociology can still be relevant. However, to remain relevant economic sociologists need to introduce time and temporality into their analysis.

The element of time is neglected both in economics and in economic sociology. By looking at networks and institutions at certain points in time, sociologists have focused on a synchronic view of markets, neglecting their temporal and dynamic dimensions. Extending the notion of embeddedness to include ever new factors (structural, institutional, cultural, political cognitive, emotional), economic sociologists forgot about *embeddedness of temporality*, that is, the fact that the economy is, as Polanyi pointed out, an *instituted process*. Put differently economic sociologists have neglected the *temporal structures of the economy*.

The rest of the dissertation is structured in the following way. In the chapter 1 explain my theoretical framework. I introduce an action oriented perspective by discussing two central concepts: *time* and *work*. In chapter 2 I discuss the methodology of my research, the case selection, and my fieldwork.

The empirical part of my dissertation (chapters 3 – 8) is organized around different temporal dimensions. I argue that in order to understand the *working time* of taxi drivers, we have to look at *waiting time*, *earning time*, *political time* and *domestic time*. My argument in this dissertation can be represented in the form of a mathematical equation:

**Working time of taxi drivers in Warsaw = earning time (chapter 3) + waiting time (chapters 4 and 5) + political time (chapters 6 and 7) + domestic time (chapter 8)**

In chapter 3 I look at *earning time* and I argue that to understand why drivers work when they work we have to look at the temporal structures of demand. I argue that taxi market is a *linking ecology*, that is a social space that connects other social spaces with each other. Taxi drivers are a *coordinating agency* and as a *coordinating agency* they are entangled in other coordinating agencies. I focus on how the state influences this cycle of demand and thus affects the working time of taxi drivers. In chapters 4 and 5 and I study the *waiting time* of taxi drivers and argue that taxi drivers work when they work because of the temporal structures of supply for taxis. I argue that the taxi market is *linked ecology* that is hostage to events happening in other social domains. I argue that taxi markets in unregulated capitalism are characterized by surplus supply (Kornai, 2013). To show this I analyse the history of supply in the Warsaw taxi market. In chapters 6 and 7 I focus on *political time* and look at how taxi drivers try to improve their position through different forms of collective action. I then turn towards the study of *domestic time* in chapter 8 and argue that structures and

processes happening in the domestic domain shape the supply of taxi drivers in the market. In conclusion I bring out the broader theoretical implications of this study as I argue for the need to introduce the element of time into economic sociology.



# Chapter 1. Time and Work in Social Life

The theoretical foundation of this dissertation is a sociological theory of action. Why action? Because, as Anselm Strauss points out, “all researchers and social theorists necessarily make assumptions about action and interaction, whether or not they are aware of this, and their assumptions and the related conceptualizations greatly affect their conclusions, interpretations and modes of explanation”(Strauss, 1993: 14). It is better to make one's assumptions explicit. Moreover, I am interested in the practices of taxi drivers: what it is that taxi drivers actually do on an everyday basis? How and why do they do it? This interest reflects my strong belief that in the social world variables do not act, people do (Abbott, 2001, Martin, 2011).

## 1.1 Time in Social Life

"The foundation of the category of time is the rhythm of social life"  
Emile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*

"Different times do exist in the mind, but nowhere else that I can see. The present of past things is the memory; the present of present things is direct perception; and the present of future things is expectations. If we speak in these terms, I can see three times and I admit that they do exist."  
Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*

Studying the work *time* of taxi drivers forces us to address the temporality of social life. Asking why taxi drivers are working *when* they are working cannot be done without discussing time. In what follows, I will discuss the role of time in social life in general, and then focus more specifically on the role of time in markets and particularly in taxi markets.

The literature on time and society is abundant, since nearly all important social theorists, in the broad sense of the term, have engaged with this topic. In sociology time was a central concept in the works of Marx (1867), Durkheim and members of his school (Durkheim, 1995, Halbwachs, 1980, Hubert, 1999, Mauss, 2013), through Sorokin and Merton (1937), Gurvitch (1964), Elias (1992), Bourdieu (1964, 2000), Luhmann (2013), Abbott(2001), and Zerubavel (1979, 1985, 1989). In anthropology time was discussed at length by Evans-Prichard (1940), Munn (1992) and more recently by Bloch (2012) and Birth (2012). Time is of course crucial

for historians (Le Goff, 1982, Thompson, 1967, Dohrn-van Rossum, 1996, Pomian, 1979, Pomian, 1984), and very problematic for economists (Currie and Steedman, 1990, Shackle, 1967). There is a broad discussion about the nature of time in physics and mathematics (Pomian, 1984). These discussions of time in social theory are often rooted in the philosophical works of Bergson, Whitehead, Mead, Husserl and Heidegger (Abbott, 2001: 209-240, Tavory and Eliasoph, 2013, Jaques, 1982).

A literature review of what has been written on time and society would go much beyond the scope of this theoretical introduction (for literature overview see Bergmann, 1992, Hassard, 1990, Mische, 2001, Nowotny, 1992, Pomian, 1984). In this chapter I will only highlight those elements that will be of high importance in the next chapters. I start with a more abstract discussion of time, in order to then focus specifically on the role of time in taxi markets.

### **1.1.1 Concepts of Social Time**

In sociology and anthropology there are two main approaches to time (Hassard, 1990, Sorokin and Merton, 1937). The first approach makes the distinction between qualitative time and quantitative time. The second approach makes the distinction between cyclical time and linear time. I will briefly discuss the two before introducing a different distinction: *between time of action, or temporal order, and time in action, or temporal orientation*.

Time can be conceptualized as something that is quantifiable or something that has qualitative dimensions. In the first approach time is treated as a commodity; it is homogenous and divisible: a scarce resource that has to be allocated in the best possible way to increase productivity and consumption. One finds this in the neoclassical discussions on time (Becker, 1965), but also in the Marxist tradition, which looked at the role of time allocation, through the prism of power struggles over labour time (Marx, 1867). The argument made by Marx and his followers was that as work time becomes a commodity bought in the labour market, it is no longer passed, but spent; and capitalists want to make sure that it is spent as efficiently as possible in order to get as much as possible out of the labour time that they bought (Thompson, 1967: 61). In sociology most empirical studies on work time take the quantitative approach and analyse the respondents' time diaries to see how time is allocated between various activities. The same quantitative perspective on time is employed in the studies on the struggles over working time.

But time can also be treated as something that has a qualitative dimension. Within this approach time is seen as something that has unique value. Rather than quantifying time in hours, minutes, and seconds, authors make qualitative distinctions between events: between sacred time and profane time (Durkheim, 2000); between merchant time and Church Time (Le Goff, 1982); male time and female time (Sirianni and Negrey, 2000); awake time and sleep time (Aubert and White, 1959). If the quantitative approach to time treats time as a resource, the qualitative approach focuses on meaning.

The second distinction made in the literature on time is the division between cyclical time and linear time. This distinction is usually made by anthropologists who argue, based on their work in non-western societies, that different groups experience time differently (Bourdieu, 1964, Evans-Pritchard, 1940). Often the distinction is made between western societies that are supposed to experience time as linear, while non-western and less developed societies as something that is cyclical (for a critique see Bloch 2012: 79-119). However not only anthropologists use this perspective, as for example the economist David Landes argues in the *Wealth and Poverty of Nations* that the economic development of Europe was caused “by the Judeo-Christian sense of linear time, while other societies thought of time as cyclical” (quoted in Bloch 2012:83). Sociologists have looked at how in western societies social time has a cyclical character has been made by sociologists who argue that even in modern society time is non-linear (Hassard 1990: 9-11). Calendars are structured around weeks, months and years, and modern organizations, such as hospitals, have a temporal structure that is cyclical (Zerubavel 1979; Zerubavel 1981).

Building on the works of authors mentioned above, I introduce a different distinction. What I find problematic in this literature on time is that it does not put enough emphasis on action. As different authors have pointed out there is a fundamental relationship between time and action (Abbott 2001: 184-185, 297-298, Novotny 1992: 442, Munn 1992: 116). This relationship is neglected as there is no underlying theory of action behind the different studies on time. To emphasize this fundamental relationship between time and action I distinguish between *time of action* and *time in action*. This distinction not only helps me to theorize time in terms of action, but also frames the topic of time in terms of the relationship between structure and agency, which is the central theoretical problem of contemporary sociology.

### 1.1.2 Time of Action

Actions take place at a certain moment, which I call the time of action, but which can also be called, following the work of Anselm Strauss (Strauss, 1993: 59), the temporal order of action. And we know since Durkheim that times of actions are not random. There is an underlying rhythm that structures collective life (Zerubavel, 1981). Each social space has its own temporal rhythms with a specific calendar. These calendars are filled with critical moments (years, weeks, days, hours, minutes, seconds etc.) and events taking place at pre-defined moments and in certain sequences. The political field has an election cycle, parliamentary committees, yearly budgets; the religious field has a liturgical cycle made up of holy days, masses, fasting and feast days, prayer time; the academic year is structured by colloquia, courses, exams, commissions, defences, abstract submission deadlines; or, to take a very different example, the pugilistic field has trainings, boxing matches, fights, rounds (Wacquant, 2004). Similarly the domestic domain has a temporal order structured by meals, school schedule, sleeping time and household responsibilities (Aubert and White, 1959, Douglas, 1991). And in the same way, markets also have a certain temporal order.

As Krzysztof Pomian points out the history of time is closely linked with the history of social differentiation (Pomian, 1984). Different social domains have their own “time systems” (Sorokin and Merton, 1937: 627), which can be different from the time systems of surrounding social domains. In other words societies are made up of multiple, overlapping temporal structures, which are ways of ordering time (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 963).

The pluri-temporalism of modern differentiated world can become problematic for actors who are members of many social circles and have to deal with these “temporal incompatibilities” in their everyday life (Datchary and Gaglio, 2014). As I will show in chapter 8, taxi drivers have to cope with the conflicting rhythms of the taxi market and their domestic domain. I describe for example how the New Year’s Eve is a situation when there is at the same time a high demand for their service in the market and also a high demand for them to spend time with their family and friends.

Temporal structures can be studied on multiple levels and using different time frames. In other words, temporal structures are nested within one another. This idea of nested temporalities is not novel and can be found – expressed either implicitly or explicitly – in the works of more historically oriented social scientists (Pomian, 1984, Abbott, 2001, Sewell, 2005, Braudel, 1960, Lahire, 2015a). On the macro level different fields have a specific

temporal order: the academic year is different from the liturgical year and different from the year of the pugilistic field; certain moments that are important for the former might not be important for the latter. The New Year's Eve, a non-significant day in the academic year, is an important day in the taxi market. But on a lower level, organizations also have a certain temporal order. A specific church, university or taxi corporation might have a temporal rhythm more or less autonomous than the field it is part of and different from other organizations belonging to that field. Belonging to a certain field or organization means having practices temporally structured. On the micro level we have individuals whose lives are temporally structured as they unfold in biographies, careers and sequences. People start work and pick up children from school at a certain hour of the day; they vote, receive their wage, go to church, pay their credit on a certain day of the month; leave school, graduate and retire at a certain moment in their life. There are temporal structures shaping taxi drivers' practices: when belonging to a corporation taxi drivers have 10 – 15 minutes to get to their client after receiving the fare from the dispatcher; they wait 5 minutes for a client before they can turn on the taximeter and 15 minutes before they can leave. Taxi drivers have to work during certain hours of the week as their corporations introduce shifts; pay their corporation on a certain day of the month; and change a car every several years.

Temporal structures are reproduced through institutions and in interactions. The institutional foundations of the temporal order of social life have been studied by the Durkheimian school, as it focused on calendars and schedules (Zerubavel, 1985, Zerubavel, 1989). These authors often took the macro view: how religious rituals shape the calendar or how social revolutions tried to restructure it; and how the institutions, in the sense of formal rules, structure temporalities in organizations. A more micro and interactional approach to the study of time of actions has been taken by symbolic interactionists and ethnomethodologists. For those authors temporality was created and reproduced in interactions and in face-to-face exchanges (Hardesty, 1982). It was seen as not something that is institutionalized, but rather something that is constantly negotiated and renegotiated by actors. Symbolic interactionists and ethnomethodologists showed that being punctual – being *on time* – or speaking when it is *one's turn* are two of the central norms of social life.

### 1.1.3 Time in Action

Looking at time of action allows us to investigate the temporal structures of social life. We are able to explain why drivers work at certain times, why they wait a certain amount of time for clients, why they change their cars every so often. But looking at temporality also allows us to capture the *agency of actors* (both individual and collective); to understand why and how taxi drivers protest over their working week, how they struggle with other actors (family members, dispatchers, corporation owners, regulators) over the temporal order of their life.

The anthropologist Sherry Ortner points out that agency is defined in two ways in social theory. Agency is either understood as the ability to act with/against power or as the ability to pursue *culturally defined projects* (Ortner, 2006: 139). Time is at the centre of both definitions of agency.

Agency is the ability to act with power where power is understood in the broad sense of the term, as “ability to bring about significant effects, specifically by furthering their own interests or affecting the interests of others, whether positively or negatively” (Lukes, 2005: 65). One way of acting with power is by controlling and shaping the times of actions of other people and by not having one's time of action modified by others. Berry Schwartz argues that control over other people's time is one of the central forms of power: “Far from being a coincidental by-product of power, then, control of time comes into view as one of its essential properties” (Schwartz, 1974: 869). Parents control their children, supervisors control their students, and taxi corporations control their employees by establishing and enforcing time frames for their actions. Children go to bed at a certain hour, students have to finish their dissertations on time, and taxi drivers have certain temporal obligations (a certain amount of time to pick up the customer; have to wait for the customer to show up a certain amount of time before they can leave).<sup>3</sup>

Like other kinds of power, the power over time is to a large extent monopolized by the state. Social struggles, as Bourdieu points out, are often struggles over classification, and the state has the power to impose its own classification on its citizens. Bourdieu calls this capacity (another word for agency) to classify the “symbolic power of the state” (Bourdieu, 2014). In

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<sup>3</sup> In more horizontal relations having the possibility to act (choose a school, a job, a product, a partner, make a trade in the stock market) before other people, or after other people have already made their choices, is a form of power. In the first situation one gets to make choices that might not be available later on, in the other when there is no ambiguity left with regards to what other people will do. Being able to act even minimally faster than others might provide a great advantage, as can be seen in the recent rise of high-frequency trading, where vast sums of money (300 million €) were spent by some investors to gain millisecond advantage over others.

case of taxi drivers, the state classifies taxi drivers by requiring and giving out licences. One cannot legally perform the service of a taxi driver in Poland and in many other countries without being classified by the state as a taxi driver.

One of the main symbolic powers of the state is that it is able to classify time. States create the official calendar with schedules, holidays, school hours, tax deadlines, school and retirement age etc. (Bourdieu, 2014). This official calendar establishes temporal structures of the different social spaces including the taxi market. Through acts of state magic, discussed in more detail in chapter 4, the state shapes the temporal order of taxi market by *institutionalizing* the public calendar and distinguishing between workday and holiday (Sunday and national holidays), each with a different tariffs; and by distinguishing between a day (6 am – 10 pm) and night (10 pm – 6 am), each again having a different tariff.

However the symbolic power over temporal orders is not fully controlled by the state. Organizations are also able to institutionalize temporal orders and set their own temporal rhythms, controlling the time of actions of their members. This is of course characteristic of total institutions, but many social institutions to some extent structure the rhythm of social life. In Warsaw some taxi corporations oblige their drivers to work during certain periods when they predict that demand for taxis will be greater than the supply of drivers (e.g. around Christmas). At home, taxi drivers are demanded to participate in the social life of the domestic domain.

Struggles over the time are part of everyday interactions. As Bourdieu argues, to understand how these struggles over temporality unfold “one would need to catalogue, and analyse, all the behaviours associated with the exercise of power over people’s time both on the side of the powerful (adjuring, deferring, delaying, raising false hopes, or conversely, rushing, taking by surprise) and on the side of the ‘patient’, as they say in the medical universe” (Bourdieu, 2000: 228). A client telling a taxi driver “drive faster!”, a wife calling and saying “why are you not home yet?!” or a dispatcher lying to the client telling him that “the taxi will be with you in 5 minutes!” are all examples of these types of struggles.

Time is a crucial element of agency understood not only as the ability to act with power, but also agency understood as the ability to pursue culturally defined projects (Ortner, 2006: 129-154). Actors pursuing projects have to orient their actions towards a *certain point in time* (see Tavory and Eliasoph 2013). This is what I call *time in action* or the temporal orientation of action, but it can also be called, following Husserl, the “temporal horizon” of action,

following Mead, its “temporal perspective” or following Jaques “time-frame of action” (Nowotny, 1992: 436, Jaques, 1982: 127-154).

Whereas time of action can be understood as “objective” time, the time of events happening and structuring social life; time in action is “subjective”, or cognitive, it takes place in the minds of actors. Actors not only experience time in a certain way, which Bergson focused his philosophy on, but also direct their actions towards a certain moment in time: past, present or future. As the anthropologist Maurice Bloch argues people have the ability to “time travel”: “Time travel enables us to remember, and, to a certain extent, experience past events of our lives and to imagine future events in which we may be involved” (Bloch, 2012: 108).

#### **1.1.4 Action as Process**

At this point it becomes clear that it is impossible to discuss the role of time in social life without an underlying theory of action. Luckily recent developments in sociology have led to a situation where from a lack of theories of action, with the exceptions of Parsons, Weber and Schutz, most contemporary social theory is now action centred (e.g Archer, 2010, Boltanski, 2011, Bourdieu, 1998, Emirbayer, 2005, Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, Tilly, 2009, Tilly, 2006, Joas, 1996, Lahire, 2011, Leifer, 1991, Strauss, 1993, Joas and Beckert, 2001).

In my work I use several theoretical traditions both from sociology and economics, arguing that the different theorists of action often do not contradict each other, as they tend to focus their theoretical lens on specific types of action and ways of acting (Lahire, 2011:158-160). But mostly I draw on the work of two authors: Anselm Strauss and Bernard Lahire. The two sociologists represent for me two important, and in many ways overlapping, sociological traditions of theorizing action: Anselm Strauss belongs to the pragmatist tradition, while Bernard Lahire critically builds on the work of Pierre Bourdieu.<sup>4</sup>

Following the action theories of Lahire and Strauss, I define social action very broadly to include what sociologists following Weber would treat as mere behaviour (not worthy of sociological analysis): thinking, speaking, writing, feeling, daydreaming, imagining, and moving. As Bernard Lahire writes:

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<sup>4</sup> There is literature that tries to connect the Bourdieusian and the pragmatist traditions of looking at social action DALTON, B. 2004. Creativity, Habit, and the Social Products of Creative Action: Revising Joas, Incorporating Bourdieu. *Sociological Theory*, 22, 603-622, EMIRBAYER, M. & GOLDBERG, C. A. 2005. Pragmatism, Bourdieu, and collective emotions in contentious politics. *Theory and Society*, 34, 469-518, GROSS, N. 2009. A Pragmatist Theory of Social Mechanisms. *American Sociological Review*, 74, 358-379, SWARTZ, D. 2002. The sociology of habit: The perspective of Pierre Bourdieu. *Occupational Therapy Journal of Research*, 22, 61-69.. Bourdieu himself saw affinities between his notion of habitus and Dewey’s notion of habit.



“The habit that we have of viewing action (as in ‘action’ novels or films where things ‘move’ – i.e. where spectacular physical events constantly recur) as necessarily ‘active’ (rather than ‘passive’) often leads us to neglect the action of thinking, imagining, daydreaming, speaking, writing etc. The word ‘action’ has to be understood in the broad sense of the term: speaking and responding, thinking or mentally imagining a ‘thing’ or a situation, making a gesture, running, walking, lying down” (Lahire, 2011: 71).

I choose such a broad definition of action because, as I argue later on, to understand working time of taxi drivers we have to understand not only what they do “behind the wheel”, but also their thoughts and feelings (towards work, clients, labour unions, family responsibilities); the origins of their recollections and their images of the future. In chapter 5 I argue that an important part of the working day of taxi drivers is spent *observing* the market.

Having defined action very broadly my next assumption, following Lahire and Strauss, is that action is a part of a social process. As a process, action can be analytically split into three different phases and analysed from three time points: before it takes place, as it is taking place, and after it has taken place (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, Lahire, 2011, Strauss, 1993). I call these phases projecting, performing and recollecting. Each phase corresponds to a different time that St Augustine argued exist “only in the mind”: projection has to do with expectations, performance with perception, and recollection with memory.

The first phase of action understood as a process is projecting. I use the word projection in a dual sense, as displaying an image of an imagined future and as accounting for the process of turning something into “a project”. Here I follow Alfred Schutz who wrote that: “Projecting is more than mere fantasizing. Projecting is motivated fantasizing, motivated by the anticipated supervening intention of carrying out a project” (Schutz, 1959: 84). We can analyse the projection of action by examining a given action from a point in time preceding it and looking for acts of forecasting and planning. By forecasting I understand a situation where actors create, what Anselm Strauss called, a “trajectory projection” guided by certain “ends in view” (Strauss, 1993: 55), while planning is establishing a “trajectory scheme” (Strauss, 1993: 55 - 56), or in other words preparing how to reach this imagined future (Lahire, 2011: 126-128). The relationship between forecasting and planning is that the former does not necessarily lead to planning, while the latter cannot be done without the former. Many taxi drivers forecasted what will happen after the deregulation of the Warsaw taxi market in 2011, but only some

actors, usually those engaged in labour unions and social movements, tried to plan what to do about it.

Although we can analyse action from a point in time preceding it, looking for signs of projection, this does not mean that all actions are necessarily thought out in advance, planned and rehearsed. In fact, looking for acts of forecasting and preparation in situations when there was none, allows us to show that – as theorists of practice like to point out – actions are often not projected (Bourdieu, 2000, Bourdieu, 1990a, Wacquant, 2004).<sup>5</sup> Actors are sometimes too preoccupied with action to be able to project.<sup>6</sup> But we should not neglect, as those theorists tend to do, that some actions are projected. They are projected either because the situation pushes actors towards it or they have a habit of doing so. Examples provided by Lahire and Strauss range from NASA planning a trip to the moon (Strauss, 1993: 53) to a housewife carefully projecting her trip to the supermarket by making a very exact shopping list (Lahire, 2011: 136). Also much of political action revolves around projections (Mische, 2009, Mische, 2014). The projection of action plays an important part in chapter 5 as I discuss the *politics of time* and the collective struggle against the deregulation of the taxi market, where the central issue for organizers was to create an “imagined future” of what will happen after deregulation.

When studying the projections of actions the central questions become: how do actors make forecasts of the future and how do they go about preparing their actions; how do they go about engaging others in their vision of the future (Beckert 2013b)?

The second phase of action understood as a process is performance. I use the term performance with some hesitation as in social theory it has the association of Goffman’s metaphor of social life as theatre. Here, performing is not meant to carry this theatrical connotation, but should rather be understood as “being engaged in activity”. Actions can be studied as they are taking place. Individuals carry out actions with more or less urgency – depending on the “temporal conditions” (Lahire 2011:136) – and more or less skill, depending on the type of situation, the dispositions of the actor, his prior experiences with similar situations and the level of his preparation. During performance there is, what Anselm Strauss

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<sup>5</sup>Thus, following those authors, I do not agree with Albert Hirschman who argued that: “Before actually engaging in any activity, including that of consumption, people formulate the *project* to do so. Part of this project are certain mental images or *expectations* about its nature and about the kind and degree of satisfaction it will yield” (Hirschman 1982: 12, emphasis in original).

<sup>6</sup>Bourdieu distinguishes between being preoccupied with action and projecting action: “This is another way of expressing the opposition that Husserl established between pretension and project, the opposition between the *preoccupation* (...) and the *plan* as a design for the future in which the subject thinks of herself as positing a future and mobilizing all disposable means by reference to that future posited as such, as an end before explicitly being attained” (Bourdieu 1998: 81-82, emphasis in original).

calls, a *continual permutation of action* (Strauss, 1993): actors react to one another and to the ever-changing circumstances; action is negotiated; previously prepared plans are enacted, consulted, modified or abandoned as both ends and means to achieve them change; mistakes are made; people learn; relations are established, repaired or broken. In some situations there might not be enough time to prepare action in advance or to consult previously established plans when it is happening (Suchman, 2007); there might be no need to consult plans or actors might not possess the necessary dispositions. In those situations, actors have to rely on their practical sense or the “gut feeling” (Gigerenzer, 2007, Bourdieu, 1990a): act without any clear “ends in view”, improvise on the spot or reproduce routine behaviour. Actions are then guided not by clear projections and long temporal horizons but rather by short temporal horizons, which Husserl called “protention” and “retention” that is “practical forms of prospection or retrospection without positing of the future and the past as such” (Bourdieu, 1985: 20). Much of the working day of taxi drivers is guided by such routine actions with short time horizons.

When analysing performance of action the central questions are: how do actions unfold and how do actors react to the changing circumstances (Strauss, 1993)? How do actors consult and modify their forecasts and plans during action? How do they cope with the temporal urgency of action?

The third phase of action understood as a process is recollecting. If projection of action deals with expectations, and performance with perception, recollection has to do with memory. Action can be analysed from a point in time after it has taken place to see whether actors return to reflect on what had already happened. During recollection, action is oriented towards the past. Similar as with projection, not all actions are re-lived and reconsidered, in fact much of social life it not. But certain actions are revisited. This can take place when something unexpected took place; something went wrong and actors want to make sense of what happened to learn from their mistakes. Other reasons are that actors are put “on the spot” for their actions or simply because an event was very pleasant or unpleasant and actors want to share their experience. In other words certain situations trigger recollections (Lahire, 2011: 70). Some actions are recollected just after they have been performed, while other recollections take place long afterwards and may involve the previous actions of other people. The former have short temporal horizons, the latter have longer. An example of the former would be when taxi drivers return to their conversations with certain clients (celebrities, politicians etc.) just after they arrive home from work and tell their wives about them, while the example of the later is when taxi drivers returned to the consequences of the de-regulation

of the Warsaw taxi market at the beginning of the 1990s to justify why the upcoming deregulation of the market will lead to chaos; or how taxi drivers now discuss the “good old days” of the 1970s and 1980s when a taxi driver in Warsaw was “somebody important”. Actions can be revised in interactions but also in solitude, during internal conversations, when actors return to their behaviour and have, what Anselm Strauss called, “belated projections” asking themselves the question “what if I (we) had ...” (Strauss, 1993: 38). Thus, as I argue in chapter 7, taxi drivers engaging in collective action returned to their previous protest to either make sense of their mistakes or to imagine and discuss counter-factual.

Although I have identified recollection as the third phase of actions, this does not make it the least important. In fact from a sociological point of view recollections might be the most important. If we argue that social world is "path-dependent" and that “history matters”, it is only because the past is somehow "stored" (Andrew Abbot would say “encoded”) in the present (Abbott, 2005a). For this "encoding” to take place the past has to be somehow remembered whether on the institutional level, as described by Mary Douglas (Douglas, 1986), and on the individual level.

Whereas in projection the central questions is how actors imagine and plan for an uncertain future; in performance how situations unfold and how actors react to it; in case of recollection it becomes how actors go about interpreting and reinterpreting the past and how it influences subsequent performances and projections? How do societies and individuals remember and forget (Bloch, 2012, Douglas, 1986, Halbwachs, 1992, Halbwachs, 1980, Appadurai, 1981)? How is the past interpreted and reshaped? How is it struggled over in “mnemonic battles” (Zerubavel, 1996)? How is credit and blame for previous actions distributed among actors (Tilly, 2009)? How do actors learn from their mistakes? And most importantly, how do recollections of the past influence future projections, or to put it differently, how does what Andrew Abbott calls the “encoding of the social process”, influence expectations?

As already pointed out, the fact that we can talk about three phases of action does not mean that all actions pass through them. Some actions only pass through the phase of projection as they are envisioned, but never enacted. An example of such action would be daydreaming studied by Anselm Strauss (1993). In case of taxi drivers many discussions about protests or quitting driving taxis end at the phase of projection. Other actions are simply performed, with no prior projection or following recollections, while some are only recollected when actors

remember actions of others. Yet other actions pass through two phases (projection + performance or performance + recollection), and only few actions pass through all three.

By looking at the role of time in action and distinguishing the three phases of action not only we are able to separate the non-projected routine actions from the planned and reflective ones, but also incorporate emotions into the framework.<sup>7</sup> Different phases of action are related to different emotions. For projection the main emotions are hope and fear. In situations of radical uncertainty actors can only rely on their desires, hopes and fears as they do not possess knowledge of the future (Schutz, 1959). Performances, especially when routine and not driven by passions or “bad habits”, might lack emotions but once they become interrupted triggers high emotional involvement (Strauss, 1993: 31-32). Interrupted performances can trigger anger as actors’ expectations are not met. In recollection main emotions include shame, embarrassment, disappointment, relief and what Hirschman called, due to a lack of a better word, a “pleasant surprise” (Hirschman, 1982: 13). During recollections emotions emerge out of “the gaps between expectations and experience” (Hirschman, 1982: 17).

Emotions of hope, fear, disappointment and relief will play an important role in my analysis of the politics of working time in chapters 6 and 7. As I will show in chapter 7 labour unions try to engage drivers in participation in the collective action over working day by creating future scenarios or “imagined futures” (Beckert, forthcoming, Beckert, 2013b, Beckert, 2013a). To do this they draw on emotions fear and hope while at the same having to cope with the disappointment of drivers previously engaged in unsuccessful collective action and opposing it with relief.

More generally, the benefit of looking at time in action and phases of action is that it allows us to build a more comprehensive approach to action, or as Lahire puts it, „develop a sociology of effective logics of action and of the plurality of forms of relationship to action” (Lahire, 2011: 160).<sup>8</sup> Although the fact that action has plural logics has been recently much discussed both in sociology and psychology (Boltanski, 2011, DiMaggio, 2002b, DiMaggio, 1997, Kahneman, 2011, Vaisey and Frye, forthcoming, Vaisey, 2009), there is nothing new

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<sup>7</sup>And the role of emotions has been central for a sociological understanding of action, ever since Weber all the way to modern sociology (Bandelj 2009; Emirbayer 2005; Strauss 1993). In economics emotions were crucial for Pareto and especially for Hirschman, who was interested in the role of hope and disappointment in politics and the economy (Hirschman 1982).

<sup>8</sup> And again: Clearly you do not decide to ‘go shopping’ in the same way as you decide to ‘go to the College de France’. The former is a simple everyday action, open to anyone able to enter a shop with money to spend’ the second is quite extraordinary and certainly not open to all comers. In the same way, to decide on the route I will take to get by car from Lyon to Bordeaux is not the same thing as ‘deciding, when I’m in secondary school, to study medicine at university” (Lahire 2011: 155).

about it. A pluralistic approach to action can be traced back to Pareto (in economics) and Weber (in sociology) who – by using typologies (rational and irrational) and ideal types (rational, value rational, emotional, and traditional) – tried to show that we should never reduce human action to just one type, neglecting either the habitual, rational or emotional aspects of action. This pluralistic approach to action then distinguishes a sociological theory of action from the economic, which not only forgets about radical uncertainty (Beckert, 2002), but also reduces action to just one type: either rational (neo-classical economics) or irrational (behavioural economics).

To summarize what has been said until now. Having discussed the two typical distinctions made in sociology of time (qualitative/quantitative and cyclical time/linear), I introduced a third distinction: between time of action (temporal structures) and time in action (temporal orientation). The notion of the time of actions allows us to study the temporal order of social life, the temporal structures that organize social spaces. Time in action allows us to study agency and incorporate a broad action theory that distinguishes between three phases of action (projection, performance, recollection) thereby incorporating the rational, emotional and habitual aspects of action. Focusing solely on time of action (time as sequence) we end up with a mechanistic theory: a purely structural account of the social world, where social order is reproduced or transformed without anyone contributing to its reproduction or transformation. In this account there are invisible social forces, but no actors with their projects, emotions, perceptions, memories. On the other hand if we forget time of action and focus solely on time in action (time as intention) we end up with a voluntaristic or romantic theory in which the social world is purely the realization of individual wills, with no power relations, no struggles, and no inequalities – in other words no social structures (Jaques, 1982: 197-221). This need to include both elements of time – the structural and the phenomenological – is exactly what Bourdieu had in mind when he argued that the social reality requires a “double reading” that includes both social structures and mental structures (Bourdieu, 1996b: 2-6).

### 1.1.5 The Temporal Order of Markets

"The element of Time ... is the centre of the chief difficulty of almost every economic problem."

Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics*

"The operation of the market constitutes a *process over time*, an ensemble of chains of events overlapping in time"

Janos Kornai, *Anti-Equilibrium* (1971: 226)

While much has been written about the role of time in social life, the role of time in markets has been neglected both by economists and by economic sociologists. This is unfortunate because the temporal structures of markets are important not only because, as Marx argued, they shape the temporal structures of other social domains but because they are in return shaped by the temporal structures of those spaces.

For neoclassical economists time does not play a role in the economy. As different authors pointed out an economy in equilibrium is a timeless economy. Not only is the moment of exchange not important but also the exchange itself does not take time. For neoclassical economists the exchange is an instant and not a process.

Sociological theories of markets have also de-emphasized the role of time in markets focusing instead on a synchronic analysis. Thus Richards Swedberg writes: "One strength of economic sociology is the analysis of markets is that sociologists are skilful at uncovering the social structure of a phenomenon" (Swedberg, 2005: 233). But this focus on the synchronic view of markets as social structures has come at a cost of neglecting that markets are processes.

Time is a crucial element of all economic activity. The economy is, to borrow Polanyi's underappreciated phrase, an "instituted process" (Polanyi, 2011). And both words in Polanyi's definition are important. This means that when members of the Austrian school of economics defined the market as a process (Swedberg, 1994: 260-261), they forgot to add that this process is instituted. However, when economic sociologists forcefully argue that markets are instituted, they forget to add that they are instituted *processes*. In other words, when Richard

Swedberg argues that a market is a social structure he should add that this is a *temporal structure* (Swedberg, 1994).

Possibly the best description of the market that would capture at the same time the instituted element but also the processual element was given by Janos Kornai in his book *Anti-Equilibrium* (1971). In that book Kornai argued that “the operation of the market constitutes a *process over time*, an ensemble of chains of events overlapping in time” (Kornai, 1971: 226 emphasis in original). In his definition Kornai underlines, like Austrian economists before him, the fact a market is a process but at the same time he highlights, like sociologists and anthropologists, the instituted element by writing that the market is “an ensemble”. And there could hardly be a better world than ensemble to capture the instituted element since an ensemble is defined as “all the parts of anything taken together so that each part is considered only in relation to the whole” (Dictionary). The only problem with this definition is that Kornai speaks of “the market” in the singular while it would be better to speak about markets in plural (Aspers, 2011).

The fact that markets are a temporal structure influences how we look at market coordination (Beckert, 2009b). To capture market coordination strong emphasis has to be put on the fact *that coordination is a process*. First, market actors have to find each other, that is, they have to synchronize with each other in terms of time and space. This is not a simple matter, especially when market actors are in a hurry or they are moving around. However, once the two sides do find each other the problem of cooperation is not resolved. The market exchange itself is not an instant, as neoclassical economists assume, but rather a process and throughout the process the cooperation between the two sides has to be sustained. To make this abstract theoretical point more concrete: during my fieldwork I was told several stories of how taxi drivers would tell their passengers, who were insulting them, to please leave the cab, thus terminating the exchange before it was meant to end. I was also told individual situations of passengers who left the cab, terminating the exchange, because they became offended by something said by the taxi driver or because they thought that the taxi driver was cheating them by taking a detour. Even though these cases are rare they help us see that market exchange is a process that unfolds in time and that cooperation has to be sustained throughout the whole period.

This unfolding of market coordination over time and the temporal structures of the market were well captured by Bourdieu in his study of the housing market. Bourdieu described the exchange in the housing market as a structured process:



“The exchange is organized in a three-phase structure, which, with a few variations, was found in all the cases studied. What varies is the speed – and bluntness – with which the salesperson takes over the transaction and, more broadly, *the tempo of the exchange*: sometimes the salesperson takes the exchange in hand from the outset; at other times, the process is more gradual and the client's efforts to retake the initiative have some degree of success and consequently last for some time” (Bourdieu, 2005: 150 - emphasis in original).

A similar observation about the temporal structures of market exchanges was made more recently by Josh Whitford who analysed market transactions in the manufacturing industry using the metaphor of a waltz: “a dance in which the moves available to dancers are, in any given step, relatively structured, even as there is considerable room for creativity and even small scale innovation in their performance” (Whitford, 2012: 260).

Like in other social spaces the temporal order of markets can be studied by asking *when* and *how long*. When does the exchange take place and when can it not take place? When does the interaction between buyer and seller begin and when does it end? When do buyers pay: before or after the exchange? When does exchange finish? When and in what order do actions take place? How long is the market exchange itself? Do the sides of the market have to wait for each other during before or during the exchange? How long do market participants wait between exchanges? How long have the two sides known each other before the exchange? The answers to those questions will vary from market to market.

The benefit of looking at the temporal structures of markets is that it allows us to create new typologies. And creating typologies is one of the main ways that economic sociologists have used to develop theories. Unlike neoclassical economists who have an abstract notion of “the market”, sociologists look at markets (in the plural) and compare them by looking for differences and similarities across particular cases (Aspers, 2011).

Until now two such classifications have been introduced: the first one distinguishes between fixed role markets and switch role markets; the other between status markets and standard markets. In some markets roles are fixed, while in others actors switch between being a buyer and seller; in some markets there is a standard product being exchanged, while in others products are differentiated based on the status – or the symbolic capital – of their producers (Aspers, 2011).

These two typologies are very useful as they allow us to highlight certain features of markets and explain the strategies of market participants. Both will be applied to classify the particular case of the Warsaw taxi market, as they help to make sense of certain practices of market participants. As I will show the Warsaw taxi market constitutes a status market where companies can be distinguished based on their symbolic capital. This is very different from other taxi markets where the state forces a standard upon market participants (e.g. same colour of taxis, a specific type of car, or fixed price per kilometre). The Warsaw taxi market is also a switch role market. Although taxi drivers very rarely become customers of taxi services, I show in chapter 6 that they sometimes strategically enter the taxi market as customers as a form of political action and an element of the competitive struggle. A taxi driver orders a taxi service which he or she thinks will be provided by a driver without the appropriate taxi licence and then report this to the authorities, thus helping the state in capturing drivers who do not possess a taxi licence and at the same time limiting competition.

But, enlightening as the two typologies are, we also need additional typologies to classify markets based on a temporal dimension. Neither the status/standard distinction nor the fixed role/switch role distinction allows us to grasp that markets vary on a *temporal dimension*, which I argue is crucial if we want to understand taxi markets. By looking at temporal dimension of markets we can complement Patrik Aspers' classifications with four additional typologies: duration of opening time, duration of interaction between the seller and the buyer, the waiting time of market participants, and temporal flexibility of the product/service. I place the Warsaw taxi market within each of them

Firstly, by looking at the temporal order of markets, we can distinguish markets with regards to their opening time. We can distinguish between markets that are always open and those that are not. Although very simple, the focus on opening time is important as it allows us to see the evolution of capitalism. We can study the development of capitalism not only by looking at how capitalism spread in geographical space – as markets developed in new countries; or social space – as social spaces like family care, education, and health care previously exempt from market forces became commodities; but also in terms of expansion of markets in temporal space. The development of capitalism marks an evolution from societies with markets or bazaars held once a week and a calendar centred around the one market day (Goody, 1968), to societies where more products are exchanged in markets that are open longer. In contemporary capitalism some markets are always open (e.g. eBay, Amazon) turning capitalism into a 24 hour economy. The taxi market belongs to this 24 hour economy.

This fact helps us understand why taxi drivers often have the illusion that there is always a possibility to earn money. Unlike a plumber or a hairdresser, a taxi driver can enter the market at any point of time hoping to catch a client.

Secondly, markets can be classified depending on the duration of market exchange. In some markets the relationship between the buyer and seller is brief. Thus the taxi market, for example, is characterized by a fleeting relationship between the taxi driver and his fare (Davis, 1959). Before the interactions the two sides of the exchange often do not know each other and the exchange itself takes less than half an hour. In some markets, like the stock market, the duration of exchange can be milliseconds. In others, like a passenger flying from Cologne to New York the duration of exchange can last several hours. On the other side of the time spectrum there are market exchanges that unfold over longer period. Thus in the exchange between the state and construction company that is building an airport can last years. The duration of exchange will influence the type of relation that will be established between the two sides and the informational order of the market: what the two sides know and what they do not know about each other.

Looking at the duration of the market exchange enables us to see the temporal dimension of market struggles. Struggles over duration take place both between competitors and between the two sides of a market. In many markets competitors are competing over how *fast* they can provide a service trying to limit the *waiting time* of buyers. They also compete over how *quickly* the exchange will take place. But conflicts over temporality also take place between the two sides of market exchange. These struggles have to do with the fact that one side of the exchange might be interested in speeding up the process of exchange, while the other side might be interested in slowing it down. I describe this temporal dimension of market struggle that takes place in the taxi market in chapter 3 (see 3.3 *Market exchange as a process and conflicts over speed*).

Thirdly, by looking at who waits for whom in the process that is the market exchange, we can distinguish between buyers' markets and sellers' markets. Looking at waiting time in markets allows us to move away from theories of market equilibrium towards theories of anti-equilibrium or disequilibrium (Kornai, 2013, Kornai, 1971, Schwartz, 1974). In situations of market disequilibrium, as the market does not clear, there is a surplus of demand or supply. In other words in disequilibrium one side of the market has to wait for the other. And, as I have already argued, having people wait is a source of power. Waiting time turns horizontal relations between the buyer and the seller into relations of unequal distribution of power. By

looking at who waits for whom in the market we can distinguish between buyers' markets and sellers' markets. If producers/suppliers wait for their customers it is a buyers' market and if the customers have to wait for the producers/suppliers it is a sellers' market. The Warsaw taxi market is a perfect illustration of this. In chapter 4 I show how the transformation from socialism to capitalism led to change in the power relations between taxi drivers and their clients. During socialism there was a shortage of taxis in Warsaw and passengers had to wait at taxi stands. This meant that when taxi drivers arrived at the stands they could choose their clients from the long queue waiting for them. They could choose the one that suited them best. With the introduction of capitalism the taxi market transformed from surplus demand to surplus supply. Thus by looking at who waits for whom we can see that the market transformed from a sellers' market to a buyers' market. On a more macro level, by introducing temporality and departing from theories of market equilibrium, we are better able to explain the dynamics of capitalist systems (Beckert, 2013a, Kornai, 2013).

Fourthly, by looking at the temporal order of markets, we can distinguish markets based on the *temporal flexibility* of the products or services being exchanged. On the one side of the spectrum there are certain markets where the exact moment of the interaction between buyer and seller is not important. The product or service traded in that market has a high temporal flexibility. Of course time matters in all markets as buyers and sellers have to coordinate in time if the exchange is even to take place, but the exact moment of this exchange is not significant. On the other side of the spectrum there are products and services that have low temporal elasticity. In those markets the moment of exchange is crucial because it is an intrinsic element of the product or service being exchanged. To give examples: it usually does not matter for a client whether she buys her house or gets her groceries on a Tuesday or a Wednesday afternoon. She might pay a different price but she gets the same product. But if a taxi corporation would inform a client and tell her that she unfortunately would not be able to take the cab now, but has to wait 30 minutes, she would not be happy and would likely look for another corporation. In the taxi market clients will not wait as there is a high sense of urgency: they want to get somewhere. In other words, to put this more formally, taxis leaving the same address at different times have to be regarded as *heterogeneous goods*, whereas for example groceries bought at different times can be regarded as *homogenous goods*.

Goods and services become heterogeneous across time in those markets in which the moment of exchange has a qualitative dimension in the sense that it provides *additional meaning* to the

product/service being exchanged. As Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood pointed out, this is often the case with consumption goods. They write:

“The most general objective of the consumer can only be to construct an intelligible universe with the goods he chooses. How does this cognitive construction proceed? To start with, a social universe needs a demarcated temporal dimension. The calendar has to be notched for annual, quarterly, monthly, weekly, daily and shorter periodicities. The passage of time can then be laden with meaning. The calendar gives a principle for rotation of duties for establishing precedence, for review and reveal. Another year passed a new beginning; 25 years, a silver jubilee; 100, 200 year, a centennial or bicentennial celebration; there is a time for living and a time for dying, a time for loving. Consumption goods are used for notching off these intervals: their range in quality arises from the need to differentiate through the calendar year and the life cycle.”  
(Douglas and Isherwoow, 2002: 43-44)

In the case of taxi markets and other transportation markets the meaning is usually quite pragmatic: it is a matter of being on time or not wasting time; getting to work or from work; catching a plane; coming home safe after a party. In other cases the meaning has a more symbolic dimension: a fir tree sold in December becomes a Christmas tree; a pumpkin sold before Halloween becomes a future jack-o'-lantern; a turkey sold before Thanksgiving becomes a Thanksgiving turkey; a costume becomes a carnival costume. In case of some goods and services *the moment of exchange magically transforms the product or service that is being exchanged*. Although on any other day turkeys, chickens and ducks could be treated as substitute goods, a duck arriving at a thanksgiving table would raise many eyebrows. Not eating a turkey on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November is very different from not eating a turkey on the 25<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup>. Likewise to understand the demand and supply of taxis on the night between 31<sup>st</sup> December and 1<sup>st</sup> January we have to understand the meaning of the New Year's Eve (chapter 8). In both cases it is impossible to understand the temporal feature of the market by starting from the individual and without discussing interactions and institutions. Put differently, understanding the temporal structures of demand requires looking at the *cultural anchoring of time*, that is looking at the meaning that actors attribute to certain events or certain periods.

Thus if the temporal structures of the political field can be studied by looking at the election cycle, and in the academic field by looking at the academic year, studying the temporal structures of the market requires studying institutional and interactional foundation of *market*

*time* (exchange cycle, business cycle, demand cycle, supply cycle, duration of exchange). The goal is to show how the temporal structures of markets are entangled in the temporal structures of other social domains.

### **1.1.6 Time in Taxi Markets and Other Linking Ecologies**

Even though time matters in all markets, time is especially important in taxi markets. Taxi markets are fundamentally about time. This is because taxi markets are *linking ecologies*: they are social spaces that connect other social spaces with each other.

Taxi market is a *linking ecology* because taxis allow people to move from one location to another, from one social domain to another. Taxis link: they connect the businessmen with the pilot, who is flying his flight; the patient with the doctor she is scheduled to meet; the student with the party that he is going to attend. People take taxis to coordinate their activities but since these activities are often structured by calendars and schedules, the demand for taxis is structured by those calendars and schedules.

The fact that the taxi market is a *linking ecology* has important implications for the structure of the market. The fact that economy of scale play an important role a taxi market, with the bigger companies benefitting from their size, it is not, as in other markets, because they are able to provide a cheaper product (in fact often they have a more expensive product), but because having more taxis out in the city they are able to cover the city and provide their service faster than other corporations. A smaller company, which does not have enough taxis to cover the whole city at each point in time, can compete with them only if it has a cheaper product. The temporal inelasticity explains also the fact that taxi drivers spend much of their time waiting: they have to be always available, since the passenger will not wait for them.

All transportation markets (airline, trains, and couriers) can be conceptualized as *linking ecologies* that connect different social worlds with each other. As linking ecologies these markets are structured by the temporal architecture that is social life. The Hungarian economist Janos Kornai very recently observed the role of time with reference to the airline industry: “Does it console passengers unable to leave on the 9 am flight from Budapest to Copenhagen that there were empty seats on the 7 pm flight to the same destination? They may have had important appointments” (Kornai, 2013: 84). This feature of the airline market, argues Kornai, makes it very difficult to talk about “aggregate demand” and “aggregate supply” since we are aggregating heterogeneous goods across time. Low temporal elasticity of

products explains why much of the struggle in the airline market takes place over good “time slots”: the privilege of being able to land and take off at a given airport at a specific time. Similarly the fact that the railroad market is a *linking ecology* explains why the development of railroads went hand in hand with the standardization of time (Barak, 2013, Dobbin, 1997). More recently the fact that market for Internet providers can also be conceptualized as a *linking ecology* helps to explain the recent struggle against “net neutrality” and the ability to send content faster to some clients than to others. A similar situation takes place in stock markets with the recent struggle taking place over high-frequency trading.

## 1.2 Work and Action: Defining Working Time

"Human work is such a pivotal activity that the discipline of economics could not exist without focus on it; as for sociology, it has its roots in early but still well cited founding fathers Durkheim, Weber and Marx."  
Anselm Strauss, *Continual Permutation of Action* (1993: 81)

"It is one of the commonplaces of received economic theory that work is irksome. Many a discussion proceeds on this axiom that, so far as regards economic matters, men desire above all things to get the goods produced by labour and to avoid the labour by which the goods are produced."  
Thorsten Veblen, *Instinct of Workmanship and the Irksomeness of Labour* (1898a: 187)

Studying the *working* time of taxi drivers requires a clarification of what we mean by the concept of work. Depending on the definition we use we end up studying different practices. If we argue that taxi drivers work only when they drive with passengers, we focus on different practices than when we argue that they also work when they are waiting for passengers or even when they are performing housework.

Both behavioural and neoclassical economists studying taxi drivers do not reflect on the notion of work, taking it for granted, but their models contain certain underlying assumptions that should be spelled out since they have important implications for their findings. Economic models are founded on three assumptions. The first assumption is that work is wage work. The second assumption is that wage work is irksome. The third assumption is that everything that is not work can be considered leisure. These assumptions are not specific to the particular case of taxi drivers but, as Veblen pointed out, have been characteristic of much of mainstream economic thought since the XIX century. A modern textbook of labour

economics teaches us that actors choose their hours of work based on a labour – leisure trade-off: people work only to be able to later consume and they abstain from consuming now to be able to work and consume later.

However, although the assumption of work being a mere mean for future consumptions helps modelling behaviour, it prevents us from understanding the actual labour practices. The first problem with assuming work to be solely an activity for which people are paid is that in many cases it is very difficult to distinguish those activities. When exactly is a person getting paid for work? In case of factory workers it is quite clear – time spent in the factory or corporation is their working time; but what about employers, independent contractors and entrepreneurs, who make up a growing part of the labour force. Is a businessman at a business lunch working? Is a taxi driver waiting at a taxi stand or at a parking lot working? This is a problem for economists trying to model taxi drivers' behaviour. To deal with it economists relax their assumptions and presume that taxi drivers work when they are “at work”, that is when they are in a taxi. This includes moments when they are driving with clients and moments when they are waiting for passengers, hoping to find a fare.

The second, more fundamental, problem of defining work as paid work is that, as sociologists and feminist economists have pointed out, the definition disregards everything that happens outside of the market. Economists studying taxi drivers simply assume that time spent outside of paid work is time spent on leisure and consumption. Activities that take place in the household such as cleaning, taking care of children and elderly, shopping are treated as non-work. In the neoclassical model the taxi driver stops working when “the marginal utility of leisure increased to the point at which it was optimal to stop” (Farber, 2005). Thus once out of the cab, taxi driver is no longer working. Behavioural economics, abandoning the optimization element of the model, keep this clear distinction between work and leisure. But how can we be sure about this? What if it would turn out that in certain situations work is seen as preferable to staying at home? By simply assuming that work is irksome, economists neglect the attitudes of actors towards their work. But sociologists have shown that attitudes towards work vary: in certain situations work can be treated as calling (Weber, 1958), in others as a mere necessity for survival leaving actors with feeling of alienation (Marx, 1867), or a way of escaping family responsibilities (Hochschild, 1997). Even the same work can sometimes be seen as obligation or passion depending on the tasks performed or on a mood of a person who performs them. Some of my informants enjoyed their jobs while others – unable to make a virtue out of necessity – hated it. In chapter 6 I show that many taxi drivers find



household responsibilities more tiring than driving a cab, and how they use work to escape from household responsibilities and obligations. For drivers working long hours, like for the families studied by Arlie Hochschild, home becomes work and work becomes home, thus turning the economic model of time allocation on its head.

The third reason why economic assumptions are problematic is that they make a clear dichotomy between work and consumption. But there is no reason, other than for the sake of modelling, why time has to be allocated, as Gary Becker argued, between work and consumption (Abbott, 2014: 9). People are able to multitask. Taxi drivers, spending so much of their time at work, often bring their hobbies and consumption practices to work as they listen to music while driving with passengers, or play games on smartphones while waiting for them. Sometimes driving itself is at the same time work and consumptions. Some drivers spend 14 hours a day, 6 days a week in their taxis to be able to afford a luxurious car, which they then drive as a taxi, not only because it earns them more money, but because they like driving a luxurious car. In this way, the boundary between work and leisure and the time allocated to production and to consumption become blurred.

Although sociologists like economists sometimes use a restrictive notion of work, especially in sociology of occupations and professions, sociologists usually have a much more inclusive definition of work. For example, Keith Grint writes in his *Sociology of Work*: “Work tends to be an activity that transforms nature and is usually undertaken in social situations, but exactly what counts as work is dependent on the specific social circumstances under which such activities are undertaken, and, critically, how these circumstances and activities are interpreted by those involved” (Grint, 2005: 9). Chris and Charles Tilly define the notion of work in *Work under Capitalism* as “any human effort adding use value to goods and services. However much their performers may enjoy or loathe the effort, conversation, song, decoration, pornography, table-setting, gardening, housecleaning and repair of broken toys, all involve work to the extent that they increase satisfactions their consumers gain from them” (Tilly and Tilly, 1998: 22). For Anselm Strauss, who centres his pragmatist theory of action on the notion of work, work is equivalent with “working things out”, which he understands as “the interactional process through which arrangements are established, kept going, and revised” (Corbin and Strauss, 1993: 73). An almost identical definition of work can be found in the work of Viviana Zelizer, who roots her theory of economic action on the notion of *relational work* defined as “the creative effort people make establishing, maintaining, negotiating, transforming, and terminating interpersonal relations.” (Zelizer, 2012: 149)

There are benefits to this broad definition. Firstly, it breaks the dichotomy between work and leisure which, as I have already pointed out, is problematic. Work is no longer treated as a purely market phenomenon, but one that can be political and domestic as well. Secondly, the sociological definition puts an emphasis on the attitudes that actors have towards their actions and brings out the meanings that they give to the notion of work. Depending on the situation work can be a passion or a drag. As this approach looks at how work is defined by actors, it shows that what is considered work varies between people.<sup>9</sup> Thirdly it highlights the struggles over “work”. Social struggles, as Bourdieu argued, are often struggles over classifications (Bourdieu, 1984: 481- 486). Being able to classify an activity as “work” is an important stake in social struggles. Thus the feminist movement has been struggling to get activities done within the household (cleaning, shopping, cooking, taking care of children and elderly), not taken into account by economic indicators such as GDP, to be perceived as “real work”. Classifying activities as work is not only a matter of symbolic recognition. Defining an activity as “work” can have material consequences as well, for example when during divorce and inheritance trials housewives and caretakers are awarded compensation for their previous “work” (Zelizer, 2005b).

But there are also certain problems with this broad definition of work, just like there are problems with the substantial definition of economic action. Firstly, with a broader definition of work, work becomes almost indistinguishable from the notion of action understood as “doing something”. With such a broad definition of work as the one provided by Viviana Zelizer and Anselm Strauss, it turns out that no interaction would escape the definition of work as it would be difficult to come up with an example of a relationship that would not require establishing, maintaining and terminating. If we look at examples of work provided by Anselm Strauss, it includes such diverse actions as organizing a political campaign, going through therapy, keeping a marriage, raising a child, and learning how to ski (Strauss 1993: 94). We can only agree with Andrew Abbot when he points out that in sociological work “the boundary between leisure and work is hopelessly obscure” (Abbott, 2005c: 309)

Thus, if I would define work so broadly it would make it very difficult to provide an answer to my research question. Asking why taxi drivers’ work when they work would become synonymous with asking: why do taxi drivers do what they do? And since taxi drivers do a lot of things besides working (in the narrow sense), such a study would become a description of

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<sup>9</sup> For example Bourdieu was able to show that in Algeria people doing similar activities would see themselves either as “working” or as “unemployed” depending on their social background (Bourdieu 1979).

endless number of practices. Incorporating the broad definition of work is also problematic since it introduces a different explanandum than the one that economists are trying to explain. Choosing a different definition of work (a broader one or a narrower one) would mean comparing two different phenomena. But I am interested in providing a different answer to the same phenomenon. That is why when I ask why taxi drivers work when they work I follow economists and look at the time they spend on driving the passengers and waiting for them. In other words, I will be studying what I call *earning time* and *waiting time*. But what I take from the vast sociological literature on work discussed above is that in order to understand working practices in the narrow sense we will have to take a look at working practices in the broad sense.

In this dissertation I argue that in order to understand the *working time* of taxi drivers we have to look, like economists do, at *earning time* and the *waiting time* but, unlike economist, also look at *political time* and *domestic time*. This is because the structures and events of the political domain and the domestic domain structure the *earning time* and *waiting time* of taxi drivers. We thus arrive at the equation:

$$\textbf{Working time of taxi drivers} = \textbf{earning time} + \textbf{waiting time} + \textbf{political time} + \textbf{domestic time}$$

## Chapter 2. *Working Time* as a Total Social Fact

“In our opinion, nothing is more urgent or more fruitful than this study of total social facts”

Marcel Mauss, *Essay on the Gift* (2005: 102)

“Thus, economic phenomena have meaning only in the total context in which they function or take place.”

Henry W. Briefs, *Three Views of Method in Economics* (1960: 18)

For different authors working time provided a vantage point to discuss different aspects of society. Karl Marx used working time to describe the on-going struggles between capital and labour and the shifting power relations between classes in a capitalist society (Marx, 1867). According to Marx, and many authors that followed in his tradition, analysing the working day meant treating it as a *political phenomenon*, which required the study of collective action and state regulation. The length of the working day was contingent and dependent on the relations of power between different social classes. Marx was also interested in the effects of machines on the working time of individuals, thereby showing it to be a *technological phenomenon*. Max Weber famously analysed the relationship between protestant ethic and capitalism by looking at the different working times of protestant and catholic workers (Weber, 1958). For Weber the working day was a *religious* and a *cultural phenomenon*. Working time of individuals was determined not, as Marx saw it, by social structures, but rather by culture: understanding the working day meant exploring the values and habits of actors, their attitudes towards work. Arlie Hochschild and many feminists following her have shown that working time varies between the sexes and that working day should be understood as a *gendered phenomenon* (Hochschild, 1997, Hochschild and Machung, 1989). Many anthropologists and historians have shown that working time varies across time and space and should therefore be treated as a *historical phenomenon*. Marshal Sahlins argued that – contrary to our common sense convictions – hunter-gatherer societies had much less work time and much more leisure time than modern capitalist societies (Sahlins, 2004). For Sahlins hunter-gatherers were the original affluent society and it was only with the rise of capitalism that people started working more (Sahlins, 2004). This transformation from a pre-capitalist society into capitalist one was portrayed by Jacques Le Goff and E.P Thompson. Le Goff

looked at how working time emerged out of a struggle between merchants and church in medieval Europe (Le Goff, 1982). E.P Thompson looked at the creation of discipline and self-discipline and the emergence of certain working habits among the working classes at the birth of capitalism (Thompson, 1967). Historians' perception of the working day as a historical phenomenon means looking at contingency: how working time emerged out of a struggle between different actors: employers, employees, labour unions, state, church.

What I take from those authors, for my own study on taxi drivers' working time, is that working time is not only a social fact, in the Durkheimian sense, but rather a "total social fact". Total social fact was a notion used by Marcel Mauss who argued that certain phenomena "involve the totality of society and its institutions (...) and in other cases only a very large number of institutions (...) [They] are at the same time juridical, economic, religious and even aesthetic and morphological (...) political and domestic." (Mauss, 2005: 100-101). The notion of a total social fact was later developed by Georges Gurvitch, a student and a friend of Marcel Mauss, who argued that the concept of total social fact should be the central concept of sociology (Bosserman, 1968, Gurvitch, 1964). He also argued that studying total social facts requires putting the problem of social time at the centre of sociological inquiries, which would bridge the division between history and sociology. The notion was then reintroduced into economic sociology by Bourdieu who wrote:

The science called 'economics' is based on an initial act of abstraction that consists in dissociating a particular category of practices, or a particular dimension of all practice, from the social order in which all human practice is immersed. This immersion, some aspects or effects of which one finds in Karl Polanyi's notion of 'embeddedness', obliges us (even when, for the purposes of increasing knowledge, we are forced to treat it otherwise) to conceive every practice, beginning with the practice which presents itself, most obviously and in the strictest sense, as 'economic', as 'total social fact' in Marcel Mauss's sense (Bourdieu, 2005: 1 )

Treating working day as a total social fact has methodological implications. Bourdieu who reintroduced the notion of a total social fact into economic sociology, argued that to

understand economic phenomena as total social facts, is “to bring to bear all the available knowledge relating to the different dimensions of the social order – which we may list, in no particular order, as the family, the state, the school system, the trade unions, grassroots organizations” (Bourdieu, 2005: 1 - 2).<sup>10</sup>

In my work I follow Mauss, Gurvitch and Bourdieu. I analyse the working time of taxi drivers as a total social fact. In order to do so I look at different institutional domains, levels of analysis and temporal foci. In chapters 3 – 5 I look at the taxi market situating it in the larger economy, in chapters 6 and 7 I look at politics, and in chapter 8 at the domestic domain. I “zoom in” and “zoom out” in terms of the temporal foci (Cicourel, 2006). While I focus on the eventfulness and uncertainty of the everyday, I try to situate it in the larger temporal framework and, at times, even in the *long durée*.

In order to approach working time as a total social fact and answer the research question of why taxi drivers work when they work, I ask a series of more specific questions:

- 1) Why does the demand for taxis vary over time? What temporal structures shape the demand for taxis over time? Where do they come from? (Chapter 3)
- 2) What role does the state have in shaping the demand for taxis? (Chapter 3)
- 3) Why is there a surplus supply of taxi drivers in Warsaw and why do taxi drivers spend time waiting at the taxi stand? (Chapters 4 and 5)
- 4) Why was the working day of taxi drivers in Warsaw structured differently before 1989 and after 1989? (Chapter 4)
- 5) How do people become taxi drivers? (Chapter 4)
- 6) How do taxi drivers make labour decisions on an everyday basis? What strategies do they use? (Chapter 5)
- 7) How do taxi drivers fight to improve their working conditions? Are they successful? (Chapters 6 and 7)
- 8) What role does the legal field and the political field have on the taxi market? (Chapters 7 and 8)
- 9) How do technical devices influence the working day of taxi drivers? (Chapters 4, 5, 7, 8)

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<sup>10</sup> A similar approach was introduced into economics by institutional economists who argued in favour of a “holistic approach” to economic phenomena. This approach was developed by Allan Gruchy, who argued that “Each aspect of the economy must therefore be analysed within the context of the cultural whole in which it functions” GRUCHY, A. G. 1947. *Modern Economic Thought: The American Contribution* New York, Prentice-Hall, INC. .

- 10) How do taxi drivers try to change their working conditions through collective action, and are they successful? (Chapters 6 and 7)
- 11) How do the processes and structures of the domestic domain influence the labour strategies of taxi drivers? (Chapter 8)

## 2.1 Case Selection

"A single case, if well chosen and adequately analysed, can be enormously informative. (...) The development of an adequately explanatory vocabulary for historical social science depends crucially on such theoretically motivated explorations of particular cases"

William Sewell, *Logics of History* (2005: 317)

This dissertation is a single case study. Firstly, it is a single case study in that it focuses on *one topic* discussed currently by economists – the working time of taxi drivers – and aims at providing an alternative explanation thereby showing the contemporary relevance of economic sociology. Secondly, it is a single case study as it studies the working day of taxi drivers in *one location*, in Warsaw.

Why taxi drivers? What makes taxi drivers particularly interesting for economists is that, „unlike most workers in modern economies, [taxi drivers] are free to choose their own hours [of work]” (Crawford and Meng, 2011: 1912). Thus, according to behavioural economists, taxi drivers present a *critical case* for neoclassical theories of labour. If *even* taxi drivers are not free and rational in their choices – in the way that neoclassical economists assume them to be free and rational – then the neoclassical theory is not likely to be suitable for all other occupations where individuals are *less* free to choose their labour strategies.<sup>11</sup> The authors of the original study were aware of the nature and weight of their findings, as they wrote in the conclusion: “Because evidence of negative labour supply responses to transitory wage changes is *so much at odds with conventional economic wisdom, these results should be treated with caution*” (Camerer et al., 1997: 433 - emphasis mine). Moreover, the studies on taxi drivers’ working time are not a marginal topic, but are considered to be one of the major

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<sup>11</sup> This is something Juliet Schor points out in her critique of the neoclassical view. “The crux of the neoclassical story is that workers determine hours. But do they? Not according to the evidence. Every study I have seen on this topic has found that workers lack free choice of hours. They are limited in both how much and how little they can work” SCHOR, J. 1991. *The Overworked American : the unexpected decline of leisure*, [New York, N.Y.], Basic Books.

findings of behavioural economics, and thus engaging with this topic allows to engage more broadly with the whole discipline of behavioural economics.

But more than just being a critical case for neoclassical theories of labour supply, the study of taxi drivers' working time can be treated as a *paradigmatic case* for economic sociology, as it allows us to introduce the element of time into economic sociology. Studying the taxi market and taxi drivers' working time allowed me to develop a broader approach and a series of concepts that can be used to study the role of time in the economy. These concepts can be later used to analyse time in other markets where it the temporal dimension is more difficult to see.

Why taxi drivers *in Warsaw*? One of the theoretical interests of this dissertation was to look at how the working time of taxi drivers is the result of processes happening both at the micro level – that is the individual choices of taxi drivers “deciding” each day when and how long to work; and at the meso and the macro levels of social structures . Economists focus only on the former, neglecting the latter. But to study how meso and macro level influences working time requires taking on a case where meso and macro level structures underwent changes and then analysing whether those changes were reflected on the micro level of the working time of taxi drivers. Such a change took place in Warsaw as Poland underwent a transformation from socialism to capitalism, which, as I argue in chapters 4 reshaped the working time of taxi drivers. As Janos Kornai has argued, when we study socialist and post-socialist countries we are able to shed new light on the elements of the capitalist system which are otherwise less visible simply because they are taken for granted: “Perhaps comparing capitalism with another system—with its opposite, in a sense—allows me to see in it something not noticed by fellow economists living within it who are unable to free themselves of their accustomed outlook” (Kornai, 2013: 52).

## **2.2 Methods**

Deciding on a single case study meant having the opportunity to reach a level of in-depth knowledge about the studied subject which would be very difficult to achieve in a multi-case study. The goal of my research was to acquire deep knowledge of the single case. Therefore my research is based on diverse methods: qualitative interviews, participant observation, survey, data analysis. I have gathered and analysed different types of data: archival material, newspaper articles, taxi drivers' calendars, Internet forums, videos and photos, statistical yearbooks.



I gained the background knowledge about Warsaw taxi drivers through following the main taxi Internet forums. Much of the social life of taxi drivers, especially younger taxi drivers, currently takes place online. In Warsaw there are three main taxi Internet forums and one taxi labour union forum. The biggest forum has more than 1,200 accounts, not all of which are taxi drivers' (I have an account); only some are regular readers and less than 50 are very active. The biggest Facebook page has more than 450 followers but many corporations and labour union have their own websites. Internet forums are important places for the exchange of information. Topics range from organizing protests, through passing on important information related to specific corporations to discussions about cars and hobbies. Sometimes people who want to become drivers or who have recently started working as cab drivers pose questions to other participants. Before starting my fieldwork I have read these forums on a day-to-day basis and continued to read them through my fieldwork and after. This provided me with background knowledge used subsequently during the interviews and when constructing the survey; and helped me in interpreting them afterwards. Internet forums are especially a good source of data on the political struggles of taxi drivers, because this is where much of the collective action was coordinated and discussed (see chapters 6 and 7). Forums also provided me with access to the video footage and pictures from the protests. Moreover, participation in the forums facilitated my access to the world of taxi drivers. I used them to look for interviewees and survey respondents.

The historical overview of the Warsaw taxi market was obtained through a careful reading and analysis of the historical literature on Poland and archival materials. Especially helpful were the online archives of the magazine *Stolica*, published since 1946, focusing on events happening in Warsaw. Equally important was the Master thesis defended in the 80's at the Department of Economy, University of Warsaw, which focused on the organization of the taxi market in the 1970s – 1980s. Statistical yearbooks provided information on the number of taxi drivers throughout the XX century.

In order to gain information about the Warsaw taxi market after 1989 I drew on a more diverse set of data. I conducted desk research and I searched the archives of the two Polish newspapers (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*) for all articles that included the word “taksówkarze” (taxi drivers). From 1989 there were on the whole more than 2000 articles. I manually scanned through all the articles and downloaded those that were related to the topic of taxi drivers.

The thesis is mainly based on material gathered during fieldwork that I conducted between November 2012 and June 2013. This fieldwork was based on a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods.

### **2.2.1 Qualitative Interviews and Participant Observation**

The qualitative part of my fieldwork included participant observation of taxi drivers at taxi stands and in taxis; conducting semi-structured interviews with taxi drivers, their family members, corporate owners, labour unions leaders and regulators, and more informal conversations with taxi drivers.

During my research I conducted 20 extended semi-structured interviews with taxi drivers. They were all recorded and lasted on average 1.5 hours, but sometimes up to 3 hours. The interviews were later transcribed verbatim and read repeatedly. The interviewees were selected to represent different taxi corporations and different age groups. These interviews focused on three broad issues: work, family life, and engagement in collective action (see Appendix 3 for the guiding questions). Many of these interviews were conducted inside taxis while my informants took a break from work or were waiting for passengers. Although at first not a conscious decision on my part, interviewing drivers in their taxis turned out to be very helpful. Firstly, the semi-structured interview would sometimes lead into participant observation as drivers would at the same time talk to me about their work and perform other activities such as looking for clients on the taxi terminal, talking to their wives on the phone, or engaging with nearby drivers. Secondly, when sociologists interview people in places where they normally act, the location of the interview triggers memories and embodied knowledge, helping people to describe their practices (Lahire, 2011: 75-76). This is particularly important in the case of taxi drivers, as their knowledge is mostly tacit (see Collins, Harry 2010). Becoming a skilful taxi driver is not something that is formally learned, but is largely acquired “on the street” through practice (see chapter 4).<sup>12</sup> This tacit knowledge can be difficult to put into words. Conducting interviews in cabs helped to limit the disparity between what taxi drivers were saying that they do and what they actually do, which is one of the central problems of any interview (Jerolmack and Khan, 2014).

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<sup>12</sup>Although drivers have to go through a short training before they receive a licence and then again each time they join a new corporation, these trainings are very basic and are not taken seriously, neither by the corporations nor by the taxi drivers.

When conducting interviews with taxi drivers, I was especially interested in my interviewees' *practices* rather than in their opinions and I have always stirred the interview in that direction. Similarly, when repeatedly reading of the transcripts, I was more interested in those moments when taxi drivers would provide examples from their working day rather than describing hypothetical situations.

I have also conducted 2 interviews with the wives of taxi drivers. Other interviewees included the vice-president of Warsaw responsible for regulating the taxi market, the taxi dispatcher, the CEO of a taxi corporation (3 interviews, in total more than 6 hours). I have also recorded a group interview with the organizers of protests in 2012. And I have conducted an interview with the research assistants who helped me distribute the surveys among taxi drivers. This provided with me insights regarding how taxi drivers experienced the survey but also the perspective of people who over the course of few weeks spend much time with taxi drivers. During my fieldwork I also observed taxi drivers at taxi stands and talked to multiple taxi drivers. I took multiple cabs talking to taxi drivers and also spent one night in a drive along with a taxi driver.

In this dissertation I rely much on the interviews conducted with taxi drivers. When referring to my interviewees, I use the exact opposite approach to the one used by both behavioural and neoclassical economists. Economists have the habit of referring to economic actors in the general. Neoclassical economists speak about a *homo oeconomicus* and behavioural economists about *homo heuristicus*. This is the idea of a "representative agent" (Kirman 1992). I on the other hand speak sometimes about taxi drivers in general but often refer to my informant by first name (changed for purpose of anonymity). I thus follow the ethnographic approach best described by William Whyte who in the introduction to the *Street Corner Society* wrote:

"In this exploration of Cornerville we shall be little concerned with people in general. We shall encounter particular people and observe the particular things that they do. The general pattern of life is important, but it can be constructed only through observing the individuals whose actions make up that pattern" (Whyte, 2012: xix).

### **2.2.2 Questionnaire**

In this dissertation I also draw on questionnaire data from a survey conducted among 246 taxi drivers (2.5 % of the total population of Warsaw taxi drivers). The questionnaire was created based on the knowledge gained from qualitative interviews and reading taxi forums. The survey provided information about working practices, past work experience, attitudes towards work, family life and political engagement. The questionnaire also collected information on income, socio-economic background and type of car used. All in all the survey was made up of 105 questions (see Appendix 4).

I opted for two ways of distributing the survey. One of the ways was by finding taxi drivers on the streets (206 taxi drivers); the other by creating an online survey (40 drivers). Taxi drivers were approached either by me or by one of 4 research assistants and were asked to participate in the survey. Sometimes they would fill the questionnaire themselves, other times with the help of the interviewer. Sometimes the interview would be conducted in the presence of other taxi drivers which might have affected the answers provided by the taxi driver. In case of the Internet survey, it was promoted on the websites that taxi drivers visit (forums, Facebook page, labour union page etc.) where taxi drivers were asked to participate.

Both methods of finding respondents have weaknesses and selection biases. Looking for taxi drivers in the city means that one is more likely to find those drivers who work long hours rather than those that work for a shorter period of time. If one does the survey during the day, one is less likely to find drivers who drive during the night; if on a Monday, drivers who work weekends are excluded. If one does the survey at taxi stands, one is less likely to find drivers who do not like waiting at taxi stands etc. Although effort was put into distributing the surveys at different times of the day, in different locations, during different days of the week; this problem of selection bias could not be avoided. Likewise, online surveys also have a clear selection bias. Online surveys reach only those taxi drivers who are active users of the Internet who tend to be much younger and better educated.

Thus, the way the survey was conducted means that the sample of taxi drivers *is not a representative sample of Warsaw taxi drivers*. However, trying to obtain a representative sample of taxi drivers by selecting random taxi drivers from the larger population would have been extremely difficult. In Warsaw there are very few “gatekeeper organizations” that have information about the population. Such gatekeepers include the city authorities and taxi corporations. Labour unions are not such an organization because less than 1% of all drivers belong to a labour union. The city administration denied my petition for the information about taxi drivers in Warsaw. Engaging with taxi corporations to obtain information about taxi

drivers and sample randomly ran two great risks (Bearman, 2005: 264). If I asked the taxi corporations and they said no, conducting this research would become very difficult as corporations would likely tell their drivers not to participate in it. If I asked the taxi corporation and they said yes, I feared that taxi drivers would be much less likely to participate and to answer truthfully as the survey would be treated as coming from and supported by the corporation. From my qualitative interviews it was clear that many taxi drivers do not trust their corporations and would opt out if they knew corporations were involved.

Thus, even though the questionnaire has been a great source of information, I am careful about using the information from the survey and making inference about the whole population of taxi drivers in Warsaw. I also refrain from any statistical analysis and use the survey results only for descriptive purposes. The findings of the survey are always triangulated with the knowledge obtained through interviews and observation. The findings of my interviews and the survey should be seen as a first step that allows us to better understand why taxi drivers do what they do rather than the final statement.

## Chapter 3. *Earning Time*: The Temporal Structures of the Demand for Taxis

*The taxi driver is as if forced to work by the weather and the calendar.  
Popular name day – more work. Weekend – more work during the night.  
Monday – more work during the day.*

Andrzej, CEO of a taxi corporation, former taxi driver

“We buy a calendar each year, we buy something that is a matter of course, we buy a completely fundamental principle of structuration that is one of the foundations of social existence, and makes it possible for example to make appointments. The same can be done for the hours of the day. There is consensus about these, and I don’t know any anarchist who does not change his clock when we go over to summer time, who does not accept as a matter of course a whole set of things that relate, in the last analysis, to state power.”

Pierre Bourdieu, *On the State* (Bourdieu, 2014: 8)

The best way to start looking at the *working time* of taxi drivers is by distinguishing *earning time*. What is *earning time*? *Earning time* is the time when taxi drivers actually earn money. And when do taxi drivers earn money? Taxi drivers earn money when there is demand for their service. In Warsaw nearly all taxi drivers are paid only when they have a client and not for the time spent in between fares. Taxi drivers are thus different from other occupations, such as for example doormen who sell their labour time to an employer and get paid both when they are “in demand” and when they are waiting to be “in demand” (Bearman, 2005). When a doorman is reading a newspaper or “doing nothing” he is getting paid because he has already sold that time to his employer. But a taxi driver needs to be in demand to earn money.

However, for a sociologist the explanation that taxi drivers earn when there is demand for their service is not a satisfactory one. A sociologist asks a follow up question: why is there demand for their service? Unlike economists, who do not study the origins of individual preferences according to the well-known formula *de gustibus non est disputandum*, sociologists try to understand where preferences come from. We do this by linking preferences back to the “social context”, that is, to the institutions and interactions in which individuals are embedded (Bearman, 2005, Bourdieu, 2005, Lieberman, 2000). This is what I

aim to do in this chapter: to uncover the socio-genesis of the demand for taxis in Warsaw. In other words, to answer the question of why taxi drivers work when they work, the question I will be asking in this chapter is why do people take taxis when they take taxis?

In this chapter I argue that in order to understand *earning time* we have to understand that taxis markets are fundamentally about time. Taxi markets are about time because taxi drivers coordinate the activities of people who take them. Thus, the taxi market should be understood not only as a *liked ecology*, that is a social spaces connected to other social spaces (Abbott, 2005b), but also what I call a *linking ecology* that is a social space that connects actors both within social domains and across social domains. Because taxis are a *linking ecology* they are dependent on the rhythms of the different social spaces that is taxis are entangled in multiple coordinating agencies that structure the activities of people. I show that one of the central coordinating agency is the state which through the acts of social magic structures *public time* and the public calendar. Together with other coordinating agencies the state creates the temporal structures that structure the demand for taxis over time and thus structured the *earning time* of taxi drivers.

### **3.1 Time, Taxis and Coordinating Agencies**

Taking a taxi without a doubt includes a symbolic element of distinction. There is the opposition between taking a taxi compared to taking public transportation (lower class), having a personal driver (elite) or taking a bike (ecology and sport oriented). But this symbolic dimension is secondary to the fact that people take taxis as it allows them to move from one location to another. Rarely, if ever, do people take a taxi for the sake of taking a taxi. Although trivial, this observation has fundamental implications for our understanding of the specificity of the taxi market and the demand for taxis.

Since taxis are a means of transportation the demand for them is entangled not only in the spatial order of the city, but also in its temporal order. Passengers do not only want to move from one location (space position) to another, they want to move from one *locality* (space-time position) to another. They want to be picked up at a certain place *at a certain time* and they want to get to a certain place *before a certain point in time* (within this hour and not the next; today and not tomorrow).

But to understand the role of time in taxi markets we have to go back to the notion of time. What is time? In an in-depth analysis of the concept of time the philosopher and historian

Krzysztof Pomian writes: “what we are used to calling ‘time’ is a coordination of several movements or changes by a coordinating agency” (Pomian, 2013).<sup>13</sup> This definition of time is particularly insightful as it clearly shows time to be not only a physical phenomenon, but also a deeply *social* phenomenon. Pomian writes about the social nature of time: “An entire system of institutions looks after different movements and changes, which together represent what we are used to call ‘social life’ in order to prevent them diverging from another or that some of them enter in collision with others, which would be even worse” (Pomian, 2013). This social character of time, pointed out by Pomian, becomes even clearer if we replace the notion of movement and change with that of action which, according to Andrew Abbott (Abbott, 2001: 298), are the same. Thus, one way of defining social time is that *social time is a coordination of several social actions by a coordinating agency*.

This definition of time shows that time and taxis are closely related. Although, according to Pomian, time as such cannot be observed, coordination agencies and the actions they coordinate can. Pomian recognizes diverse agencies, institutions and devices, responsible for the coordination of social life in contemporary societies: calendars; the international office of weights and measures responsible for the standard of the second; regulation of working time; public clocks; train, bus and plane timetables; watches; mobile phones and computers; diaries. To Pomian’s list of coordinating agencies one should add the different means of transportation and communication (Dohrn-van Rossum, 1996: 324-350): trains, cars, planes, the Internet and taxis. Taxis serve a similar function to that of watches, calendars and schedules – they coordinate actions of people who use them. This can mean coordinating two businessmen meeting for lunch; coordinating a person taking a flight with the schedule of the pilot who is flying the plane; a patient with the doctor who she is scheduled to meet; or a student with a party that she is going to attend. In other words taxis are a coordinating agency.

But taxi drivers do not only coordinate, like watches or calendars, but they also *transport*. Because taxis are a coordinating agency the taxi market can be conceptualized as a *linking ecology* that is as social space which connects social actors with each other. Taxis coordinate

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<sup>13</sup>Pomian explains this definition of time: “to measure ‘time’ is to establish such a relation between two movements, the movement of the hands of my watch and the movement of the reference clock that the speed of the former must be equal to the speed of the latter. In other words, to measure is to coordinate these two movements with respect to their speeds. And now, what am I doing when I am determining my position in “time”? To find out today’s date, I take the calendar or the agenda and I look for the appropriate page, turning over or tearing out previous pages. In order to obtain a correct result, the number of pages I turn over or tear out must correspond one-to-one to the number of days, that’s to say of sunrises and sunsets, since the beginning of the year. In other words, the movement of turning over or tearing down must be coordinated with the apparent movement of the sun.” POMIAN, K. 2013. On Time Available: <http://www.iwm.at/read-listen-watch/transit-online/on-time/>.



actions both within domains and across social domains. By transporting people from one location to another, taxis connect the businessmen with the pilot, the patient with the doctor, the worker with her company, the social science professor going to an interview with a TV journalist. As a *linking ecology* the taxi market is a way of solving the coordination problem in modern cities. There are other ways of solving this problem: private cars, public transportation and bikes; and in different cities the problem has been solved in diverse ways.<sup>14</sup>

To recapitulate, taxis are a coordinating agency. According to Pomian coordinating agencies allow social life to unfold “almost smoothly” (Pomian, 2013). The use of the modifier *almost* is very significant for our understanding of the demand for taxis. Firstly, the fact that “social life unfolds *almost* smoothly” points our attention towards all those situations where it *does not* unfold smoothly, where coordination is in danger, where people are under (time) pressure as they are either late (behind time) or almost too late (running out of time). And it is precisely in in such situations, when time is of an essence, that taxis are often used.

Secondly, the fact that “social life unfolds *almost* smoothly” is important because it prevents us from taking on an overly functional view on coordination and allows us to introduce an element of conflict into our perspective on social life and hence on the life of taxi drivers. If the social life unfolds *almost* smoothly, this is not only because there are problems with coordination, but also because there are conflicts over coordination (Beckert, 2009b). We have to remember that coordination is not mere cooperation and that different coordinating agencies live in what, following Krzysztof Pomian, can be defined as a *conflictual coexistence* with each other (Pomian, 1984).

### **3.2 Taxis and the Temporal Architecture of Social Life**

If it is worth pointing out the, at times, fragile character of the temporal order of social life, this is because it is often precisely in those moments, when the temporal order is under threat, when coordination seems to fail, that taxis come in handy and are used. Andrzej the CEO of a taxi corporation explains:

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<sup>14</sup> Thus as coordination agency taxis are entangled in other coordinating agencies. The demand for taxis is dependent on public transportation and cars. For example in New York cabs (“gypsy cabs”) have often been used by the poorer members of the population due to lack of good public transportation, and in Northern Ireland taxis have been used due to low number of cars in the city GAMBETTA, D. H., HEATHER 2005. *Streetwise how taxi drivers establish customers' trustworthi*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation.

*Taxi drivers are often perceived negatively because they are often used in situations which are problematic (...). A woman overslept and will be late for work – taxi. Somebody is late – taxi. The car broke down – taxi. Somebody is ill and needs to go to the doctor – taxi. Somebody died and another person is not able to drive – taxi.*

This qualitative statement can be backed by quantitative survey data. According to the survey conducted on behalf of the smartphone corporation iTaxi, 47% of taxi customers take taxis when they are in a hurry to get somewhere, 35% when getting to places that are hard to reach, 20% when their car breaks down (BRIEF, 2014) In those situations when coordination of space-time is in danger taxis can be used as a means of bringing coordination back.

If we take Andrzej's example of a woman who takes a taxi because she overslept, we will see that her fear of being late for work is grounded in the existence of multiple coordinating agencies. The fact that she overslept means that she has a work schedule set by the organization where she works, and that breaking it will have either direct or indirect consequences. Moreover, her taking a taxi is likely to be entangled in the timetable of public transportation, which she usually takes, but which now will not get her to work on time. Having overslept she has missed her bus or her train. But the fact that she is late for work is also entangled in the coordination agency that is the official state calendar: that this particular day is a working day and not for example a public holiday. In other words, behind what might seem like a singular and unique event not worthy of sociological investigation – a woman waking up late and taking a taxi fearing she will be late for work – stands a series of temporal structures.

We can also look at the other example used by Andrzej, the person who got ill and is taking a taxi to go to a doctor. This is not merely a hypothetical example, as according to one industry study, 27 % of respondents who use taxis pointed out that they take taxis to go to or get back from the doctor (plural answers possible) (BRIEF, 2014) The event of taking a taxi to the clinic is entangled in the multiple coordinating agencies, such as the opening hours of the clinic and the individual work schedule of the doctor. However, like in the case of the woman waking up late, the event of going to the doctor is also depended on the official state calendar, since many clinics are closed on Sundays and during state holidays. Moreover, when the client calls the taxi corporation and says "I need a taxi at 14:45", his interaction is entangled in yet another coordinating agency which is the official city time that is shared by all watches

in the city, a level of coordination and synchronization that emerged only in the late XIX century. Again behind a single and unique event there are a number of temporal structures.

Not only are taxis entangled in other coordinating agencies, but they are often used when other coordinating agencies fail. Individuals, as Krzysztof Pomian writes, are coordinating agencies themselves: “Every one of us, without knowing it, coordinates movements or changes one with another. Every one of us, in doing so, plays the role of a coordinating agency” (Pomian, 2013). This role of individuals as coordinating agencies is well shown by the works of ethnomethodologists (Rawls, 2005, Hardesty, 1982). We can return once again to the example of the woman being late for work. The woman, being a coordinating agency herself, failed to wake up possibly because her alarm clock, which is another coordinating agency, failed her. The failure of other coordinating agencies resulted in her taking a taxi. Another example of people using taxis when other coordinating agencies fail, experienced by some of my interviewees, is when a person takes a taxi to another city because their domestic flight was cancelled or because they missed their train.

The individual examples of the woman late for work and the person going to the doctor show that, even though there is a plurality of coordinating agencies, not all coordination agencies are equal: “there is a hierarchy of coordinating agencies” (Pomian, 2013). Some coordinating agencies are, as Krzysztof Pomian puts it, “dependent upon superior coordinating agencies” (Pomian, 2013). Thus the individual as a coordinating agency is dependent on the society in which he or she lives. An individual does not choose the official city time or the day that should be celebrated as national holiday. Often she does not choose her working schedule which is set by her employer.

Societies are made up of different coordinating agencies which create, what Krzysztof Pomian called, a *multi-layered temporal architecture* of social life (Pomian, 1984: 354). Taxis are but a small component of this architecture. Not only are taxis a small component of this multi-layered architecture but they are one of its last layers. In other words, in the hierarchy of coordinating agencies, taxis are low or, put differently, they are dependent on multiple superior coordinating agencies. People will not adjust their flight to be able to take a taxi; rather they adjust the taxi in order to be on time for their flight. People adjust taking a taxi to their business meetings and their work schedules and not the other way around. Likewise, organizations do not adjust their schedules and plans so that their employees or customers can take taxis, rather they will hire those taxi corporations or those taxi drivers that will be able to fit to their schedules and their organizational routines.

This low position in the hierarchy of coordinating agencies means that the taxi market is driven by demand.

Since taxis are low in the hierarchy of coordinating agencies this means that the temporal elasticity of the service that taxi drivers provide is very high. What do I mean by temporal elasticity? The notion of *temporal elasticity* or – to use a similar term found in the work of sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (Halbwachs, 1980) – *time flexibility*<sup>15</sup> can be understood analogically to price elasticity. Price elasticity is defined in economics as “the responsiveness of the quantity demanded of that good to change in its price” (Frank et al., 2007: 92). Similarly, temporal elasticity can be defined as the responsiveness of the quantity or price of the good to change in the time at which it was exchanged. A house for example has much lower temporal elasticity than a taxi. If a seller tells a customer that she cannot buy a certain house today, but that she will be able to buy the same house for the same price in a week, she is unlikely to change her mind about buying it. And it works the other way around: a seller is likely to wait for a buyer. A flight has a higher temporal elasticity as people often have specific reasons why they want to fly on a particular week or day, and sometimes even hour of the day. Taxis have even higher temporal elasticity: if a taxi driver or a taxi dispatcher tells a potential customer who wants to take a taxi, that she will have to wait even an hour, she will look for another corporation. This is precisely because individual taxis are low in the structure of coordinating agencies and thus in the power structure of society.

The high temporal elasticity of the taxi service means that the taxi drivers travelling on the same route but at a different point of time are, in fact, providing a different service. When taking a taxi there is often a sense of urgency. A passenger unable to take a taxi to the Warsaw airport at 6 am will not be happy that she is able to take a taxi at 7 am as by that time she will have already missed her flight.

### **3.3 Market Exchange as a Process and Conflicts over Speed**

Let me recapitulate what has been said until now. First I argued that taxi drivers are entangled in time because social time is fundamentally about coordination of movement. I then argued

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<sup>15</sup> Maurice Halbwachs said: “Time has greater flexibility in the family than in the barracks or classroom. While the priest must say his mass at the appointed hour, there is no specific duration for his sermon. With the exceptions of religious ceremonies, the faithful may go to church for prayers and devotion when they wish, without a time schedule, and even for ceremonies they often arrive late or leave early. A merchant must arrive on time for a business meeting, but sales are made throughout the day and orders and deliveries have very flexible time limits. Moreover, the individual seems to balance the temporal exactitude required by some milieus with the laxity found in others” HALBWACHS, M. 1980. *The Collective Memory* New York, Harper Colophone Books..

that as a coordinating agency taxis are structured by multiple superior coordinating agencies. This specific character of the taxi market is reflected in the low temporal flexibility of the service provided by taxi drivers.

The lack of time flexibility of the service explains many of the conflicts that take place in the taxi market. Many conflicts in the taxi market are conflicts over time or, to be more exact, about being *on time*. These conflicts involve taxi corporations, taxi dispatchers, taxi drivers, customers, and other road participants. To understand these conflicts we have to treat the market exchange not like neoclassical economists, as an instantaneous interaction, but rather as an interaction that unfolds over time. Economy, as Karl Polanyi reminds us, is an instituted *process* (Polanyi, 2011). To repeat once again Kornai's definition: "the operation of the market constitutes a *process over time*, an ensemble of chains of events overlapping in time" (Kornai, 1971: 226 emphasis in original).

In Warsaw the great majority of taxis are ordered via the phone with the few exceptions like the airport, the central station, where people walk up to take a taxi. Thus the market transaction in the taxi market usually starts with a person calling one of the taxi corporations. A taxi dispatcher, nearly always female, picks up:

Taxi dispatcher: "Hello, [the name of the taxi corporation]"

Me: "Hello, I would like to order a taxi."

Taxi dispatcher: "What address?"

Me: "Kowalskiego 15"

Taxi dispatcher "What time?"

Me: "As fast as possible"

Taxi dispatcher: "The taxi will be there in 15 minutes".

According to Andrzej, the CEO of a taxi corporation, this conversation between the client and the dispatcher should take between 12 – 18 seconds. If it takes less, it is likely that the dispatcher will make a mistake and the order will be taken wrong, if longer then it is inefficient. In the limited time the dispatcher has to establish the *locality* (space-time position) of the customer. Sometimes the interaction can take longer if the client is not sure where he is and the taxi dispatcher has to help him figure it out for example; or if the dispatcher needs to ask follow up questions on the exact corner of the street, the exact building etc.; or if the customer is drunk and hard to understand. Taxi corporations have interest in dispatchers being

as efficient as possible, and dispatchers are often incentivised as they often get paid for the number of paid orders.

After the order has been taken by the dispatcher, it is distributed through a dispatch system among taxi drivers who receive it on a taxi terminal located in their cars (see chapter 5). This is done through a zone system. Each corporation divides the city into zones.<sup>16</sup> Drivers sign up in a zone using their terminal and then wait in queue for their turn to receive a fare. To receive a fare a driver has to be first in line in the appropriate zone (see chapter 5).<sup>17</sup> If the passenger ordered a taxi for right away, the taxi driver has, depending on the size of the taxi corporation, between 10 – 15 minutes to get to the passenger. Sometimes there might be less time to get to the client because the fare could have been passed on from drivers who were ahead in line, but declined the ride.

If stuck in traffic or unable to get to the client on time, a taxi driver can extend this period by pressing a button on the taxi terminal and informing the dispatch centre that he will be late. But only if he does it before the time is up and according to specific rules, so that the dispatcher can call the passenger, who is waiting, and inform them that the taxi will be late. If the taxi driver does not do this, he will be suspended and will not be able to receive another fare for a given period of time, which depends on the statute of the particular taxi corporation, but is often 24 hours.

For the new taxi driver getting to the passenger *on time* is one of the biggest sources of stress. At the beginning taxi drivers experience both a cognitive and a bodily reaction to this situation. Taxi drivers I interviewed talked about forgetting even the most well-known street names, being extremely nervous, even sweating. With time and practice it becomes a routine, however taxi drivers continue to face situations that can of them creative solutions. Getting somewhere in time is not always easy as there might be traffic or there can be ambiguity regarding the exact location where the customer is waiting.

But, as is often the case, to understand the interaction between the taxi driver and his fare we have to situated it the larger social structures in which the interaction is nested. The *time pressure* the taxi driver feels depends, among other things, on the position of his taxi corporation in the taxi field. Thus drivers from smaller or middle sized companies will feel greater time pressure than those from larger corporations simply because larger corporations

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<sup>16</sup> Depending on the corporation the number of zones is different.

<sup>17</sup> If there is no one in a zone a driver from an adjacent zone will be forced by the corporation to take the trip. This is what taxi drivers call a “wycieczka”

have more drivers to cover the city. If it is a small corporation, without many drivers, a taxi driver might have to cross the whole city to get to the customer.

Grzegorz, who drove for a middle sized company, told me: *if you have to make it in 10 minutes, then if you would follow the rules, there is no way you would make it, so you know, that you have to drive faster, to make it on time.* This can lead to conflicts on the road as other road participants find taxi drivers to be rude and not obeying the law.

Once taxi drivers arrive at the pickup point they wait for their customers. Thanks to a recent innovation the customer is informed by a text message once the taxi driver has arrived. At this point in the process that is the market exchange the taxi driver has still not turned on his metre and is not earning money. This is not yet *earning time*. There is a rule, introduced in all corporations that the taxi driver has to wait 5 minutes after the scheduled time before turning on the taxi metre. A taxi driver questions this practice on one of the taxi forums:

*I cannot understand who agreed that the client can be 5 minutes late. I think this is one of the biggest taxi absurdities. We cannot be late without letting them know and when we are [late] people begin to talk about getting a discount. I agree that the time of the appointment should be sacred, but it should work both ways. From what I understand no law orders us to stand and wait for free. I have 15 fares each day (...) which gives me an hour per day of waiting for free in the car and believe me, I have better things to do.*

Even if the taxi driver waits the 5 minutes before turning on a meter this can lead to conflict. Bartek told me:

*A woman got into a conflict because she came late to the taxi. After 5 minutes I turned on the metre as you normally do. But she made a scene because she ordered a taxi and how is she to know that the taxi is standing if she cannot see it from the window. And then there was a scene like you would not believe it.*

I saw a similar conflict over the 5 minute rule when I drove one night with a taxi driver.

If Marx talked about the “small thefts” taking place in the XIX century factory (Marx, 1867: 267), where the owners of the factory would decrease the break for meal time or reset the watches in the factory, increasing the working time of their employees without paying them extra; in the case of working time of taxi drivers the “small thefts” are done by the customers

who arrive late. These “small thefts” have been instituted by taxi corporations which demand that drivers wait 5 minutes before turning on their meter.

But the struggles over time sometimes continue once the passenger enters the car. Since passengers can be in a hurry, they pressure drivers to drive faster. These struggles over the speed or the style of driving of the taxi driver are in the end a form of power struggle. Ania describes her struggles with passengers:

*I am not in a hurry... even when a passenger tells me: 'Faster! Faster!' I say 'No, faster would be Kubica [a former Polish F1 driver], but this is a taxi. I have to drive you safely' ... 'yes, but...' 'Instead of faster, you should have left 5 minutes earlier'. I get annoyed that people wait until the last minute, and then they think that we are a helicopter. But driving is our occupation. Cameras, monitoring, police... to tell you the truth we would not be able to pay all those fines [if we drove the way some clients wanted us to].*

The passenger wants to get to the destination as fast as possible, thus encouraging the taxi driver to drive more aggressively, possibly even to break traffic rules; but it is the taxi driver who will face the consequences of helping her customer to catch up with time by reckless driving, either by paying a fine or, in the worst case, losing their driving licence, without which they cannot work. Of course in this power struggle over time the taxi driver has the advantage of holding the wheel and controlling the speed of the car. But on the other hand the client has the power of not leaving a tip or complaining about the behaviour of the driver to the taxi corporation. The client has the symbolic advantage of being able to be rude to the taxi driver (swear, insult him or her). Taxi drivers can also be rude but have to be careful not to overstep the line as it can get them in trouble with the taxi corporation.

As I will argue in the next chapters, taxi drivers much of their day waiting for passengers; however at other moments the same drivers are being rushed by a taxi dispatcher to get to the client, or by their client to get to the destination. Both behavioural and neo-classical economists, who are not sensitive to the temporal dimension of social life, miss this dynamic aspect of the taxi market and the working day of taxi drivers. Since they assume a timeless state of equilibrium and do not treat the market exchange as a process (neoclassical economics), or focus only on computational capacities of individuals, but without thinking about time (behavioural economics); both neoclassical and behavioural economists do not notice that much of taxi drivers *working time* is either *waiting time*, as taxi drivers wait for



their next customer, or spent catching up with time as taxi drivers are rushing to get to the customer or with the customer to get to the destination.

The analysis of the unfolding of transaction in the taxi market shows that exchange is not an instant but a process. It also shows that that unlike physical time, which Poincare argued could be treated as a mere convention (Poincaré, 1976)<sup>18</sup>, in *social and economic life time is an institution*. Unlike conventions, which are arbitrary and are a matter of convenience, institutions both are produced and produce relations of power (Boltanski, 2011). It makes a difference to the taxi driver whether he has 5 or 15 minutes to get to the client after receiving the fare from the dispatcher. The less time taxi drivers have the more aggressively they have to drive, breaking more traffic rules, increasing the risk of getting fines or even losing driving licence. It makes a difference both to the taxi driver and to the passenger whether the taxi driver waits for the client 2 minutes before putting on the metre or 5, as it will influence how much the taxi driver will earn and how much the customer will spend.

Although the temporal order of the taxi market is institutionalized (there is a 10 or 15 minute rule to get to the client, 5 minutes rule of waiting for the client before turning on the meter, 15 minutes rule on waiting for the client before leaving without the passenger), rules are often (re)negotiated in the interactions between customers – taxi dispatchers – taxi drivers. Both taxi dispatchers and customers sometimes rush taxi drivers. This takes place through verbal and non-verbal cues. The verbal cues can include the taxi dispatcher calling the driver and asking him “where are you?”, “the passenger is already waiting!”, “the passenger is calling asking where you are?”, “how much longer do you need?” and urging him or her to get to the client faster. The client rushes the taxi driver through telling him things like “drive faster”, “hurry up”, “I’m in a hurry”, “I don’t have much time”, “how much longer?!” , “I need to be there in 15 minutes!”. Non-verbal cues, easy to read for the taxi driver, include passengers gasping loudly; looking at the watch, sitting uncomfortably, in other words, as the popular English expression goes, breathing down the neck of the taxi driver. Sometimes this means literally breathing down, as a taxi driver explains: *there are situations when an office lady enters and tells you to go to the airport in 15 minutes, and it's 5 pm, and then she breathes down your neck.*<sup>19</sup> The “office lady” is demanding from the taxi driver something that is

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<sup>18</sup> Poincare writes: “In other words, there is not one way of measuring time more true than another; that which is generally adopted is only more *convenient*” (1976: 321, emphasis in original)

<sup>19</sup> This is literal since in Polish the expression to breathe down someone’s neck does not exist.

impossible since it is 5 pm, the highpoint of rush hour and there is heavy traffic and the trip will take 45 minutes.

The consequences of the interaction between the customer and the client do not end with the client paying the taxi driver closing the door to the cab. If the client is unsatisfied with the service he or she can go to the taxi corporation and complain to the manager about the behaviour of the taxi driver. This will then have consequences for the taxi driver who might get suspended.

In the taxi market the meeting of supply and demand is not an instant but a process that starts before people enter the cab and finishes after they leave it. The interests of the sides regarding the speed of this process are not always inline which can lead to conflicts.

### **3.4 Multiple Cycles of Demand**

The first important fact that allows us to understand the demand for taxis is that people take taxis to coordinate their activities, taxis are coordinating agencies, and that taxi drivers provide a service that is temporally inelastic. This often leads to conflicts over time that are conflicts over speed. The second important fact that allows us to understand the temporal order of demand is that, while the taxi market is “open” 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, the demand for taxis varies over time.

A taxi driver or a client can enter the market at any point in time hoping that he or she will be able to make an exchange. This distinguishes the taxi market from many other markets which are not always open because of the state regulations (e.g. shops are closed on holidays), due to tradition or out of economic considerations. In fact, before the introduction of the Internet, taxi markets were in the small group of markets in which market time was not restricted in any way. And in Warsaw even the taxi market has not always been without time restrictions. In the 1980s, when Martial Law was introduced in Poland, the authoritarian state introduced “police hours” between 10 pm and 6 am, eliminating both the demand and supply of taxis during the night.

Although *market time* – the time when exchanges can legally take place – is not restricted in any way, the demand for taxis is not constant over time. Demand for taxis varies both within days and across days. As Andrzej the CEO explained to me: *The taxi driver is as if forced to work by the weather and the calendar. Popular name day– more work. Weekend – more work during the night. Monday – more work during the day.*

Economists have already shown the role of the weather in the taxi market, but they have not studied the role of the calendar. This is because, as Durkheim pointed out, the influence of the calendar cannot be understood starting with the individual. Calendars are social institutions. The fact that, as Andrzej put, it the taxi driver “is as if forced” by the calendar to work, is a way of saying that there are *temporal structures to the demand for taxis*.

Since demand for taxis is dependent on the calendar this makes it a social phenomenon. Calendars differ from society to society: some calendars differ slightly (different public holidays), some differ greatly (different definition of the day, the week or the year). However, what all calendars share is a circular conception of time.<sup>20</sup> And it is both this culturally unique and the universal cyclic aspect of the calendar that interests me here because both are important for our understanding of the demand for taxis. The fact that calendars are unique helps us understand that the demand for taxis is different in different cultures. On the other hand, the fact that all calendars share a circular character allows us to predict that in all taxi markets we should be able to find cycles of demand.

In case of the Warsaw taxi market there are multiple and overlapping cycles of demand: a daily cycle, a weekly cycle, and an annual cycle.

### **3.4.1 The Daily Cycle of Demand**

The daily demand for taxis is entangled in the coordinating agencies that structure the daily activities of people who take taxis. The earning time of taxi drivers is especially dependent on the *working time* of other people, who use taxis for work related purposes: to get to work, at work, or to come back from work. In one industry survey 40% of the respondents from the biggest Polish cities declared that taking a taxi are work related. In another survey, 15% said they use it during work and 11% that they use it to get to work and from work (BRIEF, 2014). Although this might not seem a lot we have to remember that those who use taxis for work related purposes are much more likely to use them more often than those who use them for other purposes. Thus, according to the study, while 34% of respondents use taxis once every

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<sup>20</sup> Pomian writes: “There is enormous diversity among calendars. Some are based on the rotations of the moon, others on those of the sun, still others attempt to combine the two frames of reference by means of adjustment and intercalations. The year, the month, the day - all are defined differently (...) Thus in the ancient Greek calendars, the new diurnal date generally began in the evening, at sunset; the Egyptians marked its beginning in the morning, at sunrise; while the Romans changed the date at midnight. For some, the year is a period inaugurated by an arbitrary date, such as our January 1st; on the other hand, there are those for whom the beginning of the year coincides with an astronomical phenomenon (...). Recalling this, it is even more interesting to note that the idea or image of time expressed by different calendars is the same everywhere: time is circular, the same names for days repeat week after week or month after month: the same names for months repeat year after year.” (1979: 563).

2-3 months, 8% use taxis once a week, 7% 2-3 times a week and 1% every day or almost every day (BRIEF, 2014). Taxi drivers I interviewed pointed out that it is usually business clients who take taxis during the day.

The demand for taxis increases in the morning as people have to get to work. Andrzej the CEO who used to be a taxi driver:

*When others are sleeping – we are already going off to work. And when others slowly begin to wake up and are in a hurry, we already have to be at work. When others begin to work around 9-10 am the demand for our services drops.*

Anna told me about her typical working day:

*I wake up at 5:30 am, because at 6:45 am I have my first client. Five times a week I take him to work. Sometimes he will call me and say ‘today 15 minutes later’ or ‘15 minutes earlier because I have a meeting’ or ‘I do not have a meeting’. But my day always starts with him.*

Although very few taxi drivers have such regular clients (taxi corporations try to prevent their drivers from seeking out individual clients and besides that many drivers do not like to commit to passengers), and not many people take taxis to work every day, people do use taxis to get to work. In case of businessmen arriving from other cities (countries) or going to other cities (or countries) the demand for taxis is dependent on the morning schedules of flights. Thus through the linking ecology that is the airline market taxis become entangled in the temporal structures of other cities.

After the morning rush the demand for taxis drops. This encourages some drivers, who drive during the day, to take a break. Krzysiek described his daily routine as such:

*Well I am not very experienced, as I have been driving only for three months, but through practice I have worked out that during the week I leave in the morning, around 7 am or 8 am, when there is the morning rush. This rush is short as it lasts between 7:30 am and 9:30 am, but during this time you do not wait for a fare, so during that time I do between 2 and 4 fares. And after 10 am there is stagnation, there are a lot of taxis and no fares. We [the taxi corporation] have the city divided into zones, in each zone there is usually about 2-3 people signed in, so you have to wait to catch a fare. But I do not like waiting, so usually, unless I am in a far district, and not in downtown, Mokotów or Ursynów, or even at the*

*airport, I go home and for the next 3-5 hours stay at home. I do something with my car, or at home. I try to get an hour of rest, as I do not sleep long during the night (...) [after a nap] I am fresh when I leave between 3 pm and 5 pm. I drive until there is work. It is natural that way. In the evening there is the evening peak, that lasts a bit longer (...) and then around 10pm – 11pm it gets empty again, no fares, and the night drivers come out.*

Filip has a similar routine: *I switched, so now I try to leave around 7, drive until let's say 13, go home, eat, go to the gym and go out around 17 and work until midnight.*

The evening peak is longer because working day of those groups, who are more likely to take taxis, sometimes extends well into the night.<sup>21</sup> This is well represented by the working day of Jacek. During my interview with Jacek he gave me his calendar for the 2012. In his calendar Jacek wrote each of his fares (time, client pick up place and destination of the fare). When looking through his calendar, one quickly spots a pattern. Very often the last fare was from a single address between 11.30 pm and 1.30 am. This address was the headquarters of one of the Polish newspapers. The time and place of his last fare was not random. Between 11.30 pm and 1.30 is when the newspaper for the next day went to print and people working there begin to go home. The newspaper had a contract with the taxi corporation where Jacek was working. Each night, after the newspaper was sent to print, some of the journalists and editors would take taxis home. The demand for Jacek's service was entangled in their schedules and organizational routines. Jacek knew the organizational routine and the practices of individuals and, since he particularly enjoyed driving these customers, would often seek them out by moving his cab towards the area around midnight.

Thus the demand for taxis is dependent on the working time and the working schedules of other social groups. If Marx argued that *working time* reflects the power relations between the employer and the employee, in case of taxi drivers their earning time is not only dependent on the power relations between taxi drivers and owners of taxi corporations, but also the power relations in which people who take taxis are entangled. The longer managers and other social

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<sup>21</sup> We can compare this with the description of the demand for taxis before the World War II written by a Warsaw Taxi Driver. If we are to believe the description, at that time the working day of people taking taxis was shorter. "The demand for taxis was during morning hours. From 7 till 9 people were going to work. From 10 till 14 people going to public offices, industrialists, traders and bureaucrats. Until 16:00 the traffic languished and from 17:00 there was a standstill until 19:00. After that the evening traffic increased transporting people to places of entertainment: cinemas, theatres, variety shows, restaurants, cafes and wineries. From 20 to 22 there was standstill. After that people were being picked up from cinemas and theatres and taken home until 23:00. Finally the traffic slowly died." (Sękowski 1985: 71).

groups who take taxis have to work, the later the evening peak of demand for taxis ends. *Earning time* of taxi drivers is a derivative of the *working time* of people who take taxis.

Although the demand for taxis decreases as people finish work, there is still demand for taxis during the night. While certain social groups are still finishing work, others are beginning their leisure activities. According to a study done in 2013, 76% of people in Polish cities take taxis during the day and 24% take taxis during the night compared to 69% during the day and 31% during the night in 2004 (Taxi, 2013) . Some of this demand for taxis during the night might be work related, but customers are more likely to engage in leisure activities. The same study showed that 40% of taxi passengers used taxis for work related reasons and 27% to get back from the party. Another industry survey showed that 61% respondents take taxis to get back home from a “night out” and 58% from social gatherings. This does not mean that the majority of fares are during the night; those who take taxis during the night are very likely to take them less often than those who take them during the day (BRIEF, 2014).

The daily cycle is one that is structured by the opposition between work and leisure. I had a chance to witness this opposition as I spent a night driving with a taxi driver.

*I met Piotr around 23:30 at a taxi stand near the bus station near Plac Bankowy. I wanted to interview him, but he suggested instead that I spend one night driving with him in his cab. Piotr works for the only taxi corporation in Warsaw that pays people by the hour plus a percentage of each fare. The taxi corporation also provides drivers with the car, which they usually share with either one other driver (each having a 12 hour shift) or two other drivers (8 hour shifts). The shifts are worked out between the drivers with the help of the taxi corporation. We were supposed to meet earlier, but Piotr had to wait for the person with whom he was sharing the car to return from his shift. Piotr’s partner was stuck in another part of the city and was waiting for a fare to come back and not make empty miles. Thus Piotr started his day later than he planned. While waiting we talked for about ten minutes, as I introduced my research to him, and he spoke about how he became a taxi driver. Around 11:40 pm we had the first client. A young woman around the age of 30 opened the door and asked: “can I pay with a credit card?” Piotr said yes and she entered the cab. She told us she had finished work later than normally and missed the night bus that she usually takes home. Instead of waiting in the cold for an hour for the next one, she decided to take the taxi and have it catch up with the bus she had just missed. After driving for some 7 km we caught up with it and she was able to switch. Piotr said that she was most likely a waitress, because this is the time that restaurants close. As she finished her working day, Piotr was just starting his. Out of the next 6 fares, 4 were people coming back from a party. They were either tipsy or drunk. In between fares there were long periods (around 15-30*

*minutes) of waiting time. We picked up the last client around 5:30 in the morning. The last client was a paper delivery man whose van did not want to start due to the cold weather and who wanted to drive to the nearest gas station so that he can get something to fix it and begin his work routine. Just as he was trying to begin his working day, Piotr was finishing his.*

(Field notes, Thursday 24th and Friday 25th, January 2013)

This description from my field notes shows how the demand for Piotr's service was dependent on multiple coordinating agencies that structure the activities of the people who took his cab. Two of the passengers took the taxi because other coordinating agencies failed them: the first customer missed the bus and the last customer's car did not want to start. But there were other coordinating agencies involved in the demand for Piotr's services. This includes the working routine of the first and the last client, the opening hours of the clubs and, most importantly, the fact that this particular day was a Thursday and not a Friday where more people go out during the night. As I will argue later on, the week is a coordinating agency that is in no way less social than the opening time of a music club or the working time of a waitress.

However, when looking at the structure of the daily cycle of demand we do not only find quantitative changes in the number of passengers over the course of the day, but we also find qualitative differences. These qualitative differences are felt by taxi drivers as they interact with clients and other road participants.

One of the main differences is, of course, the difference in the price of the service. By law the price of taxis during the night has to be 50% higher than the daily fare. Those corporate or non-corporate drivers that charge 1.80zł/km (0.40 €) during the day have to charge 2.40zł/km (0.55 €) during the night, those that charge 2.40zł/km have to charge 3.60 zł/km (0.80 €) during the night, while the maximum price during the day is 3 zł/km (75 €) and during the night 4.5 zł/km (1.15 €).

But there are other differences as well. These differences between day and night can be captured with a series of dichotomies: traffic/no-traffic, sober/drunk, and corporate client/individual client.

During the day the taxi driver is often stuck in traffic, either while going to the client to pick him or her up or when driving with the client. During the night the taxi driver is able to quickly move across the city, allowing a much more "aggressive" style of driving in pursuit of clients. There is a qualitative difference in driving and some drivers prefer to work during the

night precisely because they are not stuck in traffic and can seek out clients. Also during the night the conflicts over speed are not as common as during the day. Paweł, who used to work during the day, but when I interviewed him had switched to the night, explains:

*The work is less stressful, because during the day the client is in a hurry. I would like to speed up, but there is traffic. The client is irritated, sometimes says something to me. I struggle to hold it in and not to talk back and let him or her have it. I prefer to drive during the night, even though it is sometimes dangerous (...) but this is still better, because there is no traffic, one can drive without the stress.*

The second dichotomy that allows us to grasp the qualitative differences experienced by taxi drivers in daily cycle of demand is the sober/drunken dichotomy. During the night one is much more likely to meet drunken clients. Drunken clients are not very common during the day; although sometimes taxi drivers who start their work early in the morning will pick up a customer who has just finished partying.

The interactions with night clients are qualitatively different. Marek explains:

*I simply do not like driving, because there is plenty of tipsy customers, I don't like to wrangle. I am no longer 20 - 30 years old to be arguing with drunks. It's a choice. Maybe there are chances for higher income but there are also higher risks. Not risks related to health, or life risks, but risks of conflict.*

Night clients can throw up in the car, which automatically means the end of the working day, as the car has to be cleaned and dried. A taxi driver can, by law, choose not to pick up a drunken client. However, it will be difficult for him or her to earn money during the night if he or she picks up only those people who are sober. Thus, for taxi drivers choosing whether to work during the day or the night is, in part, a decision of the type of “awkward relations” they will have to face (Healy, 2013). As Ania put it:

*During the night there is a type of client I do not like. There is ... well... a difference in transmission frequency. You are sober and the client is after two or three beers. There is a stupid conversation which does not make any sense. I concluded that this does not make sense, that I do not like it.*

The third distinction that allows us to grasp the qualitative difference between day and night is the distinction between corporate clients and individual clients. During the day many of the



clients are corporate clients, who often do not pay for their own fares. The trips are often pre-paid by the company and the taxi driver gets the money for the fare at the end of the month. Some corporations charge their drivers higher fees (around 300€ monthly instead of 100-200€), but provide them with corporate clientele and allow drivers to charge more per kilometre. On the other hand during the night there are more individual clients. Individual clients take less expensive corporations, since they pay for their own fares.

Thus the choice of whether one works during the day or during the night is, in part, dependent on the corporations, where one works. The choice of corporation in turn depends on the type of car one can afford, or in other words what Bourdieu calls technological capital (Bourdieu 2005: 203). More expensive corporations require their drivers to have cars that have a higher standard. A taxi driver, who drove both for the cheaper corporations (1.8zł (0.40€/km) and more expensive ones (2.4zł (0.60€/km), explains: *corporation, which are oriented towards individual clients, drive mostly during the night and weekends. At our corporation during the weekend there is no traffic, because during the weekend companies are not working. We have traffic during the day.* The interaction between the taxi driver and his fare is nested in the social structures of the taxi market and the position of the taxi corporation of that driver in the taxi field.

### **3.4.2 The Weekly Cycle of Demand**

What the last quote points our attention to is that not only there is a daily cycle, which is structured by the opposition between day and night, but that there is also a weekly cycle of demand for taxis. The taxi market is structured by the week. The demand for taxis is dependent on whether or not the day is a Monday, a Friday or a Saturday. In the taxi market there is what can be called “the seven day cycle” (Zerubavel, 1989).

As Pitrim Sorokin pointed out, the week is one of the central coordinating agencies in modern societies. “We think in week units; we apprehend time in week units; we localize the events and activities in week units; we co-ordinate our behaviour according to the “week”; we live and feel and plan and wish in “week” terms. It is one of the most important points of our “orientation” in time and social reality” (see Zerubavel, 1989). But, as Eviatar Zerubavel shows, there is nothing natural about the week. The foundations of the day and the year are astronomical – movement of the earth with respect to the sun – thus both can be perceived as “natural” way of describing time. But the week is not. In other societies the week has been

made up of both less and more than 7 days and the fact that we currently use a 7 days week is a historical phenomenon.<sup>22</sup>

Jacek the CEO of a taxi corporation explains how demand fluctuates in his corporation over the course of the week:

*During the week, I can show it [the demand graph] to you, because it is a saw. This is what I call it. For me this is one of my basic work tools. I look at the weekly graph and I see if everything is ok or not. Because the weekly graph looks like a saw: from Monday till Saturday an increase, Sunday a slight decrease. And all over again... a clear saw. And if there is a breakdown and the curve goes up than it is because it is Andrzejki [very popular name day], because snow fell, because snow is melting, because there is a fog and planes did not land.*

What the CEO sees on his graph is a temporal structure, or put more simply the weekly cycle of demand. This weekly cycle will differ depending on the position of the taxi corporation in the taxi field. If we think about the graphs of the demand for taxis as waves, then the wave of each corporation will differ depending on the market niche it occupies. Since this was a CEO of a cheaper corporation his weekly graph was more skewed towards the night and the weekend. Students or young people who go out and party during the weekend are more likely to take cheaper corporations. A study done by a student in geography, who was granted access to all trips made within one taxi corporation in 2008, and analysed all the trips for the month of March, found out that this business oriented company had most fares between Tuesday and Friday (4000-4500 fares a day), less on Monday and Saturday (around 3000 fares), and the least on Sunday (2000 fares). (Małgorzata, 2008)

Like in the case of the daily cycle, the weekly cycle is structured by the opposition between work/leisure, which takes the form of the opposition between working day/weekend. From Monday to Thursday the demand is mostly during the day and is work related, while on Saturday the demand is during the night and is mostly related to leisure activities, with Friday and Sunday being days in-between: Friday because there is both business related demand during the day and leisure related activity during the night; and Sunday because there is not much work related activity during the day and less leisure activities during the night due to Monday being a working day. If we return to Jacek, whose last fare of the day was often

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<sup>22</sup> It most likely originated in western Asia either with the spread of Jewish cosmology or through ancient astrology, and then came to Europe through Christianity (Zerubavel 1981).

driving home people who worked for a newspaper; this demand for Jacek's service was entangled in the weekly cycle, since this particular newspaper does not come out on Sunday, and so on Saturday night there would be no demand for Jacek's service. On the other hand, on a Saturday night there is a bigger chance of people going out to party and taking taxis home since Sunday is not a working day.

The weekly cycle influences taxi drivers. Many drivers prefer to work during the day either because of economic consideration (their personal theory of demand), because they do not like dealing with drunken customers or because of family reasons (see chapter 8). However, since working 5 days a week is often not enough, taxi drivers treat the weekend nights (Friday and Saturday) as the time to earn extra money and repair the house budget. Although the demand for their service of night drivers increases during the weekend so does the supply of drivers. Wojtek explains:

*I drive normally from Monday to Friday. I start at 8 am because this is when I take my kid to school. And later, you know, until 4 pm, because this is when I pick up my kid, unless there is work, in which case my wife picks up the kid, as she is currently not working and I drive until 6 pm – 8 pm. But if I go back around 4 pm, I eat something, sit for an hour or two and then continue until, you know, I drop dead, that is 8 pm – 10 pm. Then comes the weekend. I have not driven for three years during the night. But because now there is not that much work and the bills are the same or they have increased, I use the weekend to make up.*

In this particular case we see that the working time of this driver is entangled in the 7 day cycle, not only because during the weekend people go out to party but also because of the school week. The school week is a coordinating agency and a social institution that differs from society to society. In France the same driver would probably drive on Saturday morning as he would take his kid to primary school, but might not work on Wednesday since it is a day off from school.

The taxi market is structured by the week. The demand for taxis is dependent on whether or not the day is a Monday, a Friday or a Saturday. Although by itself the week is a social convention, an arbitrary way of dividing time, because many other coordinating agencies are built on top of it (the school week, the work week), it becomes a social institution, something that is not arbitrary since changing it means changing relations of power (Boltanski, 2011).

### 3.4.3 The Annual Cycle of Demand

Just like there is a daily cycle and a weekly cycle there is also an annual cycle of demand. While some of the changes in demand over the course of the year are due to natural phenomena (like weather), other changes in demand have social origins.

Similarly to the daily and the weekly cycles of demand, the yearly cycle is structured by the opposition between work and leisure, which in this case takes the form of the opposition between working day and holiday. Thus taxis are, like most other coordinating agencies, dependent on a superior coordinating agency of public time or in other words the state calendar.

The state distinguishes between working days and public holidays. At the moment there are 13 state guaranteed public holidays in Poland.<sup>23</sup> Out of the 13 public holidays, three ( 1<sup>st</sup> May, May3<sup>rd</sup>, and November11<sup>th</sup>) have political origins and 9 have roots in the religious calendar (January 1<sup>st</sup>, January 6<sup>th</sup>, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, November 1<sup>st</sup>, December 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>), and one in both (August 15<sup>th</sup>). The religious calendar is not necessarily any less political since 7 of those 9 dates are not only guaranteed by national law, but also by a separate article in an international treaty – the concordat – that the Polish state negotiated with the Vatican in 1993.

But the influence of the religious (Catholic) calendar on the demand for taxis in Warsaw is not only confined to those 9 days. Throughout the year the demand for taxis is also influenced by the religious calendar through the popular custom of celebrating name days. If we go back to the quote from Andrzej the CEO, Andrzej said that: *The taxi driver is somewhat forced to work by the weather and the calendar. Popular name day – more work.* The name day is a custom of celebrating the day associated with the saint people are named after. The exact date one celebrates his or hers name day is based on the Christian calendar of saints. The celebration of name days used to be present in many Christian countries and is still very common in Poland where people would rather celebrate their name day than their birthday, a tradition that to a large extent has continued to this day (Łaciak, 2005: 325 - 327). Thus, the

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<sup>23</sup> These are the 1<sup>st</sup> of January (New Year), 6<sup>th</sup> of January (Epiphany), Easter Sunday, Easter Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> of May (historically labour day), 3<sup>rd</sup> of May (the date of the passing of the first Polish constitution in 1791), Pentecost, Corpus Christi, 15<sup>th</sup> August (assumption of Mary and the Day of the Polish Army), 1<sup>st</sup> of November (the Day of the Dead), 11<sup>th</sup> November (Polish Independence Day related to the end of World War I) and 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of December (Christmas Day and Boxing Day). If it is worth listing out these public holidays individually because it shows how the temporal structure of the demand for taxis is immersed in the political and the religious calendars.

taxi drivers I interviewed were much more likely to bring out name days rather than birthdays when talking about their or their customers' leisure activities. Celebrations of name days often involve a lot of alcohol and, since people are unable to drive home, taking back taxis. During the most popular name days, like for example "Andrzejki" (Andrews'), the demand for taxis increases.

The influence of the religious calendar on the demand in the taxi market is interesting not only for our understanding of this particular market, but it also helps to make a more general and theoretical point. Starting with Durkheim, through Halbwachs to Le Goff and Zerubavel, different authors have made the distinction between sacred time and profane time or, as Le Goff famously put it, church time and merchant's time. Maurice Halbwachs argued for example that: "One group cannot use another's calendar. The merchant does not live or find his reference point in the religious group. If this was the case in the past (...) it was because the economic group had not yet been separated from the religious group" (Halbwachs, 1980: 112). Social differentiation, according to Halbwachs, has led to the separation of the different calendars. But, as the case of the taxi market shows, creating a clear opposition between merchant's time and church time prevents us from seeing how, even today, a calendar of a particular market can be entangled in the religious calendar and how the merchant – in this case the taxi driver – can be dependent or entangled in church time. In clear opposition to what Halbwachs argued, one taxi driver, asked whether he works during the night, answered: *I try not to. It is really only public holidays, popular name days, Shrovetide* [the three days preceding Ash Wednesday, the first day of lent], *New Years' Eve, such things*. The religious calendar – public holidays, popular name days, Shrovetide – provided this taxi driver with a guideline when predicting the higher demand for his service.

And this dependence on church time is not only a reference point for the taxi driver but also for other economic actors. As one taxi driver pointed out to me during our conversation, in Warsaw name days are good both for taxi drivers and flower shop owners. The reason for this is that during celebrations such as name days, when people are more likely to take taxis home they are also more likely to buy flowers. We can also think about the surge in demand for taxis that takes place before Christmas as corporations organize Christmas parties.

### **3.5 The State, Public Time and Social Magic**

One of the central coordinating agencies structuring the demand for taxis and thus the earning time of taxi drivers is the state. In the taxi market the state has the power over the cycles of

demand, but it is a type of power that is very different from the one described by economic textbooks. The state controls the business cycles through the acts of *social magic*.

In the temporal architecture the state is one of the central coordinating agencies. Since it is high in the hierarchy of coordinating agencies, the state has – either direct or indirect – control over many other coordinating agencies that structure the temporal order of social life. The state has power over taxis (their number and the prices), but also over many of the coordinating agencies in which the demand for taxis is entangled. The state controls the prices and schedules of public transportation which are a substitute for taxis. The state has power over the costs of owning and using a car (prices for parking in the city, taxes etc.), which is the other substitute. The state also controls the structure of working days, weekends, holidays and opening hours of state institutions (public administration, schools, and hospitals). Since the state structures the activities of its citizens, and some of those citizens use taxis to coordinate those activities, the state structures the demand for taxis.

The state has control over the demand for taxis because it has the power to perform – what Pierre Bourdieu called – *acts of institution that are acts of social magic*. The state has this power because, not only does it have the monopoly over legitimate physical violence, as Weber famously put it in his definition of the state, but it also has monopoly over, what Bourdieu called, symbolic violence.

The state is, according to Bourdieu, “the central bank of symbolic credit” (Bourdieu, 1996b: 376). As this central bank of symbolic credit one of the main powers of the state is that it is able to perform *acts of institution* (Bourdieu 1991), or what Austin called *speech acts* (Austin, 1975). These speech acts are according to Bourdieu acts of social magic. Bourdieu writes: “the act of institution is the act of social magic that can create difference *ex nihilo*, or else (as is more often the case) by exploring as it were pre-existing differences (...) [this] social magic always manages to produce discontinuity of the continuity” (Bourdieu 1991: 119-120).

Since it might seem strange to give the state "magical powers" it is worth quoting Bourdieu at some length:

“There are things to be said about (...) bureaucratic formalism that Weber opposed to magical formalism, the formalism expressed in a ritual test by uttering a magic formula (‘Open sesame!’). For Weber, bureaucratic formalism has nothing in common with magical formalism: it is not mechanical and arbitrary respect, whose strictness is arbitrary, but rather

respect for a form that authorizes because it conforms to norms collectively approved tacitly or explicitly. In this sense, the state also falls on the side of the magic (...) but it is magic quite different from how this is generally conceived” (Bourdieu, 2014: 12).

“The state, therefore, is this institution that has the extraordinary power of producing a socially ordered world without necessarily giving orders, without exerting a constant coercion – there isn’t a policeman behind every driver, as people often say. This kind of quasi-magical effect deserves explanation. All other effects – the military coercion that Elias discusses, economic coercion by way of taxation [explored by Tilly] – are in my view secondary in relation to this” (Bourdieu, 2014: 166).

According to Bourdieu the state has "magical" powers because when it gives orders and creates rules, that is, when it performs speech acts – “An order is a magical act. You act on someone at a distance” (Bourdieu, 2014: 164) – people often tacitly accept them without them having to be constantly enforced through coercion. Through acts of institution – that is acts of social magic – the state is able to award patents, form borders, create money, and establish speed limits. The state creates a difference ex-nihilo producing discontinuity where there was continuity. Out of many inventions only some are deemed novel by the patent office and awarded patents; out of continuity in land a border is set up creating two distinct properties, counties or countries; among different pieces of paper one is distinguished as money; out of the continuity of speed that a car can travel the state introduces a speed limit. This symbolic power enables the state to have power over time.

The symbolic power of the state over time takes on different forms. The state structures time for its citizens in many ways: from age limits (school age, drinking age, driving licence age, retirement age) and schedules (bus schedule, school schedule), temporal privileges (maternity leave) to temporal punishments (prison sentences). But the power of the state over time is above all related to the fact that the state has control over one of the most important coordinating agencies in modern societies: the *public calendar* and *public time* (Bourdieu, 2014: 7-9). Since the state has symbolic power over public time and in taxi markets time is of an essence, the state has power over the taxi market.

The relationship between the state and time has been a long one. Bourdieu writes: “The constitution of the state coincides with the constitution of common temporal references,

categories of construction of fundamental oppositions (day and night, opening and closing hours for offices, days off and working days, annual holidays etc.)” (Bourdieu, 2014: 169). If a customer can now call a taxi corporation and say “I want a taxi at 20:30” and expect that the taxi dispatcher and the taxi driver will have the same time where she is working, it is because of a long term social process. During this process private qualitative time of individuals was transformed into public quantitative time. The process of establishing standardized and universal time started with the introduction of public clocks in the XIV century, through the standardization of time and the synchronization of clocks in cities at the end of the XIX century, up until the redefinition of the latter in 1967. The state was the central actor throughout the whole process (Dohrn-van Rossum, 1996, Galison, 2004, Pomian, 1984).

More generally, the standardization of time has been fundamental to social differentiation as it allowed coordination of social activities which, as society continued to differentiate, got more and more complex. Not only taxis but also railway system and air traffic, industry, electricity, media, army, police, public administration, social gatherings, concerts, public events, the Internet, and even recipe cooking all depend on the existence of quantitative time and watches. As Krzysztof Pomian remarked: “If one day all watches would stop working our whole society would crumble”(Pomian, 1984: 226 - translation mine)

However, while being a major force in the establishment of universal quantitative time and shaping the modern time consciousness of citizens, the *state has retained a capacity of earmarking this standardized quantitative time*. Just like state power allows us to speak about the two bodies of the king – the king as a person like anybody else and a *representative* of the state – we can speak about the two bodies of time. The state earmarks time by assigning *official* or *public meaning* to certain hours, days, weeks or years. This earmarking of time is an act of institution or an act of social magic. By earmarking time the state creates a discontinuity in time tuning quantitative time back into qualitative time. Thus for example in a series of days one day becomes a public holiday, in a series of weeks a week becomes a school holiday, and in a series of years one becomes the “year of Chopin”. Thus because of the symbolic power of the state the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May is in Poland at the same time a day like any other day (a unit of time made up of 24 hours/1440 minutes/86400 seconds) but it is also a day very different day from all the others because it is a national holiday.

With this magical power that turns quantitative time into qualitative time the state shapes the temporal order of the taxi market. Through acts of institution the state influences the daily cycle of the taxi market. Where there once was a natural continuity of day transforming itself



into the night, the state introduces a clear line of demarcation thus instituting “the day” (6 am – 10 pm) and “the night” (10 pm – 6 am). Each taxi driver in Warsaw at 9:59:59 pm on a Monday can charge  $x$  (where  $x \leq 3$  zł/km) because it is “the day”, 1 second later by law they should charge  $1.5x$  because now it is “a night”. And the same taxi driver who at 5:59:59 in the morning can still charge up to  $1.5x$  because it is “the night” can just one second later only legally charge  $x$  because it is now again “the day”.

This arbitrary distinction between when the day ends and the night begins seems “natural” to taxi drivers and their customers. This distinction instituted by the state has become part of the cognitive structures through which taxi drivers and their customers perceive the world or, in other words, part of what Bourdieu called *doxa*: “that which is taken for granted” (Bourdieu, 1977: 166 see also 164-171). Out of the different demands that labour union and social movements have made over the years there has never been – to the best of my knowledge – a claim to change this arbitrary division of time between day and night. Taxi drivers do not ask: why does the day end at 10 pm and not at 9.30 pm or 9 pm? Especially that, according to the Labour Law, the night starts for other workers at 9 pm (Art. 151 sec 1). Similarly, taxi customers do not ask: why does the day in the taxi market end at 10 pm and not, like before World War II, at 11 pm? Or why divide the 24 hour cycle into day and night and not into 4 or 6 timeframes? Neither group questions the line of demarcation introduced by the state. The distinction has implications for the income of the taxi driver and the expenditures of taxi customers. This perception of naturalness and the taken for grantedness of social categories, which in the end turn out to be state categories, is precisely what Bourdieu had in mind when he argued that it is so difficult to think about the power of the state because we keep thinking about it while using state categories. This ability to establish the cognitive frames through which people perceive the social world is the magical power of the state.

But there are other ways through which the state has been influencing the daily cycle besides distinguishing between day and night. The state also shapes demand for taxis by creating other qualitative differences within the 24 hour continuum of time. For example the state introduces noise curfews that limit the number of airplanes that can land at the Warsaw airport during the night. This curfew for airlines has an effect on the demand for taxis as people take taxis both to get to and to get from the airport. There is a similar noise curfew on the ending time of public festivities influencing when people go home in the evening. The state influences the temporal structure of demand by setting the opening hours of state institutions (public administration, schools, hospitals, universities) or the schedules of public

transportation. However, possibly the clearest example of this magical power of the state over the temporal structures of demand is that twice a year, since 1977, the Polish state moves the whole cycle by altering one of the central coordinating agencies in any society – the official country time – and introducing daylight saving time.<sup>24</sup> Following Bourdieu (see opening citation), one could say that an anarchist who would want to obtain from submitting to this power of the state over the temporal order would have difficulties ordering a taxi over the phone. The taxi would arrive at the wrong time.

The state also influences the weekly cycle. It is the state that introduced the 5 day/40 hour working week, which is important for the structure of the demand for taxis. However, this 5 day working week does not apply to taxi drivers themselves, who often work 6 or sometimes even 7 days a week. In the regulation of the taxi market the state only classifies Sunday as a holiday. Thus, by law, the fare on Sunday is 150 % of fare during other days of the week. And taxi drivers can only work on Sunday because they are except from the Labour Law limitations (Art. 151 sec 5). In the same way as the distinction between the day and the night, this distinction between Saturday and Sunday is taken for granted and rarely questioned by either taxi drivers or customers. This too has become a part of field *doxa*.

The state also influences the annual cycle. It does so through its power to establish public holidays. And it is worth taking a closer look at this process of establishing public holidays as this will help us understand the magical power of the state over the taxi market and the political struggles that shape the temporal structures of demand for taxis.

The power of public calendar is a matter of high symbolic, and sometimes economic, stakes. There is a reason why, whenever there is a revolution, one of the first institutions that is changed is the state calendar. Political revolutions are often symbolic revolutions. As Bourdieu writes: “Revolutions revise the official calendars – ‘official’ meaning universal within the limits of a definite society, as opposed to private” (Bourdieu, 2014) (Bourdieu 2015:7). Such a symbolic revolution took place in Poland in 1989. The fall of the socialist regime triggered a remaking of the state calendar and thus the remaking of the temporal order of the taxi market. After 1989 the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May, the anniversary of the Polish constitution of 1791, was reintroduced as a national holiday.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, the pre-1945 Independence Day

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<sup>24</sup> The history of the daylight saving time in Poland goes back to 1919 when it was firstly introduced. The next daylight saving time was introduced after the war in 1946. There was no daylight saving time between 1950 – 1957 and again 1964 – 1977. Since 1977 until today each year daylight saving time has been introduced.

<sup>25</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> of May was taken away by the new socialist regime in 1946 – a decision that was met with social protests – as it competed with the 1<sup>st</sup> of May celebrations (labour day).

(November 11<sup>th</sup>) returned replacing the National Day of the Rebirth of Poland (July 22<sup>nd</sup>) introduced in 1946 by the socialist regime as the anniversary of the 1944 Manifesto of the Polish Committee of National Liberation. In 1992 a holiday was introduced, that commemorated both the Polish victory in a battle against the Bolsheviks and the Assumption of Mary (August 15<sup>th</sup>). Neither of these events would be found worthy of celebration by the socialist regime. The May 1<sup>st</sup> was persevered as a holiday but is it is no longer defined by the state as “Labour Day”. This has created a long weekend (May 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>) which is a time that many people leave Warsaw decreasing the demand for taxis and hence the earning time of taxi drivers. All these changed affected the temporal structured of demand for taxis.

The political struggles over temporality are best exemplified by the struggle over the most recent public holiday – the 6<sup>th</sup> of January – introduced in 2011. The celebration of the 6<sup>th</sup> January, the celebration of epiphany of god to men, was taken away by the socialist regime in 1960 due to its religious connotation. In 2008 a social movement emerged that aimed to bring the holiday back. The movement was able to gather 1,000,000 signatures under a petition, but the proposal was met with opposition. The opposition came mainly from the biggest Polish employer association called Lewiatan. Lewiatan protested against the introduction of a new holiday forecasting that in the future the new holiday will bring 5 billion lower sales and a 400 million revenue loss for the state budget(Zauszkiewicz, 2011) In spite of this opposition, the social movement gained the support of the ruling party (Civic Platform), which was at first sceptical about the idea, and torn between its Christian and pro-market ideology. The proposal to introduce this new holiday also gained support from labour unions. The law introducing a new holiday passed in the parliament in 2010. But employers did not give up. They took their case to the Supreme Court arguing that introducing a new holiday would require a new treaty with the Vatican, since the concordat signed in 1993 required any changes to the Polish calendar of public holidays to be approved by the Vatican. Such a treaty was never signed. It might seem somewhat ironic that in this battle between merchant’s time and church’s time, the merchants wanted to get the Vatican involved. In 2012 the Supreme Court struck down the claim for formal reasons. The court argued that the employers' association does not have the right to bring such a case in front of the Supreme Court. The social democrats wanted to move the holiday from the 6<sup>th</sup> of January to the 24<sup>th</sup> December but failed. In this most recent instalment of the battle between church’s time and merchant’s time, the struggle over the feast of Epiphany, the merchants had lost.

It might seem that this struggle over a single public holiday – a struggle that involved a plurality of actors (social movement leaders, politicians, economic experts, judges) and institutions (employers' association, political parties, labour unions, and the Supreme Court), none of which are taxi drivers – is very far from understanding why taxi drivers work when they work. This is not the case. To understand *earning time* we have to understand when there is demand for the service of taxi drivers and that, in turn, requires understanding how the public calendar is established, instituted and transformed.

The results of the struggle over the Epiphany influenced the demand of taxis on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January. Thus, when on the 6th of January 2015 one of the taxi drivers wrote on one of the taxi forum in the middle of the day that after waiting 8 hours he has not taken a single fare, another driver replied to him: *Maybe before going to work you should have looked at the calendar, because today is the Three Kings [Epiphany] and corporations are closed.* Since corporations are closed the demand for taxis was lower during the day.

However, having pointed out these different ways in which the state shapes time, one should be careful not to overemphasize this power of the state over the temporal order and hence over demand for taxis. The failures of the French and the Russian revolutions to replace the 7 day week with, respectively, the 10 day week and the 5 day weeks, shows that the power of the state over the temporal order has its limits. State magic does not always work. Sometimes acts of magic are questioned. Every now and then there are discussions about certain holidays and every few years about the rationale behind daylight saving time.

In other words the modern state is, like all other coordinating agencies, entangled in multiple other coordinating agencies. Although it is a superior coordinating agency to many of them, still other coordinating agencies, like the 7 day week, are older than the modern state itself. Even though the state might be “a central bank of symbolic credit” this does not make it the only actor able of performing social magic in a similar way that real central bank is not the only actor that is able to create money (an example of social magic if there ever was one). Money can also be created by private banks, non-financial institutions and even, to a limited extent, individuals.<sup>26</sup> The state is not the only actor able to perform acts of institution shaping the temporal order of the taxi market. Acts of institution – which earmark turning quantitative time into qualitative time – are also performed by organizations and individuals who establish routines and schedules. Although the state – understood here not as a monolith but rather a

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<sup>26</sup> As shown by the existence of local currencies and the recent rise of Bitcoin.

field or an ecology where institutions and individuals can be in conflict with each other (Bourdieu, 2014, Abbott, 2005b) – is a central coordinating agency that occupies a key position in the temporal architecture, there are many other pieces to that architecture contributing to the temporal structure of the demand for taxis.

### **3.6 Demand Cycles and Capitalist Dynamics**

Although the cycles of demand in the taxi market that structure the earning time of taxi drivers are not on the same level of analysis as the business cycles found in the works of Marx or Schumpeter who talked about the whole economies and long timeframes, but they are cycles nevertheless, that is, they are recurring patterns of economic activity.

The fact that one can speak of a cycle of demand in the taxi market does not mean that there is no novelty or growth. Within each of the cycles (daily, weekly, yearly) there are events that are novel, situations unlike those before and after, situation that would be impossible to predict – the so called “black swans”. And when looking across cycles one finds change. Although I unfortunately had limited access to data on the demand for taxis over the years, according to one study released by the industry, the number of cabs taken each day in Poland (including Warsaw) increased by 125% from 320,000 taken each day in 2003 to 400,000 in 2013(Taxi, 2013). There have been qualitative changes in the market. Over the last 20 years more people have been ordering taxis using mobile phones, and more recently smartphones, more taxi drivers have joined a taxi corporation, more taxis accept credit cards, new smartphone application corporations have emerged, prices have fluctuated, the market leaders have changed etc.

In other words, the existence of economic cycles does not exclude linear processes from taking place. As Krzysztof Pomian points out, when studying economic processes we never find purely cyclical, purely linear or stationary phenomena (1979: 642). The three are always intertwined. Although Marx talked about the existence of cycles of production and crises, it did not prevent him from speaking about the dynamic growth of capitalism and to predict that in the future the ever faster reappearing crises of the capitalist mode of production will lead to a qualitative change in the form of a revolution. On the other side of the political spectrum, for Schumpeter it was the existence of business cycles, structured by innovation and credit, which explained the dynamism and long term growth of the capitalist economy (Pomian, 1979: 602-612).

More recently a similar point about the both cyclical and linear character of capitalist temporality has been made by William Sewell (2008). Drawing on the works of Marx and Schumpeter, Sewell argues that economic cycles have been neglected in recent studies and provide a theoretical problem for the social sciences. Like Sewell, I see the economic cycle as a neglected topic in economic sociology. But in this chapter my argument has been the exact opposite of his. Sewell has made a very broad (in the sense of macro) argument that the existence of reoccurring patterns of economic life over time can only be explained by the immanent logic of capitalism and that this capitalist logic spreads itself on ever new areas of social life. I have been arguing the opposite. I have been arguing that in the specific case of the taxi market the origins of the reoccurring patterns of economic life, what Sewell calls the “stillness in motion” (2008: 526), do not come from within the economy but from without. To explain the “relentless logic of capitalism” we have to look at the rhythms of different social domains. In the taxi market, which is both a linked ecology and a linking ecology, the origins of the business cycle are found in the entanglement of the taxi market in the religious calendar and the political calendar. And it is precisely in that sense that one can speak of an “embeddedness of temporality” (to stretch an already overstretched concept) of the taxi market in society. In the taxi market the economic cycles exist because the religious calendar and the political calendar, along with the calendars of multiple organizations and individuals which structure the activities of both taxi drivers and their customers, are all founded on a circular conception of time.

This leads me to a more general point. Although, as Sewell has argued (2008), capitalism is an important coordinating agency in the multi-levelled temporal architecture that is social life, it is not the only coordinating agency. In the building that is the modern society, capitalism is living downstairs in one of the biggest apartments. Over time it was able to buy out some of its neighbours. But there are still other residents living in that building and capitalism has had a relationship of conflictual coexistence with them. It has borrowed kitchen appliances from them and argued with them over loud music. Some of the other coordinating agencies – like the 7 day week or the state – have been living in the building even before capitalism moved in. Taxi drivers have more recently rented a small room somewhere in the attic and have been running around carrying messages from one tenant to the other.

### **3.7 Conclusion: the temporal structures of demand for taxis**

In this chapter I have looked at the working day of taxi drivers by focusing on *earning time*. I argued that earning time of taxi drivers is dependent on the demand for their service. This is

because the taxi market is a linking ecology and individual taxi drivers are coordinating agencies. I have argued that taxis have a low temporal elasticity, which often causes conflicts in the market; and that the market for taxis in contemporary Warsaw is driven not by supply, but by demand.

I have argued that there is a temporal structure of demand. There is a temporal structure of demand in two senses.

There is a “temporal *structure*” meaning that there are certain crystallized regularities in demand over time. Because taxis coordinate activities, the demand for taxis is dependent on the activities of people who take taxis: when they go to work and when they come back; when they go to the doctor; when they party; when their flights take off and when they land, when the trains arrive and when they leave; when they go on holidays; when their kids go to school and when school holidays take place. And in modern highly differentiated societies these activities are dependent on multiple other coordinating agencies: timetables, schedules and calendars. I have argued that many of the coordinating agencies are either directly or indirectly dependent on a superior coordinating agency: the state. Through speech acts or acts of social magic the state is able to establish public time and the public calendar, thus shaping the temporal order of the taxi market.

But these regularities are “temporal structures” because these regularities have a history. In the case of the 7 day week which structures the demand for taxi this is the history of long *durée*, in case of the feast of Epiphany this is the eventful history of the recent past.

Both neoclassical and behavioural economists are unable to capture the role of time in the taxi market and in the working time of taxi drivers because their starting point is the individual. However studying coordinating agencies such as taxis requires starting with the social, that is, with interactions. In economic life time is a relation.

At this point, we have arrived at the first answer to the research question. What explains the *working time* of taxi drivers? Taxi drivers work when they work because taxis are coordinating agencies and as coordinating agencies taxis operate in a conflictual coexistence with multiple other coordination agencies many of which they depend on.

## Chapter 4. *Waiting time*: The Macrofoundations of Supply and the Temporal Structures of Socialism and Capitalism

“Just as the shortage economy is a characteristic attribute of the socialist system, so is the surplus economy of the capitalist system.”

Janos Kornai, *Dynamism, Rivalry and the Surplus Economy*  
(2013: 51)

*Much of the work of a taxi driver consists of waiting for passengers at the taxi stand for a fare (...) Waiting makes up most of taxi drivers working time. And this time has to be killed.*

Andrzej (CEO of a taxi corporation and former taxi driver)

In the previous chapter I analysed working time of taxi drivers by looking at *earning time*. I argued that the taxi market is driven by demand and that there are temporal structures in the form of *demand cycles* of different durations. I argued that the taxi market should be understood as a *linking ecology* that is a space which connects different social actors with each other. Since taxis are *coordinating agencies*, the *earning time* of taxi drivers is entangled in other coordinating agencies which structure the activities of people who then use taxis to coordinate those activities.

But in order to understand the *earning time* of taxi drivers it is not enough just to look at the demand side of the taxi market. Even if there is demand for taxis, a taxi driver will not earn money unless there is no one else to satisfy that demand before he or she does it. In other words the *earning time* of individual taxi drivers is also dependent on the supply of taxi drivers. If there is somebody else able to satisfy this demand, the earning time of a taxi driver becomes replaced by *waiting time*.

In neo-classical economics *waiting time* does not play an important role. In neoclassical economics the market is not a process but an instant. Market exchanges happen instantaneously, that is, buyers and sellers do not wait for each other. Microeconomics 101 teaches that if there is surplus supply and suppliers have to wait, then either supply drops or the prices drop and waiting time disappears. If there is surplus demand then prices rise or supply increases. In both cases equilibrium is restored and *waiting time* disappears.



But in the Warsaw taxi market *waiting time* does not disappear but has rather become a chronic element of the market. *Waiting time* makes up an important part of the everyday life of taxi drivers, and an important part of their work life. The phenomenon is not difficult to see. One can observe *waiting time* simply by looking at what taxi drivers do. During my fieldwork I went to different locations at different times of the day and across days. I also observed individual taxi stands over the course of a day. One of the first thing noticed is that taxi stands are full of drivers standing in line. These queues might be longer or shorter – depending on a time of the day, a day of the week, a month of year and the location of the taxi stand – but they are nearly always there. Standing in queues of taxis, taxi drivers are looking for customers, talking and arguing with each other, playing on their smartphones, checking or cleaning their car, filling in a crossword puzzle, reading a newspaper or a book, or simply trying to kill time in some other way. For this time they are not getting paid. As independent entrepreneurs, they only earn money when they have a client.<sup>27</sup> Thus, if one understands “work” as an activity that is done in exchange for money – as mainstream economists often assume in their models – then Warsaw taxi drivers are not “working” during much of their day spent “at work”.

Understanding where *waiting time* comes from requires looking at the supply side of the market. First it requires understanding *the number of taxi drivers* and *then the time each of these drivers spends in the market*.

From the supply side of the market there can be two sources of surplus supply and *waiting time*. Surplus supply can come from the number of taxi drivers or from the time spent by each driver trying to satisfy demand. Of course surplus emerges as a result of both factors (100,000 drivers driving 1 minute will not create surplus, neither will 1 driver driving all the time), but for the purpose of analysis it is useful to distinguish between the two. In this chapter I look at the number of taxi drivers and in the following chapter at the labour strategies of individual drivers. Put differently this chapter will look at *the macrofoundations of waiting time* and the next at *the microfoundations of waiting time*.

Looking at the macrofoundations of waiting time requires taking a broader look at the history of supply of taxis in Warsaw. By “zooming out” we will be able to see the larger underlying temporal structures shaping the number of taxis on the streets of Warsaw. Such a historical perspective will show that for much of the second half of the XX century the number of taxis

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<sup>27</sup> In 2013 there was only one company, employing around 100 drivers, that was paying by the hour of their work.

was much lower than it is now and that it was much more common in Warsaw to see passengers waiting for taxi drivers than the other way around.

But there is another reason why it is important to trace the history of the Warsaw taxi market. As Andrew Abbott points out past social structures do not simply disappear but rather become “encoded” into the present (Abbott, 2001). The history of the Warsaw taxi market haunts different social actors in the present structuring taxi drivers *earning time*, *waiting time*, and *political time*.

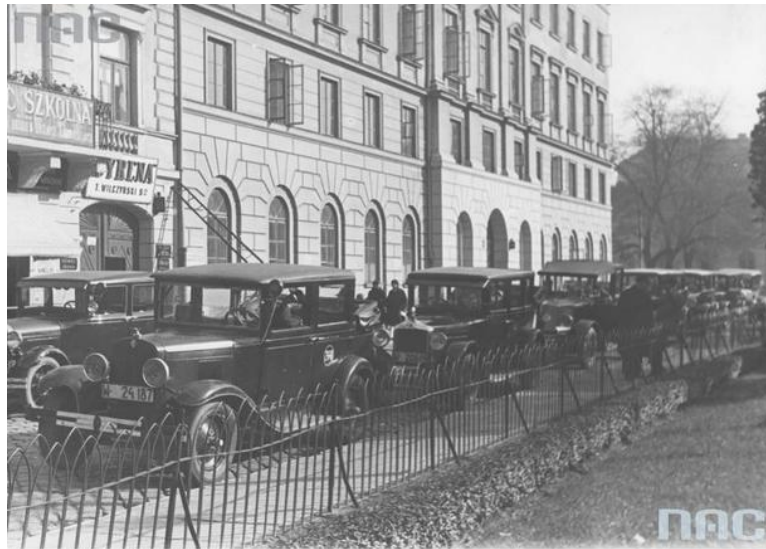
This chapter is divided into three parts which correspond to three larger temporal structures shaping the number of taxi drivers in Warsaw: socialism (1945 – 1989), transformation of the taxi market (1989 – 1992), capitalism (1992 – 2012). I discuss each of these periods first looking at the factors contributing to the supply of taxi drivers and then making an argument how these past structures have become encoded into the present.

When reading the history of the supply of taxis in the Warsaw taxi market I would like the reader to keep in mind that, as Polanyi wrote in the introduction to *The Great Transformation*, this "is not historical work; what we are searching for is not a convincing sequence of outstanding events, but an explanation of their trend in terms of human institutions. We shall feel free to swell on sciences of the past with the sole object of throwing light on matters of the present" (Polanyi quoted in Gemici, 2008: 12).

Following Polanyi, in this chapter I argue that the waiting time of taxi drivers is the result of larger temporal structures or social institutions that can be connected to the larger economic system and other markets with which the taxi market is linked.

#### **4.2 Shortage of Supply in the Socialist System (1945 – 1989)**

The first descriptions of taxi drivers waiting for passengers can be found in in *The Journal of the Warsaw Taxi Driver* written by a taxi driver from the interwar period. The author writes about his working day during the last 1920s and early 1930s: “The time spent waiting at taxi stands for passengers became longer and longer. Nearly all crossings, squares, markets and train stations were turned into stands. Waiting time was shortened by drivers telling stories about passengers to each other and with games” (Sękowski, 1985: 67).



Taxi drivers waiting at a stand in Warsaw before World War II

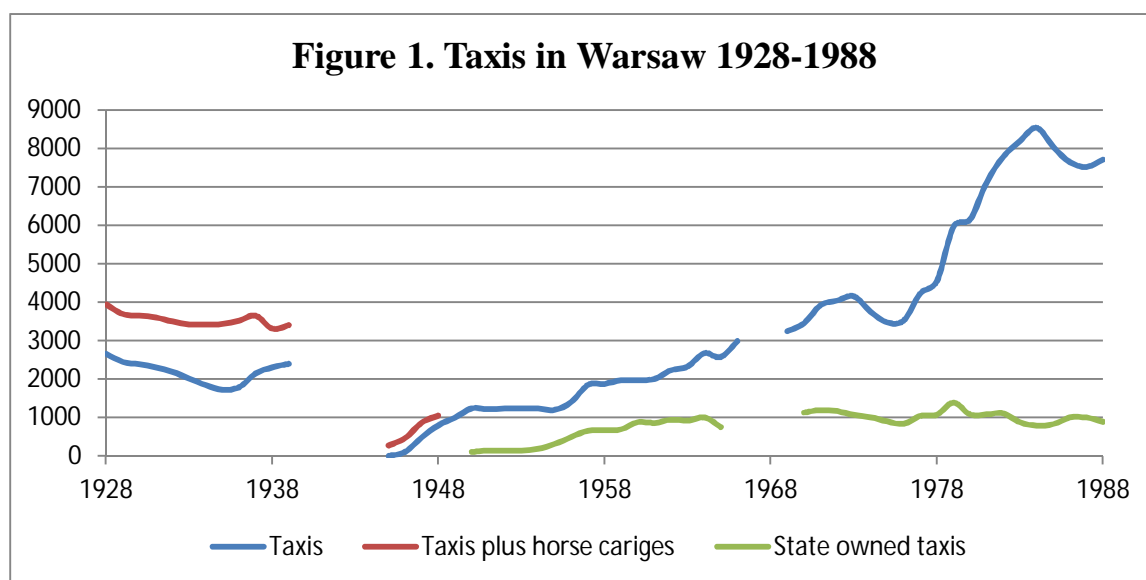
Surplus supply of taxis disappeared when the World War II started as all cars were confiscated. With the end of the war and the introduction of the socialist system taxicabs came back to the streets of Warsaw, but for the next forty years the supply of taxis was lower than the demand for their service. Surplus supply of taxis largely disappeared only to return in 1989 with the fall of the socialist system in Poland.

After the World War II and the introduction of socialism in Poland taxi drivers were one of the few groups of entrepreneurs who survived the so called “battle over trade” that took place in Poland between 1946 and 1949, which decreased the number of private owners from 2 million before the war to 146 thousand in 1955 (Zagórski, 1988). Only in 1951 did the first public taxis appear on the streets of Warsaw, when the Municipal Taxi Enterprise (MPT) was created and similar state enterprises were established in other cities in Poland. The socialist state favoured public taxis. At a conference in 1950 a representative of the Ministry of Communication predicted that within 2 –3 years private taxis would no longer exist (Szatkowski, 1994: 28). Public taxis were allowed to charge more, which due to a shortage of taxis was a form of privilege, while private taxi drivers had problems with state bureaucracy (Szatkowski, 1994: 28). In the 1950s the number of private taxis declined from 88% in 1951 to 54% in 1960.

Year	1951	1960	1970	1980	1987
Share of private taxis in Warsaw	88%	56%	68%	83%	87%

**Table 1: The share of private taxis in Warsaw over the years (source: statistical yearbooks)**

Although privileged by the state, since the 1960s state taxi enterprises were in decline. Between 1960 and 1964 nearly 100 taxi public enterprises in Poland were closed due to budget deficits. MPT was one of only seven public taxi corporations which survived, but it was reorganized to function on semi-market principles (Kantorowicz, 1971).<sup>28</sup> Although state owned taxis continued to exist in Warsaw, over time their share in the market decreased. By the end of the 1980s public taxis constituted only 13% of all taxis in Warsaw.



*Note: The data is based on the statistical yearbooks for the city of Warsaw. There is no data for 1939-195 and 1968 and 1969. The data on the number of horse drawn cabs stopped being included in the statistical yearbooks in 1948.*

It took almost twenty years for the number of taxis to return to the pre-war numbers. The Polish historian Błażej Brzostek writes about the supply of taxis in Warsaw the 1950s and 1960s: “On the taxi stand near Warsaw Central station people were lining up in queues. Respecting the rules did not always payoff. One could benefit from discrete and accordingly

<sup>28</sup> In the mid-1960s even the state owned MPT underwent major organizational changes to resemble more a private enterprise. It became one of the first enterprises in the Polish socialist economy that was supposed to function more like a private corporation (Kantorowicz 1971). After the reform MPT became self-financed and taxi drivers began to receive economic incentives with their earning dependant on how much income they would bring. They were also incentivised to take care of their car as they got to keep some of the profit when their car was sold at an auction after it had driven 200,000 km. Other socialist enterprises begun following such market-simulating reforms only in the 1980s, when the first and second stages of economic reforms were introduced GRALA, D. 2005. *Reformy gospodarcze w PRL, 1982-1989: próba uratowania socjalizmu*, Kraków, Wydawn. Trio..

more expensive offers out of line” (Brzostek, 2007: 300). Due to the shortage, drivers used to choose their own passengers depending on their destination. We find an example of this phenomenon provided by a well-known Polish writer in his journal from that time:

“I was already slightly late. I wanted to take a taxi. I entered the queue. I had some time (...). Taxis were arriving one after the other, but the first wanted to go to Wola, another to Grochów, and a third one was waiting for a shift change. I waited for some time, a taxi arrived, but I was pushed away by a nice looking young person, even though it was my turn. Finally, I entered the vehicle.” (Iwaszkiewicz, 1968: 374).

The shortage of taxis turned formally (legally) horizontal relations between the taxi driver and his fare into vertical relations of power asymmetry. Having customers wait at taxi stands put taxi drivers in a position of power. It established a market regime that favoured the seller, or in other words a sellers’ market. Drivers did not have to put effort into finding passengers, or convincing customers to use their taxis. Even if their cars were old and service would be terrible, there would still be a demand for their service. When a taxi driver arrived at a taxi stand he could choose from the long line of passengers waiting for him. If he wanted to take a break and go home for dinner, as taxi drivers sometimes did and some still do, he could arrive at a taxi stand and pick up a customer who was going in the direction of his home. At that time shortage of taxis was so great that in 1965 there were still 100 horse drawn cabs, filling in for them (Brzostek, 2007).



August 1963, taxi stand in front of the one of Warsaw’s main train stations

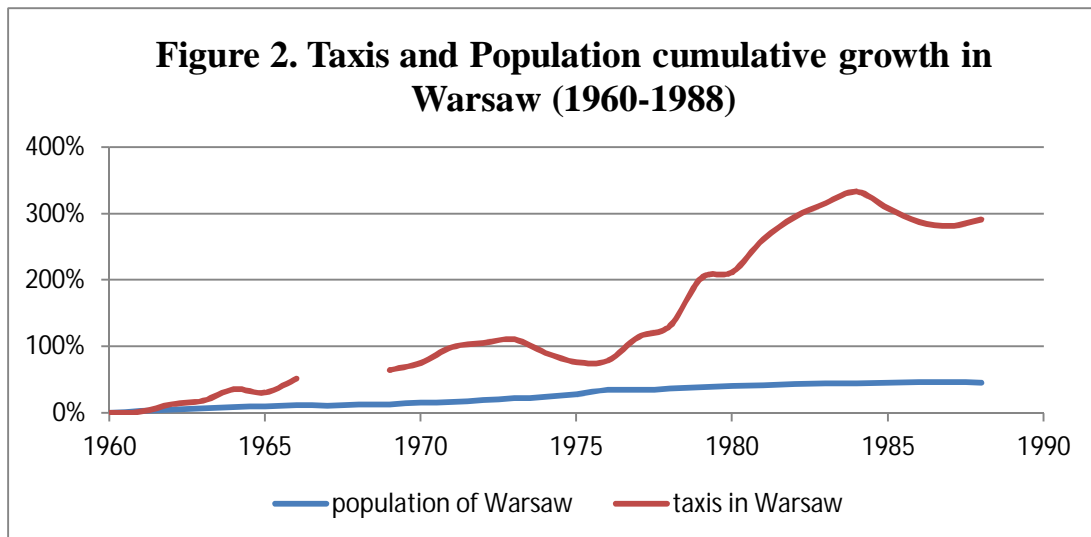
Taxi shortage continued throughout the 1970s. The director of the Municipal Taxi Enterprise (MPT) said in a discussion about public transport: “According to us, Warsaw needs another 1000 or so taxis. Maybe then we would be able to balance supply with demand” (Knothe, 1978). Over the next years more than 3000 additional taxis were registered in Warsaw, but this did not end the problem of shortage.

The number of taxis continued to grow rapidly at the beginning of the 1980s – much faster than population of the city (see Figure 2 below). In part this was because driving a taxi became a job for political activists and journalists who lost their jobs when Martial law was introduced in Poland in 1981. Unable to find another job, they sometimes turned to taxis (Wegner, 1986). The number of taxi drivers grew rapidly by 1983, 15.87% of all private enterprises in Poland were taxi drivers (90 000 taxi drivers in Poland and almost 570 thousand private enterprises).

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Private taxis in Poland</b>	<b>% of all enterprises in Poland</b>	<b>Number of private taxis in Warsaw</b>	<b>% of all enterprises in Poland</b>	<b>All private Enterprises</b>
<b>1955</b>	5,500	3.77%	890	0.61 %	146,000
<b>1960</b>	10,400	4.41%	1039	0.44%	236,000
<b>1975</b>	36,200	8.62%	2580	0.61%	420,000
<b>1983</b>	90,300	15.87%	7330	1.29%	569,000

**Table 2: Source: Zagórski 1988 and statistical yearbooks of Warsaw**

However the shortage of taxis continued. We find an extended analysis of the chronic shortage of taxis in the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s in a Master thesis of a Polish economist (Brzechowska-Szawdyn, 1982). In her thesis Brzechowska-Szawdyn argued that “the demand for the taxi service, both personal taxis and luggage taxis, has not been met. Shortage exists, even though the number of private taxis has greatly grown.” (1982: 47 – 48).



*Note: The data is based on the statistical yearbooks for the city of Warsaw. There is no data for years 1968 and 1969. The data on the number of horse drawn cabs stopped being included in the statistical yearbooks in 1948.*

In 1985 an article about “ghost taxis” appeared in *Stolica*. The author of the article wrote:

“In Warsaw there are more than 8000 private taxis and almost 1000 taxis belong to the Municipal Taxi Enterprise. This we know. But no one can tell us if this is enough or not? (...) From our everyday experience it is clear that there is a constant lack of taxis and only occasionally are taxis waiting at taxi stands. On the other hand, the queues of passengers are common” (Królikowska, 1985).

The magazine, in which this article appeared, illustrated it with the photograph of a long queue of passengers waiting at the taxi stand. The photograph came with a heading: “it is common to see long queues of passengers” (see the photo below). At that time the problem was not the lack of registered taxi, which exceeded the number of taxis found in other cities of similar size, but rather the fact that many taxis seemed to be “ghosts”: they existed only on paper and could not be seen on the streets of Warsaw.



Warsaw 1985. Heading "it is common to see long queues of passengers"  
(source: Stolica 1985).

#### 4.2.1 The Socialist System and the Economy of Shortage

Why was there a shortage of taxis? The shortage of supply between 1945 and 1989 should be seen as a macro phenomenon and a product of socialist shortage economy. Janos Kornai has argued that in socialism the phenomenon of shortage – in other words lack of supply or an excess of demand – was *general, frequent, intensive and chronic*. Shortage was general in the sense that it was not limited only to a certain sector of the economy; it was frequent as it was experienced on everyday basis; it was intensive in that it had a strong impact on the practices of individuals and it was chronic as it occurred across time (Kornai, 1992). People were standing in lines for basic products like food, clothes, and gasoline, but also for cars and apartments (Kornai, 1992, Mazurek, 2010b, Mazurek, 2010a, Wedel, 1986). In the taxi market a shortage of supply was frequent since moments when the supply was equal or larger than demand were rare; it was intensive in that it affected both the practices of taxi drivers, who could choose among passengers, and the practices of customers who had to queue and wait; and it was chronic as shortage of taxis appeared throughout the whole period of socialism.

However, during that time surplus supply did not disappear completely. The demand for taxis was not always higher than supply. Sometimes taxi drivers had to wait for passengers as there were temporal exceptions to the problem of shortage. In the 1980s, when then number of taxis



already grew; there was a “dead period” around between 9 am and 11 am when taxi drivers would wait for passengers (Brzechowska-Szawdyn, 1982). This was after the morning rush was over but before the shops and public institutions would open. It was also easier to find a taxi during the night. There were also spatial exceptions to shortage. Queues of taxis could be seen near hotels or airports as taxi drivers were trying to catch a foreigner who would pay them in dollars and not in the Polish currency. The main location where drivers would queue was the airport.<sup>29</sup> But, although one finds these individual situations of excess, overall shortage of taxis persisted. Throughout the city, there were individual islands of taxi surplus in a sea of taxi shortage.

But where did shortage of taxis come from? Why did taxi drivers not have to wait for customers, but rather it was the customers who had to wait for taxi drivers? Why was the working day of taxi drivers structured differently than it is now?

Without a doubt the pricing policy of the state contributed to creating excess demand. Bureaucracy controlled the prices of taxis, which were kept low. Taxis were not treated as a luxurious good, but as a substitute for private cars and other public transport. Also the financial well-being of private entrepreneurs was not on the political agenda. Bureaucracy tried to make life more difficult for private taxi drivers, for example by establishing lower prices for them than for state taxis or by accusing them of tax fraud.

However the major mechanism for generating shortage of taxis was the *spill over effect* from the centrally planned economy into the taxi market. The private sector and the state run sector of the socialist economies were linked with each other. The spill over came mostly from shortages in cars, car parts, gasoline and technology.

Firstly, shortage of taxis was the result of shortage of cars. Between 1945 and 1989 people and organizations had to wait to be able to acquire a car. From the 1950s to the 1970s not only did the amount of cars supplied by the central planners to state owned taxi corporations and to the association of private drivers not meet the demand for the taxi service, but during some years it even did not allow for the reproduction of the number of taxis available. In 1978-1979

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<sup>29</sup> A former CEO of Warsaw airport explained to me: *A taxi at the airport has always been a good source of income for the taxi driver. In previous times [during socialism] when they would get a client, who would have arrived from the dollar sphere [a non-socialist country], and they were the majority, taxi drivers would then take them around Poland. The conversion rate for the dollar was so good that you could earn quite well from this. At the airport some groups [of taxi drivers] would collectively organize and form cliques.*

the managers of Warsaw municipal taxi corporation had to use their informal networks in state bureaucracy to get additional 650 cars (Brzechowska-Szawdyn 1982).<sup>30</sup>

Lack of cars had important implications for taxi drivers. It decreased the supply as it was difficult to acquire cars and drive taxis. It also made it difficult for individuals to become taxi drivers. Not only did a person have to wait to obtain a car, but there was a requirement, introduced in the late 1970s, that demanded taxi drivers to have at least three years of car driving experience. The lack of cars led to a shortage spiral. It made more financial sense for the state owned taxi corporation to sell a taxi after two years than to continue using it. Having bought the car the state owned corporation would use it for two years and then sell it for 75% of its price on the second market helping to boost the financial situation of the enterprise, but limiting the amount of taxis on the street (Brzechowska-Szawdyn, 1982, Knothe, 1978).

The shortage of cars not only decreased the supply of taxis, but it also increased the demand for them. Individuals and households had to wait years before they could get a car. In the late 1950s there were 16 cars per 1000 inhabitants of Warsaw (Brzostek, 2007: 319 - 320). In 1989 waiting times to obtain a car in Poland varied, depending on the car purchased, between two and eight years (Kornai, 1992: 236). As many households did not have a car they used a taxi as a substitute. This substitution effect was enhanced by the fact that public transportation was also experiencing shortages. Buses and trams were overcrowded, did not run on schedule, and would not reach certain parts of the city.

Secondly, shortage of taxis was a spill over from the shortage of auto parts. The shortage of cars not only meant fewer cars on the streets but also that many taxis were old and in bad condition. In the 1950s taxi drivers sometimes still drove cars from the 1920s. They were said to spend 1/3 of their time repairing their vehicles and not working (Brzostek, 2007). The situation improved in the 1970s as new cars were being introduced, but in 1974 19% the cars of MPT were not working (Brzechowska-Szawdyn, 1982). Repairing cars was difficult due to lack of spare parts and shortage of repair services. New tires, car batteries and other parts

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<sup>30</sup> There were different reasons for the lack of cars in Poland. One of them was that the limited numbers of cars which were produced were often exported. They were sold in the West not only because it was more profitable but also the Polish foreign trade sector was lacking convertible currency. While exporting cars made more sense than selling them in Poland, importing cars was very expensive due to high tariffs. This phenomenon was nicely illustrated in the late 1980s by the Polish comedy series about taxi drivers called *Zmiennicy*, where the taxi driver who is unable to get a car and has to wait a long time for it, pretends to be a foreign investor that is willing to pay in dollars. Once the director of the car producing enterprise hears that an investor wants to pay in dollars, suddenly the shortage disappears.

were in short supply and required waiting times. Taxi metres, which in the 1960s became a necessity, were also lacking and difficult to obtain (Szatkowski, 1994).

Shortage of auto parts not only decreased the supply of taxis but at the same time it boosted the demand for them. Even if people were able to acquire a car, having first waited for it for a long time, they would be unable to service it when it broke down forcing them to use a taxi.

Thirdly, shortage of taxis was the result of shortage of gasoline. Having a functioning car is not enough to provide the service of a taxi driver; one cannot drive a taxi without gasoline. But throughout the socialist period in Poland gasoline was in short supply and people had to wait in line at the gas stations (Kochanowski, 2010: 233 - 249). This was problematic for private taxi drivers who had to buy their own gasoline. The shortage of gasoline increased after the oil crises in the 1970s and continued in the 1980s. In 1981 drivers, including at the beginning taxi drivers, waited up to 48 hours in lines to be able to fill in their tanks (Polityka, 1981). To cope with gasoline shortage in 1982 the state introduced a rationing policy which was abolished in 1989. People received “stamps”: taxi drivers received 10 litres per day, while other registered car drivers received 30 – 45 litres per month.

Like in the case of cars and auto parts, the shortage for gasoline affected both supply and demand for taxis. Taxi drivers had to wait for gas and they could not work during that time, which decreased the supply of taxis.<sup>31</sup> The introduction of rationing also had another effect on the supply. Some people became taxi drivers just to have access to a bigger ration of gasoline that they needed for other purposes (Kochanowski, 2003). Some drivers would earn money not by driving their taxis, but by selling their stamps for gasoline on the second market (Kochanowski, 2003). Shortage of gasoline and its rising prices also boosted the demand for taxis. People took taxis either because they had already used their ration of gasoline or because they preferred to stand in shorter line for a taxi than in the longer lines for gasoline.

Fourthly, the shortage of taxis was influenced by a lack of technology. In any market one of the problems, which has to be solved, is the problem of cooperation between exchange partners (Beckert, 2009b). The two sides have to meet. And as Kornai points out: “Up-to-date market coordination requires up-to-date technology: a widespread, efficient telephone service, quick and reliable mail delivery, personal computers, photocopying machines and so on” (Kornai, 1992: 449). In a taxi market technology is important because coordination between

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<sup>31</sup> To cope with the problem of lack of gasoline and to be able to sell their share some drivers switched to natural gas, which was not rationed.

supply and demand is particularly difficult. Unlike in many other markets in the taxi market *locality is crucial*: the space and the time of the exchange is an intrinsic element of the service provided by taxi drivers. Both sides are in a hurry to find each other and finish the transaction: customers because they want to get somewhere and taxi drivers because they want to move on to the next client. Unlike in many other markets both sides of the market are on the move. The taxi market is not like a bazaar where the locality of the vendors is often fixed nor is it a market where the locality of the customer is fixed.

In any market technology helps to coordinate cooperation between supply and demand by transforming the informational order of the market. In the taxi market technologies help to coordinate demand with supply because they extend, what Ervin Goffman called, the “response presence” of the taxi driver and his fare (Goffman, 1983). By extending the response presence of both the taxi driver and his client beyond the eye and the ear, technologies such as phones, dispatch systems (and now smartphones) help the two sides first observe and then find each other without being physically in one another response presence.

In socialist economies technologies that facilitate coordination were lacking. Phone lines, that would allow customers to order taxis, were in short supply with long waiting periods to receive a phone line (Kornai, 2013: 59). And even if people had a phone line they would not be able to call for a taxi due to a lack of a taxi dispatch system. Two way radio dispatch systems, which would allow taxi corporations to communicate with their drivers and redistribute fares, were introduced much later in Poland than in capitalist countries. While in the US dispatch systems were introduced after World War II, in Poland they were introduced only in the late 1970s. When two way dispatch system was introduced in Warsaw in the late 1970s, it was only introduced in public taxis which were the minority of taxis. The reason for this was that radio frequencies were controlled and monopolized by the authoritarian state and could not be used by private enterprises. Private taxis were only able to introduce dispatch systems in 1992, 3 years after the fall of socialist regime when the control over radio frequency was released by the state.

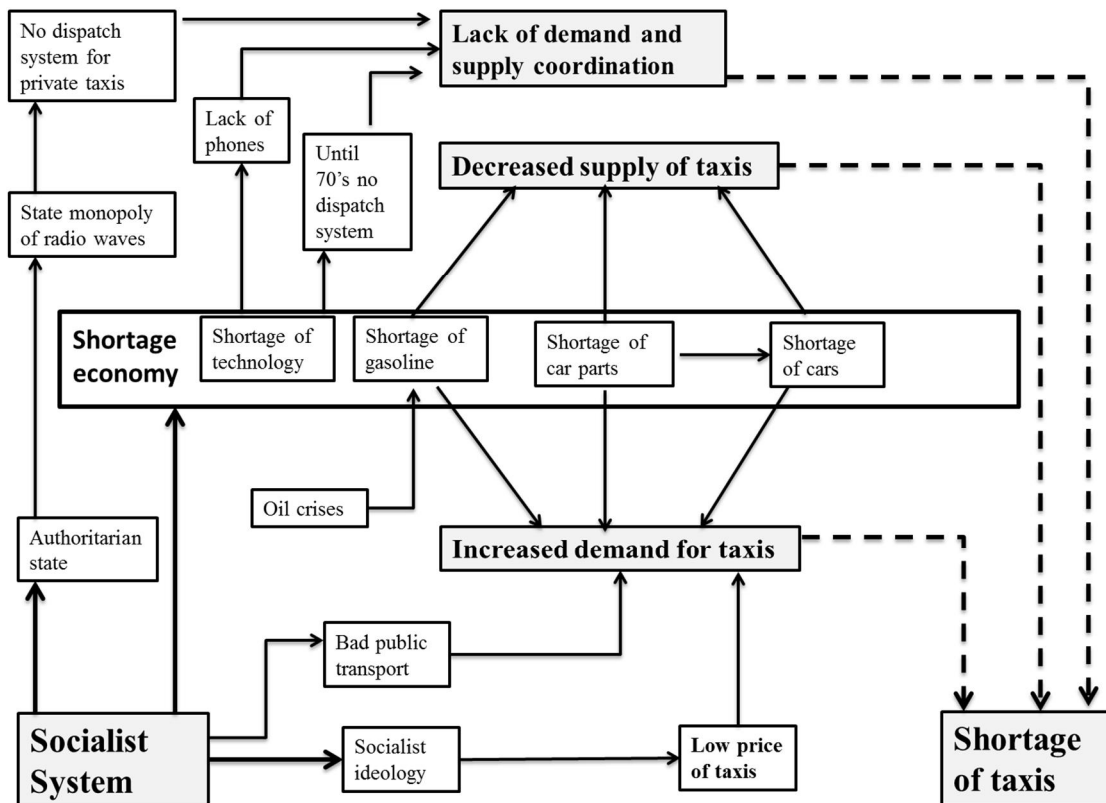
With a lack of dispatch technology the most common way of solving the problem of cooperation between supply and demand was by customers finding drivers on the taxi stands. Between 1945 and 1989 usually the customers came to the taxi stand and waited there for the taxi driver to arrive. The phenomenon of people lining up in queues and waiting at the taxi stands was a part of everyday experience. This resulted in inefficiency as customers had to walk to the nearest taxi stand and wait in long lines, while at the same time taxi drivers could

be waiting in other parts of the city thus leading to a situation of both shortage and surplus coexisted at the same time.

This lack of cars, spare parts, gasoline and technology explains the phenomenon of “ghost taxis”. Even though by the late 1980s there were more than 8000 registered taxis, more than in many other cities of similar size, a lot of them could not be seen on the streets of Warsaw. Drivers were either repairing their cars, waiting for gasoline, selling their share of gasoline, using gasoline for other purposes, or they were simply waiting for passengers in the wrong place. Although not directly under the control of central planners, the Warsaw taxi market became part of the shortage economy thereby illustrating the fact that economic fields often take on the regime of fields around them.

Figure 3 is meant to be a visual representation of the argument about the origins of shortage of taxis between 1945 and 1989. Firstly, shortage was influenced by the factors limiting the supply of taxis. Secondly, through factors that pushed up demand for them. Thirdly shortage emerged because of the lack of coordination between supply and demand, when taxis were waiting in one part of the city, while customers were waiting in another. I have argued that some factors were responsible for both restraining supply and for pushing demand up. These included shortage of gasoline, shortage of car parts and shortage of cars. These were all part of the larger phenomenon of the shortage economy. The shortage economy was also characterized by a lack of technology. Not all factors were related directly to the economic system of socialism. Some factors were related to the political system. The fact that there was no dispatch system for private taxis even after 1970s was related to the authoritarian state, which kept control of radio waves and the fact that it privileged state companies over private. The socialist ideology was responsible for keeping the prices of taxis down and for privileging state taxis over private. There were certain external factors not related to the socialist system, such as oil crises in the 1970s, which contributed to the shortage of gasoline.

**Figure 3. The Macrofoundations of Taxi Shortage**



The analysis of shortage of taxis before 1989 is important for understanding the supply of taxis in the present. The historical analysis shows that the supply of taxis cannot be abstracted from other sectors of the economy. Looking at the shortage supply of taxis during 1945 – 1989 helps to emphasize that the taxi market is a *linked ecology* that is connected to other sectors of the economy (Abbott, 2005b). Events happening in other sectors spill over and resonate in the taxi market. If after 1989 shortage of taxis disappeared and surplus of taxis emerged this phenomenon has to be located in the context of the macro changes happening in the broader economy. *If there is no longer shortage of taxis after 1989 but rather a surplus this is because, in part, there is no longer a shortage of cars, car parts and gasoline. Waiting for clients emerged with the disappearance of shortages in other sectors of the economy.* Since the taxi market is linked with other markets its temporal structures are entangled in the temporal structures of those markets.

#### **4.2.2 The Encoding of 1945 – 1989 in the Present**

There is another reason why the history of Warsaw taxi market during socialism is important. It is important because the history of the Warsaw taxi market is encoded in the present. Past social structures of the taxi market did not simply disappear without a trace but rather became encoded both in contemporary social structures and the collective memory of contemporary taxi drivers, political actors and the broader public.

History is encoded in the material and social structures of the city. After the war much of Warsaw had to be rebuilt. If a taxi driver now stands at taxi stands in certain parts of the city and earns 30 zł (7 €) by driving a passenger from the airport to the city centre, this is because of the processes that shaped the way Warsaw was rebuilt after the war. Many of the taxi stands were created at that time and they continue to structure the practices of taxi drivers who use them (and of the potential customers). These past structures continue to shape taxi drivers' income and thus, indirectly, their working day.

Past social structures of the Warsaw market became also encoded in the collective memory of taxi drivers, politicians who regulate the taxi market, customers who take taxis and the broader public.

In my conversations with taxi drivers one phrase I kept hearing, especially from older drivers was “a taxi driver used to be somebody important. People used to say Mr. Taxi driver”. There is a shared memory among Warsaw taxi drivers of a once powerful occupation that has lost its position over the years. When talking to taxi drivers one often finds this history of downward mobility of the occupation represented in the feelings of disappointment, or even resentment about the present situation, which are sometimes mixed with either lack of hope about the future or unrealistic expectations about the future. Such attitudes and feelings often characterize social groups with downward mobility (Bourdieu, 1984).

The history of the market is also encoded in the attitudes of taxi drivers towards labour unions. The history of the Warsaw taxi market between 1945 and 1989 helps to explain why taxi drivers perceive themselves as entrepreneurs and not workers. Although taxi drivers identify themselves as entrepreneur in other countries as well, it is especially characteristic for drivers in Poland. Even those most engaged in the unions and social movements would tell me that they are not workers but entrepreneurs. For 40 years, in an economy without private enterprises, taxi drivers were one of the few legal entrepreneurs. Some of the drivers who

started driving back then continue to drive. As self-identified entrepreneurs taxi drivers do not want to join labour unions which makes collective action aimed at improving working conditions more difficult (see also chapter 6).

Secondly, the history of the market is encoded in the memories of citizens of Warsaw. The period of 1945 – 1989 is also encoded in the memory of taxi customers and the broader public. During socialism taxi drivers were seen as one of the few groups that were the beneficiaries of the shortage economy. Perceived as beneficiaries of a discredited system drivers became and continue to be a particularly unpopular group among the general public and the media. Probably sometime between 1945 and 1989 taxi drivers received the derogatory nickname of *złotowa* (from the Polish currency *złoty*). This aversion towards taxi drivers continued after the fall of socialism. It can be found in newspapers and magazines which focus predominantly on the “deviant behaviour” of taxi drivers (cheating passengers, aggressive driving, and bad language), while at the same time having less to say about their long working day, their struggles with rude customers or lack of pensions.

The negative attitude towards taxi drivers is passed on from generation to generation. Consider this fragment of the interview I conducted with my research assistants, both in the early twenties, after they helped me distribute surveys among taxi drivers:

[First of all, can you please tell me about your experience of doing the surveys?]

Assistant I: *Well, I must admit that I found the topic interesting. I changed my opinion about taxi drivers, that they are not a rude złotowa as I thought before.*

Assistant II: *I also changed my attitude towards them. Before, when I was driving my car and I saw a złotowa cut in line [I would think] “złotowa what a boor”, because this is what my father taught me about them.*

Both were too young to personally remember the position of taxi market during socialism. And yet their attitudes towards taxi drivers – encoded in the notion of *złotowa* – were shaped by the structures and events that took place during that time.

These negative attitudes towards taxi drivers are important. Unlike for example nurses, taxi drivers find it difficult to obtain public support for their collective action over their working conditions. There is little sympathy for their struggle. Whenever discussions emerge about creating a limit to the number of taxis on the street or other form of regulation, an argument



against it is brought up that the introduction of new regulations will bring back socialist times. During political struggles over regulation the past become recoded as it is recollected and reinterpreted by different social actors (see chapter 7).

### **4.3 Deregulation and Surge of Supply (1989 – 1992)**

In 1988 a post-war Jewish emigrant was writing about her return to Warsaw:

“Where can I find a taxi? – I ask pedestrians. There – they show me – there is a taxi stand. But the taxi stand was empty, only a long queue extended alongside the road. People were waiting patiently until it becomes their turn. It took 30 or 40 minutes before I was the first in line.” (Ashkenazy-Engelhard, 2004: 8-9).

But just two years later in May 1990 we find a completely different description of the taxi market and taxi drivers’ working day as a Polish journalist wrote in the biggest newspaper:

“Citizens of Warsaw indifferently walk past long queues of taxis standing at taxi ranks (...) [quoting a taxi driver:] ‘I arrived at the taxi rank at 6 am (...) and I will continue to drive until 10 pm. We are now waiting so long at the taxi stands, that in order to earn, one has to work much longer than before.’ (...) Large competition favour customers who can at a point during the day or night count that on the nearest stand there will be a taxi. The arrogance of taxi drivers who used to pick the destination of their fare disappeared.”(Stołeczna, 1990).

The post-war period of shortage came to an end when the last socialist government, trying to rescue the Polish economy, introduced a second round of economic reforms at the end of the 1980s.<sup>32</sup> In December 1988, half a year before the victory of the Solidarity and the fall of the socialist regime in Poland, a law was passed which transformed the Polish economy and reorganized the taxi market. The law was officially called “the law of entrepreneurship”, but since then it is usually referred to and remembered as “Wilczek’s law”, after the minister of industry Mieczysław Wilczek who was fighting to push it through the socialist government. A chemist by training and a private entrepreneur, Wilczek was the first and the last minister of the socialist regime to come from the private sector (Economist, 2014). Wilczek became a minister in October 1988 and stayed in office until August 1989, when the socialist government lost the elections to Solidarity marking the end of state socialism.

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<sup>32</sup> The first round took place in the beginning of the 1980s.

The passing of Wilczek's law was a turning point in the taxi market. The opening paragraph of Wilczek's law stated: "Undertaking economic activity is free and permitted to everyone". This law was a major step in the transformation from the socialist system towards capitalism. The law released a wave of private entrepreneurship into an economy that was by in large state run. It also deregulated the taxi market. In order to become a taxi driver individuals no longer had to apply for a concession, they could now have other sources of income, and they did not have to join an association of taxi drivers. In other words, Wilczek's law took away all the barriers that existed previously making entry into the taxi field much easier. Suddenly anyone with a car and a driving licence could provide the service of a taxi driver.

The introduction of Wilczek's law was an end of the era of shortage and the return of the phenomenon of surplus supply. Between 1988 and 1992 the number of taxi drivers in Warsaw increased dramatically. Although there are no official data on the number of taxis between 1989 and 1992, newspapers and city officials at that time estimated that the number of taxis was somewhere around 25,000-30,000. This would mark a 300% increase from 7718 licensed taxis in 1988. At the same time the prices of taxis were no longer kept low by the state and the costs of fuel, also freed, were going up. With the prices rising, the demand for the taxis dropped.

Individual drivers began to form small local groups and take over individual taxi stands in order to secure fares. Through brute force and intimidation, drivers tried to establish or construct what can be called *locational niches*. Locational niches are locations in time-space that have symbolic and functional value: the airport, clubs, hotels, train stations, important streets. Drivers occupied a niche by "taking over" a location and by only letting members of their group into the stand. The most "problematic" places were the airport and the train station, where groups of taxi drivers make great use of the asymmetry of information between them and foreign passengers and overcharge, making customers pay even 12 times more than other drivers. The director of the Warsaw Airport at the beginning of the 1990s told me during an interview:

*In the 1990s (...) the job [of a taxi driver] became open to everyone. This created a temptation for a quick income. It led to a situation where more and more people were providing the service, groups began to form that were fighting with each other, they even began to organize, and not let others in.*

Jan a former taxi driver, who was driving at the beginning of the 1990s, explains: *the craziest thing was watching the queue at that airport. The things that were happening there! (...) I witnessed a beating when a person thought that he was strong, but they proved to him that others are stronger.*<sup>33</sup> Newspapers begin to talk about a “taxi mafia” taking over parts of the city.

The increased number of taxi drivers was related to the rapid changes happening in the economy and the state. For some driving a taxi became a second job. This was the case of one of my interviewees, Jan, who drove the taxi at the beginning of the 1990s. Jan was a jazz musician and treated driving a taxi as a source of extra income. He had plenty of time when there were no concerts and his jazz band was not rehearsing and he spent some of that time driving a taxi.

The surge in the number of taxis was not only related to the transformation of the economy but also of the state. Although there was no radical “de-communization” of the Polish state at the beginning of the 1990s, many people who were members of the police force or of military during socialism received early retirement. And in 1994 legislation was passed which allowed policemen and members of the military to take an early retirement after 15 years of service. Some of them were in their 30s and 40s. Becoming a taxi driver was a reasonable choice for them – they already had financial security from pension so driving was a form of extra income. As Jarosław who worked for the army but received early retirement in the 1990s told me during an interview:

*I am (...) an ex-military and I had to do something. When a person feels he has the power he wants to do something, simply not to go crazy from boredom. Secondly (...) to earn a little extra cash, because everyone (...), everyone wants to achieve something, something to improve one's standard of living (...). Wherever I went they asked me for a contract where I would open a company and give invoices. So I had an idea – why should I help other people making money, if I can work on my own account.*

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<sup>33</sup>A similar observation about fights taking place in deregulated markets were made with reference to the Stockholm and New York SLAVNIC, Z. 2011. Struggle for Survival in the Deregulated Market: Re-commodification and Informalisation of the Taxi Sector in Stockholm. *Forum for Social Economics*, 40, 233-251, HODGES, G. R. 2007. *Taxi! : a social history of the New York City cabdriver*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press.

### 4.3.1 Encoding of 1989-1992 in the Present

This period of deregulation continues to play a role in the contemporary taxi market. Like the temporal structures of socialism, the period after deregulation is present in the institutions that structure the market and the collective memory of taxi drivers and the public.

The current structure of the Warsaw taxi market has its roots in that time. It was during that time that many of the taxi corporations formed and the rules of the market were instituted. Thus the fact that there is not a single price in the taxi market, which used to be the case before 1989 comes from this time. As I argue in chapter 6 the lack of a standard price one of the factors hindering solidarity between taxi drivers from different corporations.

The cohort of taxi drivers who started working during that time continues to drive. These include former military and policemen who became drivers because of the transformation of the Polish state. Because these drivers are in a privileged position they are often disliked by others. Thus another driver complained to me that: *For them being a taxi driver is not serious, it is something they can play. They have a pension, they don't have to pay ZUS [social security] (...) for them taxi is a game.* For former military and police cab driving can be “a game” where game is understood as a type of activity that is not serious and non-productive and one that is not primarily driven by material interests (see Lahire 2010: 454). For some older drivers, who have a pension, going out to a taxi stand can be more of a habit than a serious economic activity.

The events of that period contributed to the already negative attitude of the media and the general population towards taxi drivers. At the beginning of the 1990s and the problems with the “taxi mafia” this perception of the occupation only worsened. The idea of a “taxi mafia” existing in Warsaw became a cultural symbol. And as is often the case of groups in the lower part of the social stratum (Elias and Scotson, 1965), taxi drivers have since then been perceived through the “worst” members of their community: the cheaters, hustlers, the vulgar and aggressive individuals.

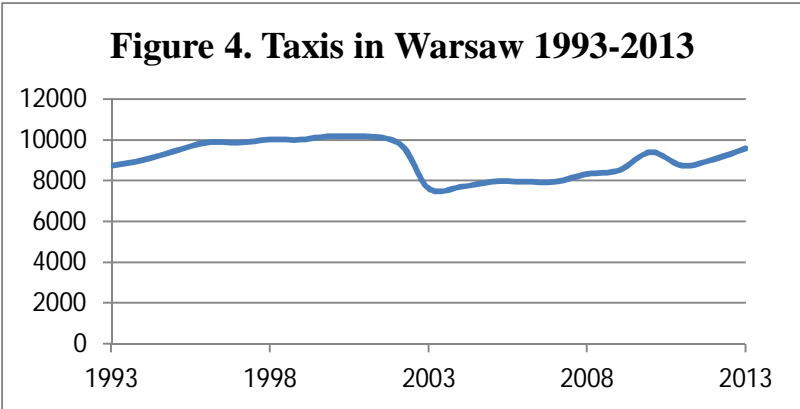
But the history of deregulation has also benefited taxi drivers in their current struggles. Wilczek's law became a cultural symbol of chaos in the taxi market shared among taxi drivers but also members of Warsaw authorities. As I argue in chapter 7, the collective memory of Wilczek's law and consequences deregulation was a resource that could be used by social movements in their struggles against deregulation which took place in 2012. The encoding of

1989 – 1992 in the collective memory enabled the social movement to mobilize drivers against deregulation by creating an analogy between 1989 and 2012. One of the reasons that the city took the side of the taxi drivers and not the central government in their struggle over regulation was because there was the memory of the chaos of the deregulated market between 1989 and 1992 (see chapter 7).

**4.4. Surplus Supply of Capitalism (1992 – 2014)**

After the initial deregulation, a Polanyi-like counter movement took place. Taxi drivers began to protest over the excessive number of drivers, long waiting time and lack of income. Different newspapers and magazines wrote about to the problem of the “taxi mafia”, pushing the local authorities to do something about it. The city gradually re-regulated the taxi market: first introducing certificates in 1991, than concessions in 1998, and finally licences in 2001.

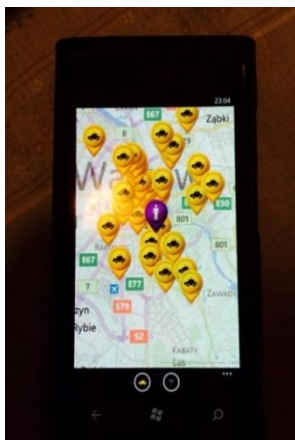
At the beginning of the 1990s the number of taxis drops from the estimated 25-30 thousand in 1990-1992 to around 8700 thousand in 1993. Over the next years the number of registered taxis continues to grow reaching 10 000 in 2001. The number of taxis drops again at the beginning of the 2000s as the city verifies the licences that have been given out. However at the same time certain taxi corporations begin to circumvent the licence system and introduce non-licensed drivers due to a loophole that exists in the law. Although at that time the official number of taxis drops significantly, the number of people performing the service of taxi drivers does not necessarily drop. In the late 2000s the supply begins to rise again as regulations change and it becomes more difficult to circumvent the licence system



Currently waiting time is part of the everyday of taxi drivers. One driver told me: *My waiting record has been 4 hours, but as a rule 1.5-2 hours, on average of waiting period.* Another driver said: *Now you sometimes have to wait 3-4 hours for a fare. So there is plenty of time to*

*do other things. A young driver: Sometimes, when I start work (...) I can wait 3-4 hours for a fare. An experienced driver estimated that currently a fare with a passenger lasts maximum of 20 minutes while waiting periods can be up to 3-4 hours. So there is time to do other things. All these descriptions have to be treated with caution, as taxi drivers have a tendency to over exaggerate and focus on extreme situations of waiting.*

However, while taxi drivers might not be waiting 3-4 hours, but they often do wait more than 30 minutes between each fare.<sup>34</sup> As Andrzej the CEO points out: *Much of the work of a taxi driver consists of waiting for passengers at the taxi stand for a fare (...) Waiting makes up*



Surplus supply as seen on a smartphone application



Surplus supply as seen on the street of Warsaw

*most of taxi drivers working time. And this time has to be killed.*

One can observe the phenomenon of surplus supply by walking up to a taxi stand and looking at what taxi drivers are doing. As of recently one is even able see the phenomenon through a sort of “armchair observation” by opening iTaxi which is a smartphone application that allows a person to order a taxi. When we open iTaxi we have a bird’s eye view of the city and we can see how many drivers are currently not occupied, but available and waiting for their next fare. Over the course of 2013 – 2014 I have done this many times at different times of a day, always observing the same phenomenon of idle capacity. Sometimes there would be more taxis available, other time less, but there were always some taxis that were free and waiting.

<sup>34</sup> I had the chance to experience the phenomenon of waiting when I did an extended interview with a driver spending a working night with him in January 2012. During the 12 hour shift there were 8 passengers and each fare was followed by a 20-30 minutes waiting period for the next customer. As I was told by my interviewee, the waiting periods during that night did not differ from other nights.

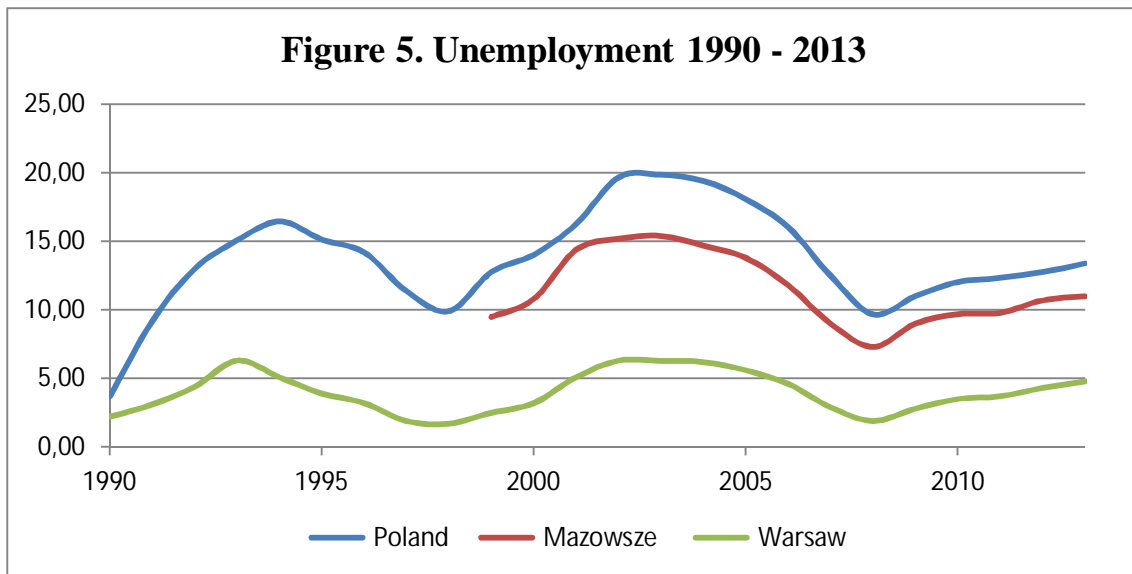
#### **4.4.1. Capitalism as a System of Surplus Supply**

The working time of taxi drivers was very differently structured before 1989 and after 1989. I already explained why taxi drivers did not have to wait for passengers before 1989 but why do taxi drivers now have to wait for passengers?

Just like shortage of taxis before 1989, the surplus supply shaping the working day of individual taxi drivers has to be seen as a macro phenomenon related to the capitalist economy. As Janos Kornai has recently argued, surplus supply is one of the central features of the capitalist system (Kornai, 2013). According to Kornai just like socialism was a system characterized by shortage, capitalism is a social system characterized by surplus. In capitalism there is a surplus of goods and services, a surplus of production capacities, and a surplus of labour force. The surplus of goods and services can be seen by looking at the shelves packed with goods, and the warehouses filled with reserve stock. The existence of surplus production capacity can be seen qualitatively when talking to production managers or quantitatively by looking at idle capacity and utilization rates which are usually below 90% (Kornai, 2013: 57-87). The surplus of labour in capitalist economies can be seen qualitatively by looking at the queues in unemployment offices; and quantitatively by looking at the number of people who are either registered as unemployed or have already given up hope of finding a job and are thus no longer included in the statistics for unemployment. According to Kornai, like shortage of supply in the socialist system, surplus supply in capitalism is general, frequent, intensive and chronic.

The surplus of labour force spills over into the taxi market. Surplus supply of labour, or in other words unemployment, has a dual effect on creating excess supply in the taxi market. On the one hand unemployment pushes people into the job of being a driver, while at the same time it reduces the demand for the service as unemployed people are not likely to take taxis.

Before 1989 unemployment was not a factor pushing people into becoming a taxi driver. In a socialist economy of full employment it was easy to find another job. The exceptions were political activists in the 80's who sometimes turned to taxis to earn a living. Since 1989 unemployment has been between 10% and 20% in Poland, and between 7.3% and 15% in the region where Warsaw is situated, and around 5% in Warsaw.



*Note: The numbers for unemployment are based on the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS). The data for Mazowsze starts only in 1999 when Poland underwent administrative transformation.*

In many countries driving a taxi is a job that is performed by immigrants (Hodges, 2007, Slavnic, 2011). However, Poland is an ethnically homogenous country with no immigrant taxi drivers.<sup>35</sup> According to my research in Warsaw there are main two trajectories that lead to becoming a driver. The first is through other jobs related to driving (being a truck driver, a bus driver, delivery man, a personal driver etc.). The second trajectory is after losing another job or having small business gone bankrupt. The two trajectories are not exclusive. 27% of taxi drivers that participated in my survey worked as a driver before, and although only 3.8% of drivers who started working after 1989 declared themselves as being unemployed prior to becoming a taxi driver, once we include those who said that they lost their previous job, that they were unable to find another one and those whose businesses went bankrupt, the figure is 38%. Of course this number has to be treated with caution as the survey was conducted on the streets of Warsaw and not on a random sample of taxi drivers.

The quantitative data from my survey can be better illustrated with the life stories of the taxi drivers that I interviewed.

Michał (age 53, taxi driver since 2012) told me:

<sup>35</sup> Currently to my knowledge all taxi drivers are ethnically Polish. This has not always been the case. In the XIX century Jews made up 30% of all horse drawn cab drivers in Warsaw. There were also some Jewish taxi drivers before the World War II.



*I had a few jobs before in my life (...) anyway my last job was in a state institution. I really enjoyed it and was respected as a worker. But, as it happens in state institutions, a new minister came, the directors changed (...) unfortunately they let me go. Everyone knows how the labour market is, finding a job is very difficult. I put a lot of effort into finding a satisfactory occupation. Unfortunately I was unable to find one*

Another taxi driver, Jędrek (age 26, taxi driver since 2012):

*Chance, it was a matter of chance. I was forced by my financial situation. When a person cannot find work, and needs the money, then he takes anything he can get his hands on. Also I was introduced to the taxi occupation by a friend of my father, who was also a taxi driver*

And Jan (age 56, driver since 2006):

*Completely by chance like most men and women standing at these taxi stands. These changes that were occurring [i.e. post-socialist transformation] led to a decrease of occupational diversity. Corporations took over the market and (...) it forced me to look for something else. I never thought that I would do this [be a taxi driver] but I did. There was no alternative, no alternative, and at home there was a car...*

But it is not only a matter of the size of unemployment, but also of its fluctuation. Each wave of higher unemployment pushes certain people to become taxi drivers. When unemployment decreases, older workers, who lost their jobs, are not as likely to find another occupation because employers prefer younger workers. For those who become taxi drivers at an older age driving a taxi is not so much a “career choice” as it is a necessity and a way of avoiding unemployment. Jacek, an older driver who started driving in 2012, told me:

*I once had a plan to become a taxi driver, but I thought that I could do more with my life than to drive a taxi. This idea came back when my other plans got thwarted. I had to close down my business. A problem appeared that I had to do something with my life. I looked at different job ads, but after 30 years of having my own business [it was difficult to find something].*

However, there are counter examples to such “involuntary” drivers. Both in my interviews and in my survey there were individual taxi drivers who answered that they “always wanted to be a taxi driver”. Among survey participants there were 11 cases (4.5%). For them becoming a driver was often a matter of family tradition or being a passionate driver. One taxi driver, who has been driving since 1980, told me during an extend interview: *I wanted to become a taxi driver since I was a kid (...) Son of a rickshaw, my father had a rickshaw.* But overall such “vocational” taxi drivers are individual cases compared to the larger number of involuntary drivers.

For many becoming a taxi is not something that they wanted to do, but something that they have to do. Many drivers take on the job of a taxi driver only because the structural factors that are pushing them towards it (unemployment) are stronger than the cultural counter factors preventing them from taking it (low esteem of the occupation). Especially for drivers who had a more prestigious job before, becoming a taxi driver can be quite difficult. It is both an economic and a symbolic degradation. The classification system of occupations puts taxi drivers low in terms of prestige. The fact that taxi driving is held in low esteem is not only related to the fact that taxi drivers do not earn a lot. As I already pointed out, the prestige of the occupation is the result of the encoding of the history of taxi drivers in contemporary classification systems of Polish society. Some drivers would talk to me about the initial shame and embarrassment related to becoming a taxi driver.

This was the case of Grzegorz and Tomek. Grzegorz, a 59 years old driver and former manager, who has been driving since 2012, asked how he became a taxi driver told me:

*I simply had to, because I worked 25 years. I have 25 years of managerial position, and when I lost my last job, where I was for 16 years, where I was the manager, at the age of 58 in the Polish reality it is impossible to find another job. I sent 250 applications...*

And Tomek, a 58 years old driver who started driving in 2010 told me:

*All my life, I worked in a regular job. I am a logistician by training. In my last corporation (...) the management changed, a new manager came (...) and they decided that I do not fit. That my image does not fit the organization, that to put it insolently, that I am too old.*

Becoming a taxi driver was not part of the future that they had hoped for or one that they imagined. This made the beginning especially hard. Tomek told me: *The beginnings were especially hard. The resistance that I had to step into my car was incredible! Later I got used to it.* Grzegorz shared similar feelings as he told me about his attitude towards being a taxi driver:

*More and more a person gets used to it. In the beginning, I will tell you, mostly I felt shame. (...) My former workplace where I was a manager is located very close to where I live. So I used to walk to work. A lot of the workers lived in the blocks close by, so they knew very well who I was. (...). It was a shock when I began to arm my car [change it into a taxi]. I am still embarrassed to drive it to my cabin, because they [the neighbours] know who I am, who I was. But more and more this feeling goes away.*

The histories of Tomek and Grzegorz show that while there are structural factors, in the form of unemployment, pushing people to become taxi drivers, there are cultural factors discouraging people from taking the job. But they show how with time the cultural factors begin to fade away as a process of habituation takes place and drivers get used to their new job. This is especially evident in the fragment of the interview where Grzegorz says that he is ashamed because the neighbours “know who I, who I was” suggesting that his old identity of a manager is no longer there and that he has new identity. Contrary to what Bourdieu would have us think, many of the “involuntary” taxi drivers do not make “a virtue out of necessity”, but rather resort to resignation and an acceptance of their new positions in the social structure. As taxi drivers become accustomed to their new job, they no longer look for other jobs, thus contributing to surplus supply of taxi drivers. For those unable to do this being a taxi driver is related to feelings of anger and resentment.

#### **4.5 Conclusion: The Macrofoundations of Waiting Time**

Looking at the history of supply of taxis in Warsaw allows us to see the macrofoundations of the temporal structures that shape the *working time* of taxi drivers. I have argued that taxi drivers' working time was very differently structured before 1989 and after 1989. Before 1989 taxi drivers did not have to wait for clients but had to wait to receive a new car, to get

car parts and repair their car and to be able to tank their car. Since 1989 taxi drivers no longer have to wait to buy gasoline or no longer face shortage when trying to get a new car or car parts, but will have to wait for customers. The socialist economy and the capitalist economy had very different temporal structures shaping the *earning time* of taxi drivers through *waiting time*.

Contrary to what neoclassical economics assumes, *waiting time* exists and structures all economies. But economies differ in who waits, for what and for how long. In some economies workers wait for jobs and stand in line in unemployment offices, in other economies employers wait for workers. *Waiting time* can vary between different sectors of the economy. In the capitalist economy of surplus *waiting time* is a crucial element of taxi drivers *working time*.

We have thus arrived at the second answer to the question of why taxi drivers in Warsaw work when they work. Why do taxi drivers work when they work? Taxi drivers work when they work because their working day is structured by waiting time. Waiting time is a macro phenomenon that can be linked back to the temporal structures of capitalism which, unlike socialism, is an economic system characterized by surplus supply.

## Chapter 5. *Waiting Time*: The Microfoundations of Supply and the Temporal Structures of the Taxi Market

*This occupation is unpredictable and you never know what awaits you when  
you go out to work*

Jędrek, a taxi driver

In chapter 5 I argued that understanding taxi drivers' *working time* requires understanding why taxi drivers spend much of their day waiting. I argued that supply of taxis can be linked with the larger temporal structures of capitalism, which is a system of surplus supply of labour. Unemployment pushes people to become taxi drivers and prevents them from finding other jobs; at the same time it also decreases the demand for taxis. However surplus supply and waiting time do not emerge simply because many people become taxi drivers due to unemployment. For surplus supply and *waiting time* to emerge and reproduce, and to structure the *earning time* of taxi drivers, taxi drivers have to go out and drive their car each day longer than is necessary to satisfy the demand for their service. In other words *waiting time* is created and reproduced in the everyday activities of taxi drivers.

The fact that supply of taxis is established and reproduced at the micro-level through day-to-day activities might seem like a very obvious statement to make. However, it is a statement worth making because we often take for granted that markets are created and reproduced through human action and interaction. When speaking about market exchange we have to remember that supply and demand do not emerge and meet through some abstract force – the famous “invisible hand of the market” being the prime example – acting behind people’s back. Supply and demand emerge and meet because of the *practices* of different market participants. For exchange to be able to take place these practices require coordination (Beckert, 2009b) or, to borrow Bourdieu’s musical analogy, orchestration (Bourdieu, 2005).

On the surface it might seem that economists studying the labour practices of taxi drivers are interested in the actions that shape the *earning time* and *waiting time* of taxi drivers. Economics is usually defined as the study of choice. However, when we look at the empirical analysis of taxi drivers it turns out that economists are limited by their data and their methods.

Although economists are studying when taxi drivers are working and for how long, due to the type of data that they gather and analyse, they are unable to describe what taxi drivers are actually doing, that is, to capture the strategies and the experiences of taxi drivers as they go about their everyday life. As the phenomenological sociologist Aaron Cicourel pointed out:

“Economists, like all social scientists who focus on meta-level, aggregate levels of analysis, ignore ‘the unfolding of the patterns its agents create’ (...) Economists, however, do not directly study processes or adjustment and change by observing how agents in an organization interact on a daily basis, nor do they address the effects of variation in the way individuals experience limited capacity processing constraints in making economic (or other) decisions in local organizational settings”. (Cicourel, 2006: 66)

The aim of this chapter is to show that labour strategies are a form of social action and that through this social action *waiting time* is created and reproduced, thus structuring the *working time* of taxi drivers. Having in the previous chapter zoomed out and looked at the larger temporal structures of supply it is time to zoom in on the labour strategies of contemporary taxi drivers.

In this chapter I look at the microfoundations of supply and surplus supply. To do so I start by going back to the demand for taxis but this time I describe it as it is experienced by taxi drivers as they go about their everyday life. I argue that taxi drivers experience the demand as a situation of uncertainty. I then explain the disparity between the temporal structures of demand and the experience of those structures by taxi drivers. I then argue that since demand for taxis is experienced as uncertain and there is an excess of possible ways of acting taxi drivers are unable to rationally choose their *working time*. I describe the two strategies that taxi drivers use to cope with uncertainty. The first has to do relying on routines, the other with market observation. I argue that while many drivers are skilled at anticipating demand their individual labour strategies lead to the emergence of *waiting time* and a situation of *collective self-exploitation*.

### **5.1. Fishing for Customers: The Temporal Dimension of Uncertainty**

Demand for taxis is not only something that exists objectively and can be studied by looking at quantitative data or, when one does not have access to such data, reconstructed by asking different taxi drivers about their typical day and then trying to establish certain patterns that

emerge out different descriptions. Demand for taxis is also *experienced* by taxi drivers when they go out and drive their cabs. Moreover, there is sometimes a disparity between the two perspectives. The same taxi drivers who, in one part of the interview, would map out certain regularities in the fluctuation of demand (day vs. night, rush hour vs. not rush hour, weekday vs. weekend, working day vs. holiday, cheaper corporation vs. more expensive corporation) would, in other parts of the interview, speak about their work being highly unpredictable. As Marcin told me:

*The last days or week before the holidays [Christmas], if you would have tried to order a taxi, you would see what was happening. But for me it was not a larger income, because you had fares, you stood in traffic, but usually these fares were for 12- 15 zł (3-4 €), and other days, it's like between 6 am and 12 pm I have, literary, three fare and I have 350 zł (80 €). This is a lottery; you have no influence over this*

Adam used the same analogy of a lottery to describe his work during out interview: *It is a lottery, if you get [a fare at the] airport or an office, and you go the city centre, but you can also go to Domaniewska [street], so everything in this occupation is a lottery.*

We have to understand this analogy for what it is. When taxi drivers speak about their occupation being “a lottery” they mean a type of lottery where the odds of winning and even the rules of the game are unknown to the participants. To draw on Knightian terms, the idea of lottery, as used by taxi drivers, is not meant to represent a situation of risk but rather a situation of uncertainty in which probabilities are unknown to the decision maker (Knight, 2002).

This analogy between driving a taxi and playing a lottery is not the only one used by taxi drivers to illustrate the experience of demand unpredictability. Maciek described his work as a series of “blind dates” which was meant to illustrate that one just does not know what type of client one will get and where the client will want to go. He also described it as a roulette that is a game where each spin (fare) is completely independent of previous spins. But possibly the best and the most often used analogy made by taxi drivers to explain their experience of demand is the analogy between driving a taxi and fishing. Wojtek told me:

*[I tell my wife] ‘Listen darling, I am going to work – maybe I will earn something’. But then you go to work and you don’t earn anything. You are angry that you should have stayed at home. But on the other hand if you would not go to*

*work you would not know if it made sense or not. It is like [pause]... like fishing!  
You go and you do not know what you will catch.*

[I have noticed that many taxi drivers use this metaphor!]

*Because it is true! It is true! You go fishing. You sit on the dock. You do not know  
what you will catch. Within an hour you might have a whole bag of fish and you  
might go home. Or you can sit 2 days and not catch anything.*

Like the analogy of playing the lottery the analogy between driving and fishing is meant to illustrate the uncertainty of demand. But more than the lottery analogy, the analogy between driving a cab and fishing is able to highlight *the temporal dimension of uncertainty*. Taxi drivers lack not only the knowledge of what will happen but also when it will happen. For a taxi driver it is not a matter whether you find a client or not, because eventually you will, but rather the uncertainty of how long you will have to wait and what type of client you will catch. Will you catch a big fish (a long fare) in the next five minutes or wait an hour and catch a trout (a short fare)? As Shackle was able to point out, once we introduce uncertainty into our analysis, time becomes a central concept in economic analysis (1967).

Taxi drivers use this analogy in part because fishing is a common hobby among them so they are drawing from their cultural repertoire and personal experience. For example the above quoted driver, who used the metaphor, enjoyed fishing. They also use the analogy to fishing because it helps them translate their experience to a stranger (the sociologist) who knows next to nothing about driving a taxi and is asking them to describe their practices and experiences to him. However, what for taxi drivers is a *practical analogy*, that allows them to translate their experience, turns out to also be a very good *scholarly analogy*. There is a vast literature on fishermen and fishing markets showing that the lives of fishermen and the fishing markets are characterized by uncertainty.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, there are many similarities between the taxi market and the fish market, especially when it comes to the role of uncertainty and the strategies of coping with it, the role of time, space and competitions (Acheson, 1981, Kirman, 2011).

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<sup>36</sup> As James Acheson wrote in his review of the many different works done in anthropology of fishing: “The primary contribution of the group of anthropologists studying fishing has been to produce a body of literature and set of concepts on the way people have solved the problem posed by earning a living in this uncertain and risky environment” (Acheson 1981: 277).



## 5.2 Temporal Structure and Experience of Demand

A phenomenological account of the demand for taxis, as it is perceived and described by taxi drivers, helps us to avoid what Bourdieu called *the scholastic point of view* (1990b). In other words, a phenomenological account allows us to see demand not from the point of view of an impartial spectator, who looks at the graph of demand over time and sees a pattern, but rather from the perspective of a market participant who experiences demand *in situ*.

However, the phenomenological analysis of demand, as perceived by taxi drivers, raises certain questions. How can the demand for taxis be at the same time structured by different coordinating agencies, as I argued in chapter 2, and experienced as being unpredictable and chaotic by taxi drivers, as I am arguing in this chapter? How can there be the tension between the macro or meso level – temporal structures of demand – and the micro – experience of these structures by the individual? This tension is worth investigating because, as Peter Bearman argued, the logic of social action, or what he calls “the grammar of everyday life”, can best seen “by focusing on tension and contradictions in interaction that appear when viewed from multiple standpoints, typically across levels.” (Bearman 2005: 4).

There are two reasons for the disparity between the temporal structures at the macro level and the micro-level perception of those structures by taxi drivers. Firstly the fact that there are temporal structures of demand does not mean that demand is not eventful, only that these events emerge out of those social structures. Secondly the temporal structures of demand are not something that is necessarily observed and experienced in the lifeworld but rather something that has to be reconstructed with the use of, what Aaron Cicourel calls, “representational re-descriptions” (2006).

Firstly, although there is a temporal structure of demand for taxis that is created by different coordinating agencies, the demand for taxis is highly eventful. The structural aspect of demand does not conflict with its eventfulness because singular and unique events always emerge out of the different temporal structures that coordinate social life. In chapter 2, I illustrated this relationship between an underlying temporal structure of social life and the eventfulness of demand for taxis with the example of a woman taking a taxi because she woke up late for work. *This singular and unique event – impossible for the taxi driver to predict – emerges within and out of a series of temporal structures: working schedules, schedule of public transportation, and public calendar.* Another unique event of this type would be people

taking taxis because the airport stops operating flights due to the weather conditions, forcing people to look for alternative modes of transportation. Again this event emerges within and out of different coordinating agencies like the schedule of the flight or the public calendar. Passengers will be going to certain destinations that are determined by the flight schedule. As William Sewell pointed out, following the work of anthropologist Marshall Sahlins, there is no conflict between eventfulness of the social world coexisting with underlying social structures (Sewell, 2005).

But there is another reason why, even though there is a temporal structure of demand, taxi drivers often experience and describe demand as chaotic. When taxi drivers go out and drive their taxis they do not see the demand for their service in the way that the Andrzej the CEO of a taxi corporation described in chapter 3 “sees” the demand by looking at the weekly graph of demand; or the social scientist “shows” social structures of demand in his work through quantitative data. What Andrzej “sees” is not, strictly speaking, demand but rather a *representation* of demand. The weekly graph of demand that the CEO looks at is what Aaron Cicourel calls a “representational re-description”: that is a synthetization and compression of human experiences and thoughts (Cicourel, 2006).<sup>37</sup>

The way in which Andrzej observes demand is different from how a taxi driver out on the street perceives and experiences demand. Andrzej and following him the social scientists, can “see” the weekly cycle, which “looks like a saw”, because he is dealing with a *representation re-description* of what 100 of drivers working for his corporation have experienced throughout the week. The individual taxi drivers out on the streets do not “see” such as saw, nor do they necessarily experience it. When Andrzej told me that he can “see” how demand decreases at the beginning of the week what he really “sees” is a line on a piece of paper that goes down. Out on the streets, where the actual taxi driver are working and making decisions *in actual time in actual space* things are much messier and chaotic. This difference in perception of demand by the taxi driver and the social scientists is a somewhat analogical situation to experiencing the weather patterns throughout one’s life and being a climate scientist looking at a graph of the weather data from the same period. Where scientists equipped with aggregate data and an adequate representational re-description will see a pattern, individuals will experience as being much less orderly (Pomian, 1984).

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<sup>37</sup> As Cicourel writes: “The notion of re-description refers to the human ability to synthesize and compress or summarize our thinking; first by producing speech narratives, gestures, bodily and facial movements, and artistic or graphical exemplars, and second by the development and use of calendars, written displays, tools, physical, chemical, and electronic mediums. These re-descriptive devices seek to capture experiences and thoughts that go beyond the limitations of our sensory capacities.”

### **5.3 Uncertainty and Labour Strategies**

Since taxi drivers experience the demand for their service as a situation of uncertainty the idea that they can rationally choose their working time is highly problematic.

For taxi drivers to be able to rationally plan their working time and maximize income would require them knowing, among other things, the locality of customers, the location of their destination, the traffic, and the plans of all the other taxi drivers. Such knowledge would then allow the taxi driver to rationally calculate and choose the best labour strategy, that is, the best combination of clients over time. This combination of clients would then allow the taxi driver to maximize his income and limit his working time. This is the approach of neoclassical economics to the working time of taxi drivers (Farber, 2014, Farber, 2008, Farber, 2005).

But let us just we just stop and think about the number of possible actions from which a taxi driver is able to choose. Even if taxi drivers had the knowledge of where each customer will want to be picked up and where each customer was going (which he does not), and he also knew in advance the plans of all the other taxi drivers (which he does not), and the future road conditions the number of possible actions that the taxi driver could choose would be astronomical. There is simply an excess of possibilities for the taxi driver to rationally calculate what to do. Just as there are simply too many books to read in any big library and scholars cannot rationally choose the best combinations of books for their bibliography, but have to find other strategies (Abbott, 2014); taxi drivers are unable to rationally choose the best labour strategy that would maximize their income and limit *working time*.

In other words, in the taxi market, like in the game of chess studied by Erik Leifer (1991), the possibility of rational action as envisioned by neo-classical economics or game theory is very limited. However, in order to earn money taxi drivers nevertheless have to act. *The labour strategies of taxi drivers and their working time should be perceived in this context of an excess of possible actions that a taxi driver can take.*

### **5.4 Coping with Uncertainty through Routines**

One way that taxi drivers deal with uncertainty of demand and the excess of possible actions is through routines. Michael Santee, a long time taxi driver and the author of *Taxi driving made simple*, a book that is advertised as being “the one book you need to master the art of taxi driving”, writes about routines:

“Yes, there is a role for routine. In the taxi business everything is so amorphous, shadowy and unpredictable that only by asserting your own order will there be any order. If you develop certain patterns of activity, you will establish a framework from which you can vary as needed and come back to without inventing confusion or that vacuous hollow feeling experienced by many new drivers. Instead you will feel on top of things rather than the reverse” (Michael, 1989: 135).

In Warsaw, taxi drivers use different routines to deal with uncertainty of finding clients. There are routines related to space, time, movement, and income.

Spatial routines have to do with coming back to the same location. Taxi drivers sometimes have their favourite stands where they like to work. If they are near the airport they will drive to the airport, if they are near train stations they will drive there. Some drivers always return to the same taxi stand. These drivers are referred to by other drivers, and refer to themselves as *gumiarze*: people who act as if they were held by an elastic band (*guma*). Having picked up a customer at a location and driven her to her destination, *gumiarze* return to the original starting point to wait there for the next customer. Maciek told me: *In my corporation there is this guy, who I know for 15 years, and he will never go to another neighbourhood [where he lives]. Even if there would be 100 customers there, he will always come back here. He works from 7 am until 4 pm and only here.*

Among the people who took my survey there were 45 cases (19%), who declared that they return to the same spot. However, the number of taxi drivers who stick to one location is likely to be much lower in the general population since my survey was conducted in large part on taxi stands (especially near the airport), thus there was a much higher probability of talking to a taxi driver as those stands were especially popular stands among *gumiarze*. In case of corporate taxi drivers the stand they often return to would most likely be the airport or the central railway station, but it can also be hotels, certain shopping malls, music clubs, discotheques and bars. Non-corporate drivers have individual taxi stands throughout the city that they “colonize”.

Another way of coping with uncertainty is through temporal routines or in other words schedules. Since taxi drivers cannot rationally choose when to work, some resort to working the same hours. In my survey 61 taxi drivers (25%) declared that they always work the same hours, 134 drivers (54%) declared that usually work regular hours and 51 (21%) declared that

they do not work regular hours. The temporal routines are often closely related to spatial routines. If a taxi driver returns to the airport he will not work during the night because planes do not land during the night. On the other hand if a taxi driver works around clubs, he will not be driving during the day.

Taxi drivers also use routines that have to do with movement. A routine used by taxi driver is based on minimizing the amount of unpaid kilometres. Thus after dropping off a customer the taxi driver tries to move as little as possible and does not go looking for customers in another part of the city. To return to the analogy to fishing, here the fishermen does not go looking for the fish, but rather waits for the fish to come to him. Similarly, the taxi driver goes home or takes a break when he is closest to home and avoids going home when he is far away.

Taxi drivers also rely on income routines. Taxi drivers try to earn a certain amount of money each day. This is what behavioural economists call an income target. An income target can be seen as one of the ways of coping with uncertainty of demand. As my interviews and survey show, many drivers consciously use an income target. Some are also likely to use it non-consciously. In the survey 59% of all drivers said that they do have an income that they want to reach. Similarly the income target was also mentioned in many of the interviews. Grzegorz, who started working the previous year, told me:

*I try to wake up around 5 – 5.30 am but I do not put on an alarm clock. I wake up, make myself tea, coffee. And then I drive until I get my daily target. Sometimes to earn this, one has to drive 8 hours, sometimes 10, sometimes 14. And if one day you earn less then you know that the next you will have to earn more and then this progressively increases, so it's better to work longer and have a peace of mind, that is, to have an inner regime, a norm, that has to be kept up to freely manage your month.*

Although I have described separately the different routines in their labour strategies taxi drivers rarely use just one routine. Very often routines are not rules that taxi drivers follow but rather they are strategies (Bourdieu and Lamaison, 1986). Put differently, taxi drivers have repertoires of routines that they use as an *adaptive toolbox* (Swidler, 1986, Gigerenzer, 2008, Gigerenzer and Selten, 2002).

### 5.4.1 Routine as a Social Phenomenon

What are routines? Routines are, as Anselm Strauss pointed out, “standardized patterns of action” (Strauss, 1993: 194). As Anselm Strauss argues, “many if not most routines are responses to problems” (Strauss, 1993: 195). In this case the problem is the excess of possible actions to take.

Another way of thinking about the strategies of taxi drivers would be to follow the psychologist Gerg Gigerenzer who argues that to deal with Knightian uncertainty people use heuristics: “strategies that ignore information to make decisions faster, more frugally, and/or more accurately than more complex methods” (Gigerenzer and Gaissmaier, 2011: 453). However, unlike the notion of heuristic, the notion of routine underlines that these ways of acting and thinking emerge and are reproduced in a social process (Strauss, 1993). Thus unlike Gigerenzer, who distinguishes between social and non-social heuristics (Gigerenzer and Gaissmaier, 2011: 471- 472), a sociologist should look for the social foundation of even the most “personal” routines.

Let me illustrate the social character of taxi drivers’ routines with two examples. The first example will be the case of a spatial routine the second of the income target.

If a taxi driver can come back to the same location this is, in part, because there is the social institution of a taxi stand. A taxi stand is typical “uncertainty reducing institution” (Kregel, 1980: 46). Taxi stands are locations where taxi drivers and passengers are able to meet. Although with the rise of the modern communication system, taxi stand have lost some of their power they continue to play an important role in the everyday of taxi driver, if only because they provide a place where taxi drivers can park and wait for free. Corporations continue to pay to be able to monopolize certain taxi stands.

A taxi stand is a physical space that is collectively recognized as a space that is reserved for taxi drivers. It is thus both a physical space and a social space. There are different ways of enforcing this collective belief for those who do not abide by it. If a taxi driver returns to the stand that he likes but there is a private car parked there he is likely to remind the owner of that car that he cannot stand there. He is likely to do so in not a polite fashion since, as Anselm Strauss argues, routines that become challenged trigger high emotional involvement. If the imposter does not move, the taxi driver is able to get help from the state, which not only has the symbolic power to create a taxi stand *ex nihilo*, but it also has the monopoly over

physical power in case the state's magical power of transforming water (physical space) into wine (social space of a taxi stand) becomes questioned. In other words the state has the legal right to physically remove the non-taxi driver from the social space that is the taxi stand. However this right is rarely exercised because the majority of citizens believe in this magical power of the state.

The spatial routine is reproduced not only through institutions, but also in interactions between taxi drivers. When observing taxi stands, as I have done during my research, one notices that it is often not individual drivers who return to the same stand, but rather small communities of taxi drivers. If a taxi driver returns to the same taxi stand day after day it is because he gets along with other people who stand there. When non-corporate taxi drivers “colonize” certain taxi stands by illegally taking them over and preventing others from standing there, they do so collectively and have collective strategies of defending their territory from other taxi drivers.

Likewise, daily income target can be treated as a socially reproduced routine. For behavioural economists the income target is rooted in the hardwiring of the brain. People simply think in terms of income targets because they are, to change Garfinkel's expression, *computational dopes* (Kahneman, 2011). However, the income target can be understood as routine that is reproduced in everyday interactions between drivers. Among taxi drivers one of the questions most often asked is “how much did you earn today?” Comparing daily targets is a form of competition between drivers; sometimes taking on the form of a game between friends. As Wojtek told me:

*Before when I drove during the weekend, I used to compete with Bartek, “shit - I would tell him – it's 5 in the morning and I already have 600 [150 €]”. He would say „I only have 500... so I will earn around 50 more and then go home”*

In other words when speaking about social routines rather than heuristics we are not following cognitive psychologists, who are interested in the universal aspects of human cognition and hardwiring of cognitive biases (Kahneman, 2011), but rather those psychologists who see human cognition and action as a deeply social phenomenon (Tomasello, 2014, Vygotsky, 2012). Routines are an element of culture and as Lev Vygotsky pointed out “cultural development appears twice: first on the social level, and later on the individual level; between people and then inside.” (Vygotsky, 2012: xli ).

## 5.5 Coping with Uncertainty through Observation

If routine is one strategy that taxi drivers use when dealing with uncertainty of demand, the other strategy is observation. Whereas, in Andrew Abbot's terms, routines are *defensive strategies* that are aimed at ignoring uncertainty and the excess of possible actions, observations are *adaptive strategies* that aim to adjust to the unfolding of the market process (Abbott, 2014: 16). Just like it is impossible for a chess player to plan in advance his game but rather has to observe and adapt to the moves of his opponent, taxi drivers cannot plan in advance their working time, but they try to observe the unfolding of market activity.

Different authors have argued that the ability to observe is one of the fundamental social skills (Elias, 1983, Leifer, 1991). The role of observation has also been central in sociological and anthropological theories of markets. Harrison White, who has written extensively on uncertainty, made observation central in his definition of the market. White writes: "Markets are self-reproducing social structures among specific cliques of firms and other actors who evolve roles *from observations of each other's behaviour. I argue that the key fact is that producers watch each other within a market*" (White, 1981: 518 emphasis added). Similarly the anthropologist Clifford Geertz put observation at the centre of his anthropological theory of the bazaar market. Geertz wrote: "The main energies of the bazaari are directed toward combing the bazaar for usable signs, clues as to how particular matters at the immediate moment specifically stand" (Geertz, 1978: 30).

Everybody who drives cars observes. They have to. One would not be able to participate in the complex system that is the traffic of a metropolis without observing. Car drivers observe the speed of the cars in front of them and those behind them to adjust the speed of their car accordingly. They observe other traffic participants, like bikes and pedestrians. They observe the lights and road signs. Not observing means making mistakes: getting a speeding ticket, having a car accident, or taking the wrong turn.

But, except observing other road participants, taxi drivers also observe the market. As Gambetta and Hamill have pointed out, taxi drivers observe the market to try and predict dangerous clients (Gambetta, 2005). But taxi drivers also observe the market as they try to anticipate what will happen in the market. Anna, an experienced female taxi driver, told me during our interview:



*There are days when nothing happens nothing happens. So for example nobody visits Warsaw. There are days like that. That nothing... You can see it from the start. When I go for my passenger, I look around at taxi stands. If at taxi stands there is a multitude of taxis, this means that nothing will happen. Of course this is sometimes deceptive because rain will fall and things will start moving. But usually it is that when I see that there are three taxis [at a taxi stand] this means that there are clients. But if I drive and see that there are 15 taxis, this means that today will be a difficult day. And for those days I have books.*

When driving her car Anna observes other taxis. The number of taxis on the taxi stand is an indication of whether or not there will be work today. But Anna observes demand not only indirectly, by looking at surplus supply at the taxi stands, but also directly by engaging in conversations with clients:

*There are clients and there are clients. You know? And now you have to find ... well the good clients. For example last Friday I had this fare that was a man from Michałowice (...). And it was 100 zł [24€]. And now you should do things to meet the person again, right? [But how? How can you do this?] It's a matter of conversation. 'Do you often?', 'And what about You', 'What are you doing'. 'Because I go to Żoliborz to the cinema'. 'Oh, that is you'. It is a matter of conversation. Asking. The most important thing is to ask. To pretend that you are not asking about anything. To bait the client so he will sell himself. And then you know. And observation (...) because this is a very good fare and you have to be at the right moment.*

The conversation described by Anna is very similar to the type of “information search” that goes on in a bazaar where market participants try to get bits of knowledge in a situation as “information is poor, scarce, maldistributed, inefficiently communicated” (Geertz, 1978: 29)

Through observation and participation in the taxi field taxi drivers are able to acquire individual islands of knowledge in the sea of uncertainty. Skilled taxi drivers get to know the routines of some of the individuals and social groups they are driving. As Wojtek told me:

*You know more or less what time more trains arrive or planes land and there is more movement. You know that it is not worth to go to the airport between 1 pm*

*and 4-5 pm (...) you know if you work for a larger corporation, you more or less now what time employees are going out in bulk and taking taxis.*

Besides observing supply and demand, taxi drivers also try to anticipate demand by observing the weather. Without being asked about it, different taxi drivers would talk about the influence of weather on demand. Paweł told me:

*Bad weather is our ally, because people treat taxi as an umbrella. I go out, it rains, I get wet so I take a taxi to take me home.*

[Me: Many taxi drivers tell me about this. Is this something you learn from others or from experience?]

*From experience, you can see that bad weather or that winter months are better than summer, you know that, in the winter there is more of those days, or autumn, when the weather is bad, here the weather is the ally of the taxi driver.*

The fact that weather is an ally is not only experienced by taxi drivers in practice but it is also something that taxi drivers learn from each other in interaction. Thus Andrzej, the CEO of a taxi corporation and a former taxi driver told me during a general discussion about the labour strategies of his drivers:

*I always joke and tell the boys [the taxi drivers from my corporation] (...) 'first thing you do [in the morning] is look out of the window' (...) I always repeat: 'look at the window. If it is raining than like a soldier go to the car. If you have a dog, take him out, if you don't, put on your pants and don't even drink coffee because you have to do your first move, because there is work. There is higher probability of an increase in demand'.*

Observation has to be selective. There are simply too many things that a taxi driver can observe to try and anticipate demand. Observation, as Luhmann put it, requires making distinctions. Taxi drivers try to anticipate demand by, among other things, observing supply, observing demand, and observing the weather.

### 5.5.1 Instruments of Observation and Indirect Cognition

Since taxi drivers are unable to plan many moves ahead they can either rely on routines or on observation. Taxi drivers observe the taxi market directly by looking out of their windows in the morning and throughout the day. But taxi drivers also observe the market *indirectly* by using different “instruments of observation” (Pomian, 1998). Instruments of observation are a special type of cognitive artefacts, that is, “objects made by humans for the purpose of aiding, enhancing, or improving cognition” (Hutchins, 1995: 126). The instruments of observation that taxi drivers use to establish their labour strategies and working time include watches, calendars, computers, and taxi terminals.

All taxi drivers have clocks in their cars and the great majority of them have calendars. Calendars are a form of objectified memory that reminds taxi drivers about name days, holidays, days of the week and allows them to position themselves in time. This information is used by taxi drivers when they make decisions regarding when to work. Likewise clocks allow taxi drivers to observe the temporal order of the city. Over time taxi drivers learn when planes land and trains arrive. They know the routines of corporations and even individual clients. But to make use of this information a taxi driver needs a clock. Without a clock, which is an instrument of observation, a taxi driver would be unable to tell what time it is and know whether he should go to the airport or to the central station. Measuring time without an instrument of observation – for example by looking at the sun – is not very efficient.

Taxi drivers also use instruments to observe the weather. Taxi drivers observe the weather not only, as the Andrzej suggested to his drivers, by looking out of the window but also by using different instruments. Paweł told me:

*I use a website where there is a weather forecast for 16 days (...) sometimes I watch the news in television and there will be a weather forecast there, and this will guide me.*

Wojtek, who drives with a laptop and is very good with computers, uses more precise tools for anticipating weather:

*There is this nice website newmeteo.pl, which is pretty reliable. And it is nice because you get the weather given to the hour. Not that it will rain today but you*

*do not know from what time, you know? It will say that, for example, it will rain from 12 pm. And then you know that that there will be more work.*

However, the main cognitive artefact and instrument of observation used by the great majority of taxi drivers is the taxi terminal. If a taxi driver works for a corporation (more than 90%), he has to know how to use the terminal. The terminal is the “brain” of the taxi.



A taxi terminal

Except for driving the car and picking up customers, operating the terminal is the main task of corporate taxi drivers. The reason for this is that in Warsaw nearly all fares are ordered via phone and not taken from taxi ranks or, like in New York, hailed on the street. The passenger orders a taxi by calling a corporation or opening a smartphone application. Passengers are then distributed by the taxi corporation among drivers who receive the call to pick up a fare on their terminals.

The distribution of fares within a corporation is done through a zone system. The exact way the system works varies from corporation to corporation. But each corporation divides the city into zones, and depending on a corporation the number of zones is different (see the picture below). Drivers sign up in a zone using their terminal. To receive the fare a driver has to be the first in line in the appropriate zone, if he is not then he has to wait to be the first in line. If there is no one in that particular zone the fare becomes “free” and is taken by the first driver who presses the appropriate button on the terminal.

The importance of the terminal is not only that it allows the distribution of fares among drivers within a corporation, but that it is an instrument of observation for the taxi driver. The terminal provides a representational re-description of the city with one column of numbers representing the different zones and another column with number of drivers waiting in each of the zones. The terminal also shows the number of fares that have been pre-booked in advance.



Warsaw divided into zones by a taxi corporation

Taxi drivers use the terminal to position themselves in relation to other taxi drivers and in reference to the anticipated demand for their service. Skilled taxi drivers use the terminal to look for *locational niches*. Just like companies in a market try to occupy a niche to avoid competition (White, 1981); the skill of the taxi driver is to find a niche to avoid other taxi drivers. But since a driver provides a very similar service to other drivers, drivers look for *locational niches* or *niches in time-space*. A taxi driver finds a locational niche by looking for a location with the best driver-customer ratio. A driver wants to be where there are clients but where there are no taxis. Sometimes these *niches are constructed and institutionalized* when a taxi corporation or a group of taxi drivers legally monopolizes or illegally colonizes a taxi stand. But more often these niches are observed as taxi drivers try to anticipate the best driver-customer ratio.

The terminal is their observational tool, and skilled drivers make great use of it. In interviews taxi drivers would often refer and say that they “see” the supply or “look” at the city and “observe the movement of the city”. For the taxi driver the terminal is a similar object to a blind man’s stick: an extension of their senses and an everyday tool. Observing the terminal in search for locational niches becomes something that drivers do habitually while waiting or

when driving with their clients, thinking about where to sign in next. Bartek told me during our interview:

[When are you looking at the terminal?]

*All the time. This is our work tool. (...) A client enters my cab at Warsaw Central station and says “We will be going to Chłodna [street]”. Then I immediately look at the terminal and see how many drivers are logged in in Zone 20 [the zone of the destination].*

The terminal also allows taxi drivers to learn from each other. Modern taxi corporations can be understood as a “cognitive ecology” where taxi drivers, taxi dispatcher and the dispatch system together create a system of “socially distributed cognition” (Hutchins, 2010) (Hutchins 2010). Each time a taxi driver receives a fare, it is shown on the terminals of all other drivers in that corporation. By looking at the terminal, some taxi drivers can observe that some drivers are getting more fares than others. They can then observe what others are doing that they are not. Drivers can become second order observers, they can “observe how observers observe” (Esposito, 2013: 3). By looking at the terminal the less experienced drivers can learn from the more experienced ones.

Anna told me that she learned the craft of positioning herself in the marking and locating locational niches by observing more experienced drivers on her terminal. She continued by saying how she now observes newcomers and sees how they make mistakes:

*To tell you the truth, you have to have a lot of intuition and knowledge. Be able to draw conclusions. Be clever. You have to know that sometimes it makes sense to sign in as number 8 in one zone and wait 20 minutes, while in another place I can wait 2 hours and receive no fare.*

[This intuition, does it come from practice or conversations with others?]

*From observation. When you begin you have to pay your dues. I also paid mine, because when you start in a corporation, you do not have an overview of the situation. Where you will find clients and where you won't (...) I sometimes make fun of my colleagues when I see [on the terminal] that they are struggling. They sign in in the wrong places but after a week they begin to understand what is*

*happening. Where there is demand. (...) But it's observation and experience: first observation, then experience.*

The ability of taxi drivers to use instruments of observation varies between drivers. Some drivers are skilled observers, while others rely more on routines. Drivers learn to observe over time as they become accustomed to all the other actions that a taxi driver has to perform, such as getting to the fare on time, driving the car or talking to clients.

### **5.6. Observation, Position Taking and Practical Sense**

The fact that Anna uses both the word “intuition” and “experience” to describe how she positions herself to limit *waiting time*, points us towards the fact that much of the observation done by taxi drivers is done in the register of, what Bourdieu called, *practical sense* (Bourdieu 1990). Different taxi drivers spoke to me about being guided by “intuition” or a “feeling” when making decisions where to go next. Thus, Warsaw taxi drivers were no different from the taxi drivers interviewed by Gambetta and Hamill who also spoke about being guided by “intuition” or “gut feeling” (Gambetta, 2005). However, due to their theoretical background of rational choice, Hamill and Gambetta completely missed the fact that their empirical material provided them with one of the best empirical descriptions there currently is of Bourdieu’s theory of the practical logic of action.

Bourdieu wrote about the concept of a practical sense:

“The practical sense, which does not burden itself with rules or principles (except in cases of misfiring or failure), still less with calculations or deductions, which are in any case excluded by the urgency of action which ‘brooks no delay’, is what makes it possible to appreciate the meaning of the situation instantly, at a glance, in the heat of the action, and to produce at one the opportune response. *Only this kind of acquired mastery, functioning with the automatic reliability of an instinct, can make it possible to respond instantaneously to all the uncertain and ambiguous situations of practice.*” (Bourdieu quoted in Lahire, 2011: 151, emphasis added)

In much of their everyday actions, including observation of the market, taxi drivers are guided by *practical sense*. Over time taxi drivers internalize and embody the temporal and the special structures of demand. They do so through *practice*, by observing the terminal and driving their cabs. As Aristotle famously put it “it is by working as a blacksmith that one becomes a

blacksmith” (Lahire, 2011: 73). Over time taxi drivers know when trains arrive and when planes land, they know the routines of certain individual clients (when they finish work, go shopping or to the doctors), they know where are the locational niches. They know the schedules of the organizations that have signed a contract with their corporation. They also learn how to observe and are able to do so without having to think much about it. Without thinking they are able to make sense of the numbers that appear on the small screen in their car, numbers which represent the unfolding activity of the taxi market. Experienced taxi drivers do not look at the terminal but rather glance at it and are able to see what is happening whereas a novice only sees a series of numbers. Experienced drivers press the buttons of the taxi terminal positioning themselves without having to think about it. Following both Vygotsky and Dewey, we can say that for taxi drivers the terminal becomes both a “tool for the hand” and a “tool for the thought” (Heft, 2013: 23). The structures of demand become part of their bodily knowledge (Bourdieu, 2000)

Many, but not all, of the actions performed during the day by a taxi driver are, as Bourdieu would put it, in the heat of the moment. Problems of choosing the right decision that would be difficult to resolve in theory, because there are simply too many possibilities to choose from, have to be resolved in practice. Bartek tried to explain to me the decision process:

*It just like making a decision, when entering a crossroad, whether you will make it before the other car or not. This is the amount of time that you have (...) I look [at the terminal] at the central station. There are so many [taxis]. In his area there are so many. In that area so many. Wait, what time is it? Oh a train will come soon. So even though there are 30 taxi drivers at the central station, I will sign in there and soon leave. There is a split of a second to make decision. And then it is only the skill of your fingers to hit the right buttons [on the terminal]. That is it.*

But although taxi drivers over time acquire a practical sense that helps them position themselves, even the most skilful taxi drivers are unable to fully anticipate demand. Thus we cannot follow Bourdieu when he speaks about “perfect coincidence of practical schemes and objective structures” (Bourdieu, 2000: 147) or the “quasi-perfect coincidence between habitus and habitat, *illusio* and *lusiones*, expectations and the world” (Bourdieu, 2000: 208). If this would be the case surplus supply of taxi drivers would not be a problem. Even the best taxi drivers make mistakes in anticipating demand as their practical sense *misfires* (Bourdieu, 2000: 159-163).



## 5.7 Surplus Supply and Waiting Time

The problem of the *misfiring* of the practical sense leads us back from the problem of how supply is formed and how taxi drivers establish the labour strategies in a situation of uncertainty to the phenomenon of surplus supply and *waiting time*.

The main reason for the emergence of surplus supply is uncertainty. The uncertainty related to the coordination of supply and demand was always present in the taxi market. However, under the temporal structures of socialism the taxi market was a sellers' market and the consequences of uncertainty were pushed to the side of the customers rather than the taxi driver (see chapter 4). The customer had to wait for the taxi driver. With a shortage of taxis, taxi drivers were sure to find somebody waiting at a taxi stand. With the fall of socialism and end of the shortage economy, the taxi market switched from a sellers' market to a buyers' market. With the larger number of taxi drivers out on the streets the taxi driver had to be there because the customer has other options.

Secondly, surplus supply comes from new taxi drivers who do not yet have the skills to position themselves in the market. On the one hand these are new taxi driver who do not yet feel like "fish in the water" as they have not spent enough time on learning the rules of the game. In Bourdesian terms the *habitus* of newcomers does not yet match the field they have entered. It takes time before a taxi driver will feel like "a fish in the water"<sup>38</sup>. Taxi drivers, who had very recently started driving, would tell me that they are still "looking around" and "learning the craft". At the beginning drivers are trying to figure out what taxi driving is all about and to be able to position themselves. These drivers make mistakes and contribute to surplus as they stand at the wrong time, in the wrong place.

On the other hand some drivers, who have been driving for a long time, have over time acquired, what Veblen called, trained incapacities: "skills that are no longer appropriate because new circumstances are being confronted" (Strauss, 1993: 200). They wait in the wrong places or are unable to position themselves. Especially older drivers, who started

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<sup>38</sup> Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it finds itself "as fish in water" it does not feel the weight of the water and takes the world about itself for granted

driving in the 1970s or 1980s, can sometimes have problems acquiring the skills that are necessary to efficiently work the modern dispatch system and resort to their old routines that are no longer efficient. There the *habitus* of these taxi drivers is no longer in line with the new structures of the field.

A common “trained incapacity” among taxi drivers that contributes to surplus supply is the capacity to patiently wait. Waiting a certain period of time becomes a part of the job description, a taken for granted reality. Over time taxi drivers become used to waiting. It might make a taxi driver angry at times, push him or her to go home, or make the driver take his frustration out on a client, but the fact that you have to wait is just how it is. Not getting used to waiting means living in frustration.

Thirdly, surplus supply of taxis is related to the fact that taxi drivers sometimes have “non-economic” motives for staying in the market. Some taxi drivers avoid taking a break during the middle of the day when demand is lower because the home environment (TV, family, beer in the fridge) makes going back to work difficult. Just like the students studied by Bernard Lahire forced themselves to work by leaving their home and going to the library (Lahire, 2011: 64), many taxi drivers know that the household triggers “bad habits”. By staying in the market, even though there is no demand for their service, drivers protect themselves from this “weakness of will”. In the survey 75% of drivers agreed with the statement that they avoid taking a break because it makes going back to work difficult. Others avoid going home, not because home triggers their bad habits, but because they want to escape from family obligations (see chapter 8).

Fourthly, surplus emerges due to, what can be called, *locational stickiness*. Taxi drivers cannot simply “teleport” out of the market. There are transaction costs related to both entering and leaving the market. As I argue in chapter 8, many taxi drivers who live on the outskirts of Warsaw cannot simply go home during the middle of the day when the demand for their service drops because it would simply take too long. The transactions costs of leaving the market and going home are too high to easily switch between domains.

Finally, surplus emerges because there is no constraint on the time a taxi driver can spend waiting for a fare. The time taxi drivers spend in their cabs is not limited by the state regulation or corporate policy, but rather by drivers feeling tired or their wives calling them and asking them – directly or indirectly – to come home. These are not “hard” constraints like state regulations. They can have “hard” consequences, when a tired driver causes a fatal

accident or a marriage breaks up as the driver is never home, but on an everyday basis these constraints are often not necessarily perceived by drivers to be hard. But, as Kornai has argued, there is problem with soft budget constraints. Soft budget constraints can easily lead to overinvestment. Kornai was speaking about money but there is no reason why we should not extend his analysis to time. Thus, Maciek a taxi driver who during the whole of 2012 spent 308 of them in his cab, told me: *You can always go to work. Always. There will always be work. There is always a chance of earning more.* Kasia, his wife told me in a separate interview: *My husband has to work. In the sense, that he leaves home and works non-stop because there is no time limit. I work. I work eight hours. I come back home. But my husband stretches it to the maximum: he stands, and waits, waits, waits.*

To summarize the factors that contribute to the emergence of surplus supply and waiting time are: uncertainty of demand, new taxi drivers that have not acquired the necessary skills, trained incapacity of experienced drivers, non-economic reasons for staying in the market, locational stickiness and soft time budget constraints.

## **5.8 Waiting Time and Collective Self-exploitation**

Even though taxi drivers read books, play on their smartphones or solve crossword puzzles to pass time, for many drivers *waiting time* is often not experienced as leisure time. Asked in the survey to name the things that they dislike about their job one of the answers most often provided was “waiting”. A driver told me: *Anyone will tell you that the most tiring part [of the job] is the anticipation and the waiting for a fare.* This statement made by one of my informants expresses a feeling held by many drivers. Drivers tend to perceive waiting time as wasted time, time that could be spent more efficiently doing something else. This perception of wasting one's time causes irritation and anger. In a modern culture which is focused on efficiency “waiting is painful because it causes us to renounce more productive or rewarding ways of using time” (Schwartz, 1974: 167). It is also a matter of time perception. As another taxi driver told me: *Most of my friends say that standing is more tiring than driving. Because when you drive time flies faster.* For many drivers waiting for customers is just as exhausting, or sometimes even more exhausting, as their actual “work” of driving people around the city.

In other words, the working time of taxi drivers and the existence of waiting time can be to some extent analysed the result of *collective self-exploitation*. It is no longer exploitation in the Marxist sense of workers selling their labour time to an employer who then tries to get as

much as possible out of them, extending their working time or forcing them to be more efficient. Rather, like the working day of peasant families described by Chayanov (1966), taxi drivers' working day is a form of *self-exploitation*. It is *self-exploitation* because it is the taxi driver himself who extends his own working time without getting the benefits of higher income. By extending his working time the driver increases his *waiting time* rather than his *earning time*. However, this form of self-exploitation is *collective* because as different taxi drivers extend their working time they contribute to surplus supply and the *waiting time* of others with whom they are competing for fares.

Rather than a situation that was famously described by Garrett Hardin as “the tragedy of the commons” that is, a situation where rationally acting individuals benefit in the short term at the costs of the group, in case of taxi drivers' working time we are dealing with *the commons of individual tragedies*: a situation where behind the individual self-exploitation of members of a group lies the self-exploiting behaviour of other members of that group. Put differently one could say, following Andrew Abbott, that taxi drivers “make their own histories, but—to modify the Marxian dictum—in that making they produce larger structures that in turn render them unable to make those histories under conditions of their own choosing”(Abbott, 2005b). In case of taxi drivers these larger structures are the temporal structures of surplus supply and *waiting time*.

## **5.9 Conclusion: Labour Strategies and the Microfoundations of Waiting Time**

Much of the *working time* of a taxi driver is *waiting time*. In the two last chapters I looked at the processes that contributed to *waiting time*. In the previous chapter I looked at the processes and structures responsible for the number of taxi drivers. But the macro structures of capitalism only create the structural conditions for surplus supply and *waiting time* to emerge. Temporal structures of capitalism do not directly cause surplus supply and *waiting time*, as surplus supply and *waiting time* is created and reproduced at the micro-level of the everyday actions and interactions of taxi drivers.

Understanding the working time of taxi drivers requires understanding how the problem of cooperation between the taxi driver and his fare is resolved (Beckert, 2009b). In order for the taxi driver to earn money he has to find the passenger. In economics the problem of how supply is formed and how it meets demand is often explained in a semi-mystical manner. Economists explain the phenomenon by referring to the famous force of the ‘invisible hand of

the market', which somehow coordinates market activities allow the two sides to meet and the exchange to take place. But sociological explanations of the formation of supply and market coordination are only a little better. Bourdieu who was one of the few sociologists that tried to understand this phenomenon wrote:

“For the myth of the ‘invisible hand’, that cornerstone of liberal mythology, we have properly to substitute the logic of the spontaneous orchestration of practices, based on a whole network of homologies (...). This sort of ‘leaderless orchestration’ underlies countless strategies we may term ‘subject-less’, because they are more unconscious than properly willed and calculated” (Bourdieu 2005: 73).

The concept of “spontaneous orchestration of practices” central for Bourdieu’s field theory remains abstract without an adequate description. I have argued that in case of taxi drivers the “spontaneous orchestration of practices” is based on taxi drivers’ routines and acts of observation. Moreover, this coordination is achieved with the help of uncertainty reducing institution like the taxi stand, networks of taxi drivers observing each other, and instruments of observation such as clocks and the taxi terminal. However, the orchestration of supply with demand is far from perfect. Rather than being attuned with each other the different musicians in the orchestra are competing for the attention of the audience.

We have thus arrived at the third answer to the question. Why do taxi drivers work when they work? Taxi drivers work when they work because they face uncertainty of demand. They deal with this uncertainty through routines and observation. Although many drivers become skilful at their job and develop a practical sense that allows them to position themselves better and better anticipate demand, their individual strategies lead to the emergence of surplus supply, *waiting time* and collective self-exploitation.

## Chapter 6. *Political Time: Forms of Voice and Struggles over Institutions*

“The very term ‘bettering our condition’, like the more contemporary expression ‘getting ahead’ or ‘making it’, seems to point to individual effort.

But other patterns of action serving the same objective must also be considered: they involve *collective* initiatives such as formation of interest groups or cooperatives, protests against new taxes or higher prices, or even joint occupation of some privately or publicly owned idle lands near a city by a group of people”

Albert Hirschman, *Getting Ahead Collectively* (1984: ix)

Asking why taxi drivers’ work when they work could be seen as a simple question about time allocation. In this view to understand working time it is enough to study *earning time* and *waiting time*. But such an answer makes the assumption that the context in which taxi drivers make their “choices” about working time (theorized, depending on the action theory used, either as conscious or unconscious; rule following or driven by values and norms; rational or emotional; routine or creative, heuristic or deliberative etc.) are fixed and pre-given or that the context of their “choices” is an exogenous factor to working time. But the conditions under which taxi drivers “choose” when and how long to work are neither fixed nor are they exogenous. If social life is like a game – an analogy that many economists, sociologists, and anthropologists, who otherwise have little else in common, like to use (e.g. Swedberg, 2001, Lahire, 2010, Ortner, 2006, Elias, 1978, Bourdieu and Lamaison, 1986, Leifer, 1991) – it is not a game with unchanging rules (Martin, 2011: 293-294). The rules under which Warsaw taxi drivers “choose” their labour strategies have over the years been established, instituted, enforced, interpreted, contested, misunderstood, broken and transformed. In other words, *the working day, like all economic practices, has to be understood as a political phenomenon.*

However, the political struggles of taxi drivers over working time have been neglected both in the neoclassical and the behavioural account of taxi drivers’ labour strategies. Behavioural and neoclassical economists argue over how taxi drivers make their labour decisions (utility maximization vs. income target heuristics), but both share the assumption about the context in which those decisions are made. For them the context is “the market”, a central notion of economics that under closer scrutiny turns out to be untheorized (Beckert, 2009b, Hodgson,

2008). Not only is the context assumed to be given but it is also fixed. This neglect of politics is not specific of the particular studies of the taxi market, but is a more general phenomenon characteristic of neoclassical and behavioural schools of economics.<sup>39</sup> Both behavioural and neoclassical economists take the political out of political economy. Notions such as power or domination, central to the language of economic sociology, are not part of their vocabulary. On the macro level this means that both behavioural and neoclassical economists are not interested in class, social structure, and institutions and on the micro level this means that they focus on economic actors entering and exiting the market while neglecting actors struggling over market institutions through, what Albert Hirschman so appropriately called (Hirschman, 1970), strategies of *voice*. They study working time without studying political time that is the time spent on trying to change the rules of the game.

But a de-politicization of the economy cannot be done. The voices of economic actors should not be muted. Markets are not only places in which goods and services are allocated but they are also institutions of political contestation (Bourdieu, 2005, Fligstein, 1996). And the taxi market is no exception. Thus, if the aim of the previous chapters was to show the taxi market to be a *field of forces* structuring the working day with a temporal structure of *earning time* and *waiting time*, the next two chapters show the taxi market to be a *field of struggles*: struggles that reproduce and change this temporal structure.<sup>40</sup>

Taxi drivers have been engaged in *political time* trying to improve their working conditions. However, taxi drivers have not struggled directly over their working time, they have struggled indirectly. They have struggled indirectly by fighting over prices and over the supply of taxis. These indirect struggles over the working time have taken on different forms. Firstly, there have been wars over the rules that structure the supply of the market and the price of the service. Secondly, there have been campaigns over rule enforcement. Thirdly, there have been battles over the interpretation of existing rules. These wars, campaigns and battles have taken place in multiple locations: on streets, in courts and in political offices. The aim of the next two chapters is to describe *how* taxi drivers have been trying to better their working conditions through strategies of voice; and to think about *why* these struggles have been mostly unsuccessful and *when* they were successful.

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<sup>39</sup> Unlike institutional and evolutionary schools of economics which have put much emphasis on the institutional contexts of economic action CHANG, H.-J. 2014. *Economics: the user's guide*, Bloomsbury Publishing USA.

<sup>40</sup> On the benefits of the field metaphor that it allows this double reading of social life MARTIN, JOHN L. 2011. *The Explanation of Social Action*, New York, Oxford Univ Press.

## 6.1 Indirect Struggles over Working Time

On Thursday the 22nd of September 2011 taxi drivers took to the streets not to pick up customers, but to protest over the price of their service. According to the newspapers and the organizers of the protest around 1000 of the more than 8000 Warsaw taxi drivers drove through the streets to voice their concerns. The protesting drivers divided themselves into groups. Each group was located in a different part of the city. At 8 am drivers set off slowly driving towards the Palace of Culture where they were all going to meet. The protest took place during the peak of the morning rush, thus drivers were able to block the already heavy traffic in the different parts of the city. Drivers were to meet at 10 am in front of Palace of Culture, where the session of Warsaw City Council was taking place.

At the destination Artur Oporski, the spokesperson of a recently formed group that was made up of both taxi drivers and taxi corporations, laid out taxi drivers' demands. Oporski spoke in front of the building, where the city council was in session. Surrounded by a large group of radio, TV and newspaper journalists, and accompanied by the noise of taxi drivers honking the horns of their taxis, Oporski said: "We demand a normal fare, which will allow the drivers to stay at home on Saturday and Sunday. Allow taxi drivers to work 8 hours and not 14 hours." The protesting taxi drivers were demanding that the starting fare should be raised from 6 to 10 zł (1.4 € to 2.4 €) and that the maximum price for each additional kilometre that a taxi driver would be able to charge should be estimated by the city "more realistically". At the time the maximum price, established back in 2001, was 3zł (0.75 €/per km during the day and 4.5zł (1.1 €/km during the night.

The previous year taxi drivers also took to the streets. On the 3rd of March 2010 hundreds of taxi drivers were blocking the roads around the office of Prime Minister to protest against non-licensed drivers. The rally was aimed at pushing city authorities to enforce the existing regulation: to catch, put on trial and convict drivers who were driving people in exchange for money without possessing a taxi licence by providing the service of "occasional transport of persons". In the official petition justifying their protests, taxi drivers wrote: "The fundamental problem of our ecology is the fact that the mechanism [the existence of occasional transport of persons] provides an excellent method of evading the limited number of taxi licences. This means that in order to be able to simply break even, a taxi driver has to work 7 – 8 hours, for 25 days a month. To be able to provide for his family he needs additional 5 – 7 hours a day. This adds up to a freighting 12 – 15 hours a day".



In both strikes taxi drivers were bringing up their working time as a main justification for their protest. But drivers were not directly fighting for shorter working hours.

Warsaw taxi drivers have never directly struggled over their working time. In that sense taxi driver do not resemble the XIX and XX century factory workers struggling with their employers over labour contracts. Taxi drivers are not employees with labour contracts; they are individual entrepreneurs. Warsaw taxi drivers do not sell their labour time to the employers; rather they buy the service of the taxi corporation to be able to sell their service to customers. And drivers do not fight over their wages and working hours, they struggle over prices and supply of taxis. The only way drivers could directly fight for a shorter working time would be by forcing the state to introduce a cap to the number of hours that a driver can spend behind the wheel, like the one truck drivers in EU countries have. But taxi drivers have never struggled over this. Recently they have even struggled against this.

However by fighting over the price of the service and surplus supply taxi drivers have been struggling *indirectly* over working time. The price of the service effects the time spent in the taxi indirectly. Assuming, as protesting drivers do, that the rise in fare will not be equated with a fall in demand, a rise in the supply or that the taxi corporation will not increase its fee, a higher price for the service means higher revenue and the possibility to drive less. Similarly struggles over supply are indirectly related to working time. In a situation of chronic surplus supply, which characterizes the taxi market, fighting over the number of drivers means fighting how long drivers have to stand in line and wait for their next fare. Assuming that the lower number of taxi drivers would not be equated with each driver working more, drivers would be able to reduce waiting time between fares. Preventing others from becoming drivers would decrease *waiting time*, increasing *earning time*. In other words, by fighting over supply and over the price of the service drivers have been fighting for the opportunity to earn more and to work less.

However, while characteristic of the indirect struggles of taxi drivers the two protests illustrate only a small part of the indirect struggles over working time that take place in the taxi market. Protests and strikes represent those struggles most noticeable by the general public. To borrow Goffman's metaphor such struggle is the front stage of voice strategies. But there is also a backstage to voice. On one hand there are the acts of *projections* of the organizers that make protests and strikes possible. These projections include the actions of *forecasting* and *planning* and the mobilization of taxi drivers before the protests take place. On the other hand there are those forms of voice aimed at improving the working conditions,

which take *place behind the front stage of public life*. These forms of voice are not discussed by newspapers nor are they shown on TV. Many taxi drivers are not even aware of them.

If we are to understand taxi drivers indirect struggles over the working day there is a much broader spectrum of strategies of voice that have to be included. Political time takes on different forms.

## **6.2 Different Forms of Voice**

If one listens more carefully it turns out that the voices of taxi drivers can be heard throughout the city of Warsaw, not only during protests every few years, but on an everyday basis. At taxi stands, on the streets, in state institution and in households, taxi drivers are expressing their concerns, venting their anger and articulating their frustration with their working conditions. Some of their voices are clear and loud, with a strong message of dissatisfaction being sent to a large audience, others are vague and soft with only few people being able to hear and make sense of what is being said. Simply aggregated the voices of taxi drivers would create a *cacophony of contestation*, a noise that would be difficult to understand or make sense of. Put together taxi drivers sound less like a harmonious church quire and more like a noisy bazaar. Thus, Hirschman's notion of voice, although very helpful, requires further elaboration. To make sense of this cacophony, it becomes useful to separate between the different voices. We need to distinguish the loud ones from the quiet, the clear from the incomprehensible. Distinguish between *the murmurs*, *the whispers*, *the hisses*, and *the shouts*.

### **6.2.1 Murmuring at the Taxi Stands, in Taxis and at Home**

Most often the voices of taxi drivers take on the form of murmur. Drivers murmur their concerns and dissatisfaction about their working conditions while driving with passengers, while waiting for them and while off from work.

Murmur of taxi drivers can be heard at taxi stands. As I have argued, taxi drivers spend much of their time waiting for the next customer. The discussions that take place between taxi drivers often take the form of *complaining*. Taxi drivers complain to each other about the long working day, about their problems with passengers, lack of income, car breakdowns or family troubles which are often work-related. Complaining can also be heard on the "virtual taxi stands" that are Internet forums. Even a casual reader of taxi forums will notice that much of the activity takes the form of complaining. There are whole topics devoted to problems with

cars, lack of income, long working hours and lack of domestic time. Sometimes the goal is to find solutions, but often it is just about sharing one's troubles with others.

Murmurs can also be heard in the conversations taxi drivers have with their customers and family members. Although it is often passengers who engage in conversation with taxi drivers, using them as a substitute for a therapist or a priest, telling them about their problems; taxi drivers also tell passengers about long working hours, lack of income and problems with family life. Drivers voice their disappointment or anger to get a higher tip, as a form of habit, or as an answer to a question posed by the passenger, who shows the slightest bit of interests. Complaining can also be heard in households as drivers or their partners complain about the work. Overall, complaining is such an important part of the everyday life of taxi drivers that they often self-reflectively refer to themselves and to other drivers as *cierpiarze* or *cierpy*, a word that could be translated as “grumblers” or “sufferers”.

In everyday language complaining is perceived negatively as something excessive and ungrounded. However there are reasons for taxi drivers to be frustrated. Taxi drivers often spend more than 60 hours a week behind the wheel. At the same time their income is below Warsaw average. The collective actions to improve their situations have been largely unsuccessful. In the media they are often portrayed as cheaters and crooks and not as overworked small entrepreneurs. They lack security as they do not have any unemployment benefits and will end up with a minimal state pension. As discussed in chapter 4, for some of them the job of a taxi driver was not so much a career choice as it is a form of necessity. Unable to make a virtue out of necessity, the job becomes a source of disappointment: a representation of the failed hopes about a career path, about businesses gone bankrupt, terminated employment, and broken marriages due to the character of their job and their long working hours.

Complaining is without a doubt a form of voice. But as a form of voice complaining takes the form of murmur because is not likely to be heard nor to be successful. Even when taxi drivers are shouting at a customer or his fellow taxi driver, this form of voice takes the form of murmur as there is a limited number of people able to hear the message. A passenger might share this (bad) experience with friends or family as an anecdote but the story of taxi drivers working conditions will not find a bigger audience. Similarly complaining at the taxi stand is a form of murmur as taxi drivers are simply preaching to the choir. The audience, which is made up of other taxi drivers, knows the sermon very well. Sharing similar experience they have given a very similar sermon, possibly even in front of the same group of people. Thus,

although complaining might be cathartic for the person engaged in it, providing them with a safety valve to release frustration, the story that is being told by the driver has been heard so many times by other taxi drivers that they have become accustomed to hearing it or have stopped listening.

Not successful in changing the existing rules of the game, that is to say, bettering the working conditions, complaining at taxi stands is mostly a way of interacting with other drivers and passing time in between fares. In many ways complaining has reached the stage of a routine. As a routine, complaining no longer triggers the emotional engagement (anger, fear, rage) that could facilitate collective engagement and other forms of voice aimed at improving the working conditions. Complaining is rather a symbol of frustration and resignation. Often the only emotions triggered by the complaints of others are not related to the message – that is the underlying working conditions – but rather concentrate on the messenger. Over time some taxi drivers simply become tired of listening to others complain. Even if each individual driver engages only occasionally in complaining, taxi drivers over time interact with a large enough number of drivers to hear the same stories over and over again. On taxi forums drivers often complain about how drivers have a habit of complaining.

The complaining of others is especially annoying for those drivers who are heavily engaged in social movements and labour unions. What is particularly frustrating and de-mobilizing for them is that, while many taxi drivers complain about their working conditions, only few drivers engage in trying to change these conditions. Of the many drivers who talk about their dissatisfaction about their work, only a minority engage in other forms of voice: join unions or participate in protests (a topic I will return to). Some of the drivers I spoke to have become so tired of listening over and over again to the same stories that they try to avoid taxi stands and conversations with other drivers. They strategically avoid interaction with other drivers.

Thus, although murmurs can be heard throughout the city as drivers complain to others about their working conditions, as a form of voice, it does little to better the condition of taxi drivers. It does not help either directly – by changing the rules of the game – or indirectly – by facilitating other, more successful, forms of voice. While gossip can serve as a way of creating solidarity among communities (Elias and Scotson, 1965), complaining seems not to facilitate other – more time and energy consuming - forms of engagement.

### 6.2.2 *Whispering in Political Offices*

Voice of taxi drivers takes also the form of whisper. One should distinguish between murmur and whisper. Whisper like murmur is a quite form of voice, with a limited audience, but unlike murmur, whisper has a clear message, often directed strategically for others not to hear what is being said. Whispers can be effective, they can be heard, but only if the person whispering has the attention of the listener. What else is lobbying if not whispering into the ear of the people in power?

Whispers of taxi drivers could be heard at different locations than murmur. By location I mean the time–place when an action is performed. Murmurs can be heard at the taxi stand in between fares (*waiting time*); in the taxi while driving with customers (*earning time*); and in households before and after work (*domestic time*). The location of whisper is behind closed doors of political offices where the rules that regulate the taxi market are being written and rewritten. The location includes both central and local government; both parliamentary commissions on transportation and municipality meetings.

Over the years different taxi drivers have tried to whisper to better their condition. Mainly taxi drivers have whispered to get regulation changed: to create barriers of entry and to increase the maximum price for the service. After the deregulation in 1989 the main goal of taxi drivers' political action was to change the regulation, to create a barrier of entry and to push certain groups out of the market: people with a criminal record, half-time drivers, and pensioners. Taxi drivers have also whispered to raise the price for the service.

In 2001 the Act of Road Transport was passed. The act regulated different forms of transport. The law introduced licences for taxi drivers. This might have seen a major victory for taxi drivers. But having created a moat that would make entry into the taxi field difficult, the law left a drawbridge that helped people circumvent the regulation and enter the taxi field without having a licence. The law introduced the service of “okazjonalny przewóz osób” (*occasional transport of persons*). Occasional transport of persons (OTP) was supposed to provide service during special “occasions”: wedding, funerals, holiday trips etc. If a person wanted to go to another city he or she could hire an “occasional transport for person” and not have to take a taxi. But the law did not create a definition of what the service of a “transport of persons” was and how it differed from taxis. Since there was no definition, it thus allowed both taxi corporations and individuals to circumvent the licence system and bring new actors into the field. Over the next years taxi corporations and individuals made great use of the OTP to circumvent the licence system.

As the number of taxis in Warsaw was limited and there were people waiting in lines to receive a licence, taxi corporations made great use of this pathway bringing new drivers into the field. It became even more important when in 2002 the state authorities verified taxi drivers and many drivers lost their licence. Some corporations centred their business model on non-licensed drivers; some used it to grow by bringing together both licensed taxi drivers and occasional transport of persons. At a highpoint there were more than 1000 OTP with around 8000 regular licensed taxi drivers. Those providing the service of OTP would drive a car that looked exactly as a taxi (it had a taxi sign, phone number of a corporation etc.) but without having a taxi licence. The difference between a licensed taxi and an OTP was difficult to see and passengers would often not be able to distinguish between non-licensed OTP and licensed taxi drivers since they often drove for the same corporations and looked almost identical. The only visual difference was that occasional transport of persons did not have small stripes and the coat of arms of Warsaw on their front doors.

Whereas murmurs can be heard on a daily basis and engage many drivers, whispers are heard less often and performed by a very small number of heavily involved actors, often union leaders or representatives of taxi associations. Whisperers involve both taxi drivers and corporate owners. And they have changed over the years as some corporations that used non-licensed drivers to grow, then switched to licensed drivers and began fighting against the use of non-licensed drivers. Whisperers are often those actors who have the symbolic power, who are perceived by the state and media to have legitimacy, first granted to them by the state, to be the *spokesperson* for a group and not only represent individual interest (Bourdieu, 1991: 75).

Those whispering are much more engaged in the political struggles over regulation than the rest of drivers. When we look at the participation of taxi drivers in the political struggles over regulation we don't find all actors equally engaged. We do not even find a normal distribution of engagement with a majority engaged and small minorities of either not engaged and heavily engaged. Rather we find a long tail distribution with less than 50 very engaged actors and a rest of either occasionally engaged actors or actors who, except for maybe participating in the occasional murmur at the taxi stand, are not engaged at all. In other words, contrary to what Bourdieu argued, not all taxi drivers share the same level of *illusio* that the game is worth playing.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> In his theory of fields, Pierre Bourdieu argued that all actors participating in field share a belief that participation in the field makes sense. For Bourdieu actors are receptive to the forces of the field because they believe "the game is worth playing". This belief Bourdieu called *illusio* or – drawing on a more psychoanalytical

For the few actors engaged in whispering having their whispers heard has not been easy. Getting the attention of the audience – “the ear” of the people in power – is a necessary condition whisper to be heard. To get this attention it helps to have either the right networks or the money; or in Bourdesian terms either social or economic capital. Networks help to get the attention of the rule makers; to get access to them. Economic capital allows hiring professional whisperers. Such professional whisperers know who and when to call, how to push legislation through the parliament or stop it from passing; who have the right networks and set of skills. However, with weak labour unions and a lack of economic capital, taxi drivers have been unable to hire such professionals.

Taxi drivers, who want to engage in whispering, have very limited finances to professionally engage in political time. Very few taxi drivers participate in labour unions and pay union fees. Even during the culmination of the struggles over regulation in 2009 – 2012, when the people in charge of the biggest labour union were putting a lot of effort to recruit new drivers, less than 200 people (around 2.5 %) of drivers were paying members (2€monthly fee), leaving the union with a less than 400 €monthly budget. This is not enough to have someone forgo his *earning time* and engage in *political time*.

Drivers also lack the social capital that would open political doors and help them lobby. Taxi drivers have a limited access to people in power even though they do interact with them. Like doormen studied by Peter Bearman (Bearman, 2005), taxi drivers interact with people who are far away from them in social space. Warsaw being a capital, journalists, celebrities, politicians and businessmen all take taxis.<sup>42</sup> For a short period of time, on a daily basis, drivers have close access to people that they do not interact with outside of their work; people who have better connections than they do. Some drivers sometimes try to make use of this situation by engaging with their customers and voicing their dissatisfaction. When some of the more engaged taxi drivers would pick up a journalist they would try to engage in a discussion hoping that the journalist will amplify drivers’ voice by writing about their problems. Similarly when taxi drivers recognize that they are driving a politician, they would start telling the politician about the problems with the existing regulations, lack of enforcement, the surplus supply of taxis, the problem of illegal taxis and the undervalued price for the service.

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language – *libido*. But the idea that actors share a belief in the stakes and share an engagement was a theoretical assumption rather than an empirical statement. In his theory, Bourdieu neglected the fact that the level of engagement of actors in fields can be very different. In other words some actors are “more in the field” than others. Some actors are, as the French sociologist put it, “caught up in the game”; while other taxi drivers are only one foot in the game. (Lahire 2015b; Hilgers and Mangez 2015).

<sup>42</sup> Taxi drivers do not interact with those at the very top as they tend to have their own drivers and not take taxis.

This form of interaction with passengers has been encouraged by representatives of social movements and labour unions, who have asked taxi drivers to “educate” their clients on the problems of being a taxi driver in Warsaw.

But although taxi drivers often interact with people in the upper part of social structure these relations are of limited use during struggles over regulation. Unlike doormen, who build relationships with their tenants over a long period of time (Bearman, 2005), the relationships between taxi drivers and their fares, nearly always, take the form of “a fleeting relationship” (Davis, 1959). As a fleeting relationship this interaction between drivers and his customer is very weak and cannot be mobilized at a later point in time. In other words, if Granovetter famously talked about the strength of weak ties (Granovetter, 1973), *the ties between taxi drivers and their (powerful) customers are too weak to be strong*. They cannot be mobilized for purposes of getting the attention of the rule makers or, like in the case of doorman, the sympathy of the people who use their services and will be affected once taxi drivers go on strike (Bearman, 2005).

To be able to whisper one needs access to the location where whispers take place. But taxi drivers have had difficulties getting access to those locations. One cannot simply enter the room of the minister of transport and start whispering. Thus, much of taxi drivers whispering has not been done in person but through means of *official communication* such as official letters sent to different ministers, bureaucrats and politicians. In the situation of lack of access to a locations where an action is performed, that is in a situation of “bodily absence” (Lahire, 2011: 133), written official communication has been the only way to perform acts of whisper.

In order to whisper taxi drivers engaged in collective action have tried to get a representative elected to both local and the central government. Taxi drivers have tried to create an *avatar*, a representative, of the taxi field in the political field (Abbott, 2005b: 265). An avatar would enable them easier access to these locations. In different elections taxi drivers ran for office as representatives of taxi drivers in both local and national elections. This has been unsuccessful, in part because taxi drivers are not big enough as a social group, but also because, as the discussions on the taxi forum and taxi stands make clear, drivers have different political views: from the far right to the left. It has been very difficult to mobilize drivers, who have different political views, around a single candidate from a *political* party.

In 2006 Roman Krakowski was elected to district council of Warsaw rather in spite of being a taxi driver than because of it. Even though he got elected without the support of taxi drivers, many of whom did not share his political views, the taxi-driver-turned-local-politician was



then approached by labour unions and began to function as an avatar. He explained in an interview with me:

*I began to meet with labour unions and cooperatives, because they knew that I am a councilman. They began to invite me so I could, how can I put it, pave the way for them to get access to the right people (...). I met with them, we would discuss, and I would try to reach out to members of city council.*

The taxi-driver-turned-local-politician became an advisor to the commission that was responsible for changing the law regulating the taxi market. But as a one person avatar without much power behind him, he has not been able to achieve what he, or the labour unions, had hoped for. Having made a list of things he would like to achieve, which he showed to me during our interview, there were few he actually was able to push through. But in many cases his interest and vies did not align with the views of the social movement and the labour union. As a member of the ruling political party he was against taxi drivers protests that took place in 2012. He also did not approve of some of the more radical claims of the movement.

Hoping to change their situation through whispers, lacking the money to buy the networks of a lobbyist, and with a weak avatar, whose views were not always in line with theirs, taxi drivers engaged in whispering have tried to mobilize the few networks they have. Sometimes this meant trying to resurrect the weakest of ties that have been buried with the passage of time. Thus, Tomek who has been engaged in labour unions tried to resurrect old networks from his childhood:

*Well, I have tried to find access to members of parliament before the current legislation was passed (...) I tried getting access to the office of the president, but also was not successful. In primary school I went to one class with the current chief of staff to the President, but he did not find the time, he did not find the time to talk to me.*

With a lack of available networks and a weak avatar, actors, who wanted to engage in whispering, had to build relation from scratch. Those engaged in whispering had to engage in, what Viviana Zelizer calls, *relational work* that is “the creative effort people make

establishing, maintaining, negotiating, transforming, and terminating interpersonal relations (Zelizer, 2012). Once Jarosław became a leader of a newly formed labour union *Warszawski Taksówkarz* (Warsaw Taxi Driver) he began establishing relations with local politicians and journalists. Slowly built these relations help to get him invited to radio shows and quoted in newspapers and invited to political meetings. When a story on taxi drivers was being prepared journalists, who have his number, begin to call him so that he can be the *spokesperson* presenting taxi drivers point of view. What helps Jarosław is that, once he became a union leader and acquired the symbolic capital granted to him by the state, he been perceived to have the legitimacy to speak on behalf of a group of drivers. As a union leader he has been perceived, by media and by state authorities, as someone who can represent the collective voice of taxi drivers, even though less than 1 % of all Warsaw drivers belong to the union.

Like murmurs, the whispers of taxi drivers have over the years been largely ignored. However, taxi drivers have been able to claim small victories in their struggle over jurisdiction. In 2006 the parliament passed an amendment to the act of transportation distinguishing more clearly between a taxi and an occasional OTP. The law stated that only licensed taxis are allowed to have a “taxi” sign above the car and that only a licensed taxi could be equipped with a taxi metre. After further struggles another amendment to the law was introduced in 2011 outlawing OTP. However, during that time taxi drivers lost the more important struggle over supply. In 2011 the Polish parliament, against the will of local authorities of Warsaw, took away the right of cities to establish limits the number of licence. Between 2008 and 2014 the number of licensed drivers increased from 7962 to more than 11.000. Many of those who previously were OTP became licensed taxi drivers. With an increase of taxi drivers the waiting time in between fares became longer.

### **6.2.3 Hissing in Courts**

But political time is not only spent on murmurs and whispers. Bourdieu argued that in any field one can find both struggles over the rules and struggles within the rules. The indirect struggles over working time do not only take the form of struggles over legislation, there have also been struggles within the existing legislation. In the taxi field struggles within the rules have taken on the form of struggles over the rule interpretation and over rule enforcement. These forms of voice that focus not on changing the existing institutions but rather changing their interpretation and pushing for rule enforcement I will call *hissing*.

Unlike whisper, hissing is more “aggressive” oriented not at convincing the rule makers to create new laws but rather against the people who are breaking the current law. Hissing of taxi drivers could be heard at a different location than whisper. Hissing could be heard in the headquarters of the Road Transport Enforcement Agency (ITD) and Police offices as drivers have been fighting over the enforcement of existing rules, *mobilizing the state* to more rigorously enforce existing legislation and to more forcefully fight against non-licensed taxi drivers. Hissing could be heard in courts as taxi drivers have been engaged in legal battles against non-licensed drivers.

Just because legislation exists does not mean it will be enforced. In Warsaw pedestrians cross the street on the red light everyday but police do not send out hundreds of police officers to execute the law and catch the lawbreakers. Likewise, just because OTP became illegal in 2008 would not mean that state would send transport inspectors to catch them or that once caught they will be efficiently and quickly tried. When the amendments to the Act of Transportation passed distinguishing between taxi drivers and OTP passed enforcing the law was not a priority: both Police and ITD, which are the agencies responsible for the execution of the transportation law, devoted little resources to enforce it: single team working from 8 am to 5 pm. This was not very effective because many of the non-licensed drivers were driving during the night. In their fight against OTP taxi drivers engaged in collective action began to try and *mobilize the state*: put pressure on different state institutions to catch, trial, and convict people who provided the service of a taxi driver without having a licence. This would decrease the supply of taxis.

In their struggles against non-licensed drivers taxi drivers began to make use of the fact that the taxi market is a switch role market (Aspers, 2011), a group of drivers would enter the market not as they usually do on the supply side but on the demand side. They would do so not in the aim of engaging in an economic transaction but rather as a political act that would target illegal taxis and reporting them to the authorities. On one of the taxi forums an informal group of drivers, who called themselves GAP (an acronym for “a group against OTP”), was formed and they began to target non-licensed drivers. At the highpoint there were about 60 members of this organization.

In their struggles against non-licensed drivers, taxi drivers began to coordinate *with* authorities (Police and ITD). What facilitated this cooperation between licensed taxi drivers and the ITD was that one of the people working for the agency used to work for one of the taxi corporations. Taxi drivers had some success in mobilizing the state in their fight against

OTP. Between September 2009 and December 2009 state authorities audited and fined 146 non-licensed drivers, individually fined up to 15.000zł (around 3.500 €), for the total sum of 350.000zł (83 000 €).

The non-licensed drivers that were caught and fined by state authorities took their cases to court. Struggles over supply of taxis moved from streets to court rooms. In courts the struggles turned from struggles over the enforcement of the law and mobilization of the state to struggles over the interpretation of the law. Taxi drivers, who participated in raids, were present in court as witnesses against non-licensed drivers.

The struggles in court over the interpretation of the law took the form of struggles over categories. As Amsterdam and Bruner point out: “where there is law, so too must be categories” (Amsterdam and Bruner, 2000b: 8), and in case of taxi regulation it is no different. The cases against the non-licensed drivers centred on interpreting the categories set previously by the regulators. Courts had to make judgements whether the accused person was “in fact” providing the service of a taxi driver, thus breaking the Act of Transportation, or if he or she was, “in fact” providing another service and was thus not guilty of breaking the law. Borrowing an expression from Luc Boltanski’s we can say that the responsibility of the court became to express *the whatness of what is*. The court, equipped with the symbolic power of the state, had the monopoly of establishing the whatness of what is: were the defendants “illegal” taxi drivers or they were “legally” providing another service. The court was equipped with the symbolic power to create the official – that is state or public – interpretation and classification of past events. Boltanski writes about the role of law:

“Law thus plays an essential role in the processes that stabilize reality. It helps make reality at once intelligible and predictable by pre-forming causal chains that can be activated to interpret events that occur. Obligated to link events to entities, the legal system has to have at its disposal an encyclopaedia of entities that it recognizes as valid. It is the law’s responsibility – as I suggested at the outset to *express the whatness of what*” (Boltanski, 2014: 232, emphasis in original)

Let me provide two examples of such struggles over categories and interpretation of *the whatness of what is* that took place in courts.

The Act of Transportation stated that only licensed taxi drivers can use “a taxi meter”. A taxi meter is, in Boltanski’s terminology, part of the “encyclopaedia of entities” recognized by the legal system. In court non-licensed drivers argued that their cars were not equipped with “a

taxi metre” but rather were equipped with a different entity which was “a distance counter” (*drogomierze*). Because they did not have a “taxi metre” but “a distance counter” the courts had to take a stand whether this device they had was “in fact” just a “distance counter” or was it rather “in fact” a “taxi metre” or was it both. In one of such cases the court argued against the non-licensed driver: “a distance counter is equivalent to the taxi metre, according to article 18 paragraph 5 point 1, because it serves the same purpose that a taxi metre does, that is it calculates the charge for the trip of the taxi, something that requires a licence, which the applicants did not have”.

In the second case the Supreme Administrative Court had to decide, among others, whether the car of a non-licensed driver was equipped with a ‘taxi banner’, which according to the law could only be used by a driver with a taxi licence. The non-licensed driver argued in court that

the banner located on the roof of the vehicle was disconnected from the internal electrical system of the vehicle and could not easily be turned on. Due to this state of affairs one cannot say that the banner placed on the roof of the car was the same device as the one forbidden by the legislator in art. 18 paragraph 5 of the transportation law.

The non-licensed driver claimed that he was not providing the service of a taxi driver because he did not have a taxi banner. The trade union of licensed taxi drivers commented on this justification on their website writing: ‘Does the lamp standing on the table cease to be a lamp just because it is not connected to the outlet?’<sup>43</sup> But while the union questioned this line of defence and provided a different categorization of the device, it was the judges who had the monopoly of symbolic power to establish *the whatness of what is*: to establish whether the device was ‘in fact’ a lamp or not and thus whether or not the non-licensed driver was ‘in fact’ breaking the law. It was not the licensed taxi drivers but the judges who were the ‘authorized interpreters’ equipped with the juridical capital and symbolic power to establish this ‘fact’ (Bourdieu 1986b: 818). And indeed in this case the court declared that the non-licensed driver had not broken the law. One of the arguments made by the court was that the banner located on top of the roof could not be proved to be a lamp with the photos that were provided by the state authorities.<sup>44</sup> The court sided with the non-licensed driver and against licensed drivers and Road Transportation Agency.

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<sup>43</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20100611014647/http://www.taxisolidarnosc.pl/?p=2944>

<sup>44</sup> <http://orzeczenia.nsa.gov.pl/doc/4300FBB4D9>

The examples of the two court cases show that struggles in court over market institutions were struggles about *meanings* (Amsterdam and Bruner, 2000b: 28-29). The fact that rules – even laws set by the state – require interpretation should not surprise us: “as Goffman said, when we try to investigate the rules that supposedly bind us, we find not laws but *meanings*” (Martin, 2011: 327).

But the hissing of taxi drivers in court cases did not end with court decisions. The successful trials were used by taxi drivers to further mobilize the state against non-licensed drivers. Although some judges took the position of licensed taxi drivers, the other branches of the state, both at the local level and the national level, were not aware of this and had the impression that the state was losing all its cases against non-licensed drivers. In other words, the one arm of the state, responsible for law enforcement, did not know what the other arm, responsible for legal interpretation, was doing. As Michał explained to me in an interview:

*They [Police and ITD] did not want to enforce the law, because they said that the law has to be changed, because we are losing the court cases. But Arthur sat down and checked. For such a long time no one thought to check the court sentences. But he [Artur] sat down checked and he called me telling me: ‘fuck, we are winning, the law is good’. I went frenzy. I spent 3 days reading the whole webpage of NSA [Supreme Administrative Court]. 500 sentences, that included the word occasional transport of persons (...) with the results we went to inspector and when he saw it he was shocked (...) and the inspections, and fines began with those sentences.*

The *mobilization of the state* was done by making one arm of the state aware of what the other is doing. After Artur checked the court cases, which no-one thought of before, not only did state begin to stronger enforce the law, but taxi drivers spent less time trying to change the existing law and more pushing authorities to enforce it. They even organized a protest to push state authorities not to change the existing law, but to enforce it.

However, although a group of taxi drivers was able to organize against illegal taxis and had some success in mobilizing the state against non-licensed taxis, their fight over the supply had not given the result they had hoped for. Hissing was not successful. Court cases have not stopped the inflow of non-licensed drivers. Out of the many drivers without a licence only few were caught and successfully tried. The trials have been slow and often not conclusive with some OTP appealing successfully. One of the problems has been that both the law and

the trials were targeted at the individuals providing the service and not the corporations using non-licensed drivers. As individuals were slowly being convicted, corporations were able to find new drivers to take their place convincing them that there are legal ambiguities and what they are doing is not illegal and providing them with legal support. Secondly, corporations, who have used the service of non-licensed drivers, have over time found new ways to circumvent the law – for example by arguing that their drivers are “security guards” and can thus operate under security licence. Having won a few of legal battles in court, licensed taxi drivers lost their war over supply.

#### **6.2.4 Shouting on the Streets**

As drivers were fighting over the enforcement of the existing regulations, Arthur, one of the key figures in the union at the time, wrote in “Warszawski Taksówkarz”, the official paper of the labour union of Taxi drivers (Nr1/2009):

“If at this moment, with the court cases in our favour, we will be unable to get the state to execute the law and great rid of this disease from the streets our city [non-licensed taxi drivers], which unfairly is eating our income and brings us to the edge of existence, this will be the end of our occupation (...) We have a deep conviction, that in every one of us there is the will to fight for a better life and for dignity, which occasional transport of persons have taken away from us; only that by now some of us now lack the faith that any form of resistance can help. We assure you, that it can, but *only if there will be enough of us and we will shout at the authorities with one voice: 'Away with occasional transport of persons!'* Therefore colleagues *wish us the best during our conversations* at MSWiA [Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration] and the President [of Warsaw], but at the same time slowly *prepare for the possibility, that the voice of the few of us at those meetings will have to be supported by the sound of thousands of horns on blocked roads*” (emphasis mine)

As taxi drivers were whispering in political offices and hissing in courts, they were thinking and preparing to get ready to shout on the street. Over the following months different meetings were held, both with local municipality and at national level, by the labour union trying to change the legislation and mobilize the state to enforce the existing law. Taxi drivers were pushing authorities to take a more firm stance against “occasional transport of persons” limiting the supply of taxis. At the time there was a division among union leadership between

those wanting to focus on whispering and those wanting to shout. The first thought that shouting will ruin all the relational work put into building relationships with the law makers, whose attention they thought they have finally got, the latter that whispers will not achieve anything, as authorities listen only to those who speak from a position of power, and that those who wanted to whisper have been simply seduced by the people in power. Since the talks did not give the results taxi drivers were hoping for, the labour union made a decision to organize a rally against OTP.

This was not the first time when taxi drivers took to the streets to protests. At the beginning of the 1990's there were protests after the deregulation, when drivers were demanding the state reintroduce barriers of entry taken away during deregulation in 1989. In 1998, after a murder of a taxi driver, taxi drivers protested against the recent violence against taxi drivers and for the re-introduction of death penalty. In 1999 – 2000 they took to the streets to protest over the price. In 2003 – 2004 taxi drivers protested against compulsory cash registers that were being introduced in taxis. There were also individual protests in 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2012 both over prices and supply. Apart from protests that united drivers from different corporations, and in individual cases from different cities, over the years there have been individual protests not against the state but against the corporation which was forcing taxi drivers to buy new cars or was introducing new fees.

Even though over the years' taxi drivers have taken to the streets, it has been very difficult to mobilize drivers to strike. Rarely have taxi protests involved more than 1000 people (out of 8000), and often less than 200 drivers or even 50 took part in them. The strikes have been largely unsuccessful in that taxi drivers have been unable to win their battles. This is a puzzle. Theoretically taxi drivers have, what Peter Bearman calls, *structural power* that is the ability to create, through strikes and protests, production problems in other sectors of the economic system (Bearman, 2005: 206-208). Taxi drivers are a *linking ecology* that connects different social actors with each other. Although individual taxi drivers have little power and have to adjust to the temporal structures of other social domains a *collective effort* of taxi drivers could make life very difficult for inhabitants of Warsaw. Possessing their own cars and with an in-depth knowledge of the inner workings of the city ecology, taxi drivers could paralyze the car-based communication system. And in some cities (like Paris) they are able to do this. This structural power of taxi drivers should push authorities to meet their demands. So why have taxi drivers not made more use of their structural power? Why have they been unsuccessful?



The problem of collective action has been central for economists. For economists the lack of collective action is the “free rider problem” (Olson, 1965). Individuals do not engage in collective action because they can benefit from it without participation. The problem of “free riding” should not be neglected in the explanation of taxi drivers’ lack of participation. For taxi drivers the problem of free riding is even more important than for other social groups. Not only are other drivers able to benefit from collective action even without participating in it, but they benefit when they actively boycott the collective efforts of others. When nurses or miners go on strike other members of the occupation do not earn more. However when taxi drivers protest, the supply of taxis drops, and it becomes easier for those boycotting the protests to find customers. Those who boycott the strike can, as taxi drivers who engage in collective action put it, “sweep the city” picking up clients.

As Roger Gould pointed out what allows groups to overcome the free rider problem is group solidarity, understood as “a sense of members’ willingness to make sacrifices for group welfare” (Gould, 2003: 110). But taxi drivers lack a sense of group interest and group identity that would create solidarity. All of the drivers I talked to, who had tried or were still trying to organize taxi drivers, spoke of the lack of solidarity between members of their occupation. This lack of solidarity between drivers was put best by Artur, a very keen observer and for 2 years a central figure in the labour movement, who became disappointed with the results and quit. Artur wrote a long post on one of taxi drivers’ Internet forum entitled “a few words about the future of the taxi”. In the post he laid out a grim perspective for the future of the occupation. He also laid out two arguments for the current position of the taxi driver. First the working conditions of the taxi driver were the fault of the state which was weak and unable to execute the existing law. But the second factor responsible for the position of the taxi driver was the lack of community between taxi drivers. Artur wrote on the forum:

“The second factor [responsible for the working conditions] is our community, or in fact – the lack of it. Our community exists only as a physical group, which an observer can see, count and describe. But what this community lacks are real relations. We are like the residents of a block, who do not talk to each other, but only say “good morning”, and when it comes down to doing something, no one knows what to expect of the other and in the end thinks only of himself. This is enough for when the faucet breaks down, but not enough when we have to fix the roof.”

As different interviews and careful reading of taxi forum show this assumption about the lack of solidarity between taxi drivers is shared by most drivers engaged in collective action.

### **6.3 Creating a Choir out of a Group of Soloists**

For taxi drivers establishing a sense of solidarity and community have been difficult. The reason for the lack of solidarity lies in the character of their collective struggles, the organization of the market, and the specificity of the job.

One factor that prevents solidarity is the character of the struggle. Although according to Central Registration and Information on Businesses there were in 2012 more than 80,000 taxi drivers in Poland very rarely do drivers have a common interest and a common struggle. Most of the political struggles of taxi drivers are not *national but local struggles*: prices and licences are established at municipality level. The struggles of Warsaw taxi drivers are usually not the struggles of taxi drivers from other cities. Over the years there have only been individual protests that united drivers across different cities.

But solidarity among different taxi drivers – of either interest or identity – is difficult to achieve even at the level of Warsaw. Just as one does not find a strong "we" identity that would unite Polish drivers across different cities, one does not find a strong "we" identity that would unite Warsaw taxi drivers across different corporation.

What prevents the sense of solidarity between Warsaw drivers, which could facilitate the indirect struggles over the working day at the city level, is the structure of the Warsaw taxi market. Although there is a rotation of taxi drivers between corporations, with drivers switching corporations every few years, there are clear lines of conflicts between drivers from different corporations preventing the creation of a collective "we" identity across corporations.

Taxi drivers who are in different corporations have different labels on their cars; they have different prices, and often, due to the monopolization of taxi stands, wait for their fares in different locations. When a driver from one corporation arrives or stands near a rank monopolized by another he is “reminded” that he should not stand there. The structure of the Warsaw taxi market leads to multiple micro-conflicts at taxi stands. These individual conflicts scale up to group conflicts making the formation of a collective "we" identity across different corporation very difficult. As Artur pointed out in one of the conversations on taxi forum: “Taxi drivers in general are much closer to their corporations (even though they change them every 3 – 4 year) than to perceive others through the perspective of the *syrenka* [the coat of

arms of Warsaw], which all of them have on the doors of their car throughout their whole career”. Taxi drivers do not share a common identity.

There are two main lines of conflict between drivers from different corporations. One is among price lines, the other between those drivers who work for corporations that cooperated with non-licensed drivers, and those who did not.

Firstly conflicts take place between drivers along price lines. With the Warsaw taxi market being a status market – and not a standard market like many taxi markets across the world – there is a clear line of conflict between drivers, who drive in the cheaper corporations (under 2 zł/0.45€) and those who drive in the more expensive ones (over 2 zł). When a person walks up to the taxi stand and sees three taxis standing there he will often go for the cheapest one and not the one that is first in line. Drivers from more expensive corporations accuse those driving in the cheaper ones of making irrational financial decisions and “ruining the market”.

These micro-conflicts between drivers are most often of symbolic nature. Thus the drivers from more expensive corporations call those from less expensive “garbage catchers”, referring to the fact that their clients, who take cheaper taxis, are “garbage”. Some drivers from the more expansive corporations imply that the drivers from the cheaper corporations are not cheaper because they cheat passengers and overcharge by manipulating their taxi meter. Drivers from cheaper corporations experience those from more expensive as full of themselves.

The second line of conflict of drivers from different corporations emerged with the introduction of non-licensed drivers in 2000s. Some corporations began cooperating with non-licensed drivers. Over the years a line of conflict emerged between those taxi drivers who drove for corporations that did hire non-licensed and those that who did not. Drivers participating in actions against OTP would be reminded – on the Internet forum or during meetings of the labour union – that although they might be engaging in the struggles against non-licensed drivers they at the same time work in corporation that employ them.

Since it has been difficult for taxi drivers to form a sense of identity on a national level or at a city level, one could imagine that drivers would organize at the level of the corporation and try to improve their working condition. They would do this by orienting their protests not against the state but rather against the taxi corporation. Taxi drivers could try to push the corporation to increase the prices to the maximum 3 zł per/km, which no corporation has yet reached, and stop them from accepting new drivers limiting supply. But this has not been the case. There

have been very few protests at the level of corporation. At the level of the corporation drivers have chosen either loyalty or exit, but very rarely have they opted for voice.

There are different reasons for this lack of solidarity and voice at the level of corporations. The labour unions and those engaged in mobilizing drivers have not oriented themselves against taxi corporations but rather have focused their struggles against the state. They have often done so by allying themselves with the corporate owners. Not only have unions not situated themselves in opposition to corporations but since they have been so weak, unions have relied on the help of taxi corporations in their struggle against the state. This help has been both financial, as corporations contributed to strike funds, but also organizational as labour unions have asked taxi corporations to encourage drivers to participate or at least to not discourage drivers from participating. Unions and movements have relied on the communication systems of taxi corporations to pass out information about meetings and protests. In order to voice their concerns at city level drivers labour unions have refrained from voicing their concerns at the level of corporations. As one of the former leaders of the labour movement explained to me:

*We were not pushing for this [conflict with taxi corporations] because, to be frank, we did not want to get into conflict with corporate owners. We already knew that they are so strong, that if they would act against us, they will prohibit joining a union or participating in protests and it will become difficult for us.*

The boundaries between taxi corporations and labour unions of taxi drivers have been blurry. Many of the central figures in labour movement and labour unions would be incorporated or assimilated into the organizational structure of the taxi corporations. When a new labour union was being set up it received financial support from some of the taxi corporations. There was even a short period of time in 2013 when the leader of the labour unions was at the same time an owner of a taxi corporation and a leader of a labour union.

Another reason preventing the emergence of the solidarity among taxi drivers is the character of the job and the type of people that are drawn to becoming taxi drivers. There are not only structural factors responsible that prevent the formation of a collective "we" identity. Taxi drivers often perceive themselves as entrepreneurs and not workers. Many treat the idea of a labour union as foreign. Even people who were central union figures would tell me that there is something strange about taxi drivers organizing themselves in a labour union. And since drivers think of themselves as entrepreneurs, they perceive other drivers in terms of competition and not as fellow workers. Thus Maciek told me:

*I have never belonged to any labour union. How can you have a labour union of taxi drivers if a taxi driver is an entrepreneur (...) A taxi driver starts a union but with whom will he unite, if he is alone? You have a different interest, I have a different interest. You are a taxi driver, but you do want me to drive a better Peugeot. It's competition!*

I argued in chapter 4 that the idea of taxi driver being an entrepreneur is the encoding of the history of the Warsaw taxi market. Throughout much of the post-war period taxi drivers *were the only few entrepreneurs* in a centrally planned economy. This identity of being an entrepreneur continues to this day.

Moreover, the job of a taxi driver often attracts people who are difficult to mobilize for collective action. Some people are drawn to the job of a taxi driver with the idea of being “free”. In interviews and surveys asked about what they like about their job drivers would speak of “freedom”, “independence”, and “liberty”. “Freedom” has to do with choosing ones working hours, not having a “boss” who has authority and “tells you what to do” and before whom you have to “kneel”. However, engaging in collective action would require giving up some of this “freedom”. As Bourdieu pointed out, criticizing Albert Hirschman, collective action breaks with the clear voice-exit dichotomy (Bourdieu, 1986). Collective action require an alignment of voices: individuals have to transfer their voice to the *spokesperson* who will speak on behalf of them. In order to collectively voice their concern they have to cede their individual voices.

Ceding once voice on behalf of a spokesperson requires trust. However, those who have over the year's engaged in behind the stage negotiations have been perceived and accused by other taxi drivers to be pushing their own interest instead of fighting for the collective interests of the occupation. In many cases there were good reasons for this. The whispers in political offices became topic of rumours which spread through murmurs at taxi stands undermining the already weak trust in the whisperers and undercutting the chance for a successful collective shout should the whisperers fail.

#### **6.4 Conclusion: Speaking Out and Being Heard**

In their studies of the taxi labour strategies both behavioural and neoclassical economics focus only on drivers entering and exiting the market while neglecting the struggles that take place

over the rules underlying actors' labour strategies. Not only do they study working time without understanding the origins of *earning time* (the temporal structures of demand) and *waiting time* (the temporal structures of surplus supply), but they also neglect *political time* which aims to change the temporal structures of the taxi market. I argued that Warsaw taxi drivers have in multiple ways voiced their discontent with working conditions. Taxi drivers have struggled over rules, over rules enforcement and interpretation. To describe their different efforts I have used Hirschman's notion of voice, developing the notion further by distinguished between murmur, whisper, hiss, and shouts. I have argued that overall in their struggles drivers have been unsuccessful. Murmurs at taxi stands were aimed at the wrong audience and as a routine have not triggered the emotional engagement that could facilitate collective action. Whispers in political offices have largely been ignored as drivers lacked the financial and social capital to get the attention of the rule makers. Hisses in court have not prevented the circumvention of taxi regulation and did not limit the supply of taxis. And with only a small minority of engaged drivers' shouts have not given the results drivers would have hoped for.

We thus arrive at the second answer to the question to my research question. Why do taxi drivers work when they work? Taxi drivers work when they work because their collective efforts to improve their working conditions have been largely unsuccessful.

## Chapter 7. *Politics of Time: Struggles over Imagination and Memory*

“Through narrative, we construct, reconstruct, in some ways reinvent yesterday and tomorrow. Memory and imagination fuse in the process. Even when we create the possible worlds of fiction, we do not desert the familiar but subjectivize it into what might have been and what might be. The human mind, however cultivated its memory or refined its recording systems can never fully and faithfully recapture the past, but neither can it escape from it. Memory and imagination supply and consume each other’s wares.”

Jerome Bruner *Making Stories* (Bruner, 2003: 93)

In the previous chapter I looked at the different forms of voice and the difference collective strategies that taxi drivers use to indirectly struggle over working time. These struggles included struggle prices and struggles over the supply of taxi drivers. These actions were aimed at increasing the income and decreasing *waiting time*. I have argued that taxi drivers have been mostly unsuccessful in their war over prices and the supply of drivers.

However in their overall unsuccessful campaign, taxi drivers have been able to win individual battles. And it is worth taking a closer look at one of such victories as it shows how this group that lacks solidarity and has a weak labour union, was able to successfully prevent further deregulation.

In this chapter I zoom in and look more closely at a single event which was the struggle over deregulation that took place in Warsaw between February and May 2012, after the Minister of Law announced that he plans to deregulate the taxi market. I argue that taxi drivers were successful in defending licences because a group of drivers was able to successfully engage in *politics of time*. A group of taxi drivers created a clear representation of the future and convinced other drivers and the local authorities to this image. They were able to do this with the help of different “instruments of imagination” and by drawing on the collective memory of the period of deregulation of the taxi market between 1989 and 1992 (see chapter 4).

In 2012 taxi drivers were able to prevent the Ministry of Law from eliminating taxi licences. On the 26th of February 2012 Jarosław Gowin, at the time the Minister of Law, said during a meeting in Cracow that he plans to deregulate 150 occupations. Among the 150 occupations were the taxi drivers. Gowin declared: “in order to be a taxi driver one will no longer have to pass an exam in topography of the city”. Gowin said: “I am economic liberal, and I think that competence is best verified by the free market” (Kursa, 2012). He justified the deregulation of the taxi market by arguing that in the age of GPS, knowledge of the city is no longer important. He also forecasted that thanks to deregulation of the different occupations additional 100,000 jobs will be created in three years and that deregulation will increase the popularity of the ruling party. By June 2012 the Minister changed his mind and allowed cities to keep licences and exams. This chapter looks at how this happened.

### **7.1. Struggling Over the Future**

After the Minister of Law proposed that he will deregulate the taxi market, the information about the plan quickly spread through taxi stands and on taxi forums. On the next day the information was put on taxi drivers’ Internet forum. The information was picked up by Michał, who wrote: “Gentlemen, the thing we were afraid of most happened. Civic Platform [the ruling political party] came up with the idea to get rid of the exams of knowledge of the city. First they introduced OTP, than they took away the limits and now the last element, which somehow, although not very efficiently, limited access to our occupation”.

The Internet forum of taxi drivers changed into what, following Ann Mische, can be called a *site of hyperprojectivity* (Mische, 2014). In Mische’s terminology sites of hyperprojectivity are spaces where scenarios for the future are being imagined and discussed. However, unlike the site of hyperprojectivity studied by Mische, the discussion on the taxi forum was not oriented towards reaching “the future we want”, taxi drivers were rather imagining and discussing “the future we do *not* want” or “the future we should prevent”. Whereas in Mische’s studies the driving emotion behind the discussions of an imagined future was hope (Mische, 2014, Mische, 2009), in case of taxi drivers the driving emotion was fear.

A discussion broke out on the forum about the consequences of deregulation. One driver wrote: “if we don’t move our asses now we can start selling our cars” referring to the fact that after deregulation corporations will be able to introduce fleet cars and drivers will not be able to own their own cars any more. Another driver responded “if they open the occupation, the bigger danger will not be fleet corporations, but normal people who will get a licence just



because it will allow them to use the bus-lanes or use it to work once a week during the night”. Yet another driver wrote “I am wondering whether taxi drivers are aware of the fact that, when they take away exams, in a couple of months or possibly even before that, they will not have a pot to piss in. We will not have money to buy new tires as each wise ass will add taxi to his current occupation”. Someone else commented “Gentlemen it cannot get worse. In the current situation it is worth to give up a few days to strike. Because soon 100 zł [25 euro] of revenue will only be a dream”

The temporal orientation of taxi drivers, during these discussions, was very different from the temporal orientation of taxi drivers’ everyday practices. The everyday of taxi drivers is filled with actions that have a short temporal horizon: the goal is to pick up a customer and take him safely to a destination. As I argued in chapter 5, at first this action can be a source of anxiety and stress (some of my interviews discussed forgetting the names of even the most obvious streets or having bodily reaction in the form of sweating). But, like most practices, over time the activity of picking up customers and transporting them becomes a routine. As a routine, it often does not require reflection allowing drivers to perform other actions while driving. This does not mean that the everyday of taxi driver is completely devoid of contingencies. These contingencies break the routines and require attention (reflexivity) and creative solutions. But, even when taxi drivers’ routines are broken, the *ends in view* of taxi drivers’ everyday actions are not far from the present. As I argued in chapter 5 the fact that taxi drivers do not plan in advance is not only a matter of the dispositions and limited computational abilities but rather of the objective characteristic of their situation. Taxi drivers are unable to submit their everyday actions of driving passengers to a larger project. Thus, the temporal orientation of taxi drivers everyday practices is guided by, what Pierre Bourdieu defined as, a forthcoming future (Bourdieu, 2000: 208). Many of the everyday actions of taxi drivers take place in the register of *practical sense* where actions are “adjusted to the future without being the product of a project or a plan” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 51).

However, for those engaged in the discussions on the taxi forum, the prospect of deregulation triggered a very different register of action with a different temporal orientation. As the institutional foundations of the taxi market were being questioned drivers engaged in discussion on the taxi forum began to think and talk about their actions not in terms of the next fare or even the next day but rather months into the future. In their discussion drivers were no longer driven by the practical sense but rather operated *in the register of a project*. Unlike practical sense, the register of a project ‘*posit the future as future, i.e. as possible (as*

*being able to happen* or not to happen), the possible that is posited as such (Bourdieu quoted in Lahire, 2011:127).

In their discussions over the plans to deregulate the market taxi drivers were engaged in thinking about the future, making *forecasts* about the results of deregulation and the possibility of creating a successful protest against the plan of the government. One driver wrote “I think that with the help of his crew he [Michał] will not be able to get 300-500 participants”. Another driver responded: “Realistically it is between tens and a few hundred people”. Someone else forecasted: “Without agreement of corporations we will not be able to do anything”, while someone else argued „we should not count on the help of taxi corporations because it is not in their interest”. Yet another driver forecasted that “Staying at home would make sense if the majority of taxi drivers participated. Personally I don’t believe in such a scenario and that is why we have to organize a protest, which would work with a smaller group of participants”. Over the next days the number of interactions on the taxi forum (both in terms of people writing and reading increased. This was a moment of intense conversation between drivers.

But taxi drivers were not only talking to each other on taxi forums. One week after the announcement was first made the representatives of nearly all Warsaw taxi corporations, labour unions and the social movement against non-licensed drivers (represented by Michał) met to discuss what the prospect of deregulation will mean for them in future. The participants of the meeting agreed that the future after deregulation is not a future they want. The representatives of labour unions and social movements were afraid of the inflow of new taxi drivers that would create even longer waiting time and lead to a price war; taxi corporations were afraid that deregulation will make it easier for the new smartphone start-up (iTaxi), which was just entering the market, to find new drivers. Corporations used the meeting to agree that no corporation will cooperate with iTaxi, representatives of labour unions and social movements to get corporations on their side in the upcoming struggle against deregulation.

Having mobilized the taxi corporations, and got their financial and organizational support, the goal of those hoping to prevent deregulation from happening was to mobilize other taxi drivers and the general public in their vision of the future; to engage others in the *politics of expectations* (Beckert, forthcoming). The goal was to convince others, and not only taxi drivers, that the future set forth by deregulation was not a future that they would want. That deregulation proposed by the mister of law would lead to a future that should be avoided.

Engaging other taxi drivers, who did not participate in discussion on taxi forums and were not part of the taxi forum “thought collective” (Fleck, 2012) and “speech community” (Gumperz), to think about their future was not simple matter. As two drivers, who were central in the labour movement and have put much effort into trying to mobilize other drivers to participate in collective action explained to me:

*Taxi driver nr. 1 [a taxi driver] operates in a weekly time-frame and the struggles about the regulation, which are supposed to change his situation... that he has to invest now and refrain from working, so that his situation will improve in a year?! That is an abstraction! Because what matters is today, because he lacks the money to refuel his car tomorrow!*

*Taxi driver nr 2 A taxi driver lives from one day to another!*

This is a problem for those trying to organize collective action. Roger Gould pointed out that “individuals participate in collective action for two reasons, one involving interests and the other norms. The problem of actors involved in mobilization is to convince potential participants that, given their social situation, they are both likely to benefit from and, as a result, obligated to contribute to collective action” (Gould, 1995: 14). With a lack of solidarity between drivers, discussed in chapter 6, the role of sense of interest in collective action was crucial. Thus, in order to engage other taxi drivers in collective action it was first important to engage them in thinking about the future. Mobilize drivers “time travel” and imagine what will be the consequences of a deregulation in the future (Bloch, 2012).

In some situations engaging others in thinking about the future is easier. During some protests it has been easier to engage others to think about the future because the image of the future was clear. Thus, during taxi drivers struggles over cash registers in 2003 – 2004 more than 5 thousand taxis took to the streets of Warsaw to protest. But during that protests it was easier to mobilize drivers in the struggle not only because the struggle over cash registers was an issue that united drivers from different cities, and not a local issue, but also because the image of the future that collective action was meant to avoid was clear. The future even had a clear “price tag”: if the proposal of the government passed each driver would have to spend 600 Euros on a cash register.

But during the struggle over deregulation the image of the future was not as clear. What exactly would happen after deregulation? Why should taxi drivers care about it? Even if they would care is there a chance of doing anything about it? If convincing drivers that the future

would be dark was hard, engaging the general public in politics of expectations would be even harder. Why should the general public think about the consequences of deregulation on the lives of taxi drivers and why should it take taxi drivers' point of view?

### **7.1.1 The Story of the Future Taxi: The Making of a *Prolepsis***

Taxi drivers hoping to mobilize others came up with an idea how to engage others in politics of expectations. As often is the case with ideas this one came out as a result of conversations between drivers. After a discussion between a larger group of drivers who wanted to engage in organizing protest against deregulation, Michał met up with another driver and they came up with an idea of a future taxi. The “future taxi” was meant to represent the results of deregulation. As Michał put it on the forum: “If they do not know, how taxis will look after deregulation, maybe we have to simply show it to them?” This would, as Michał put it, allow “everyone to see, that what the minister is proposing is stupidity of the highest level”.

Like most visions of the future, the future taxi took the form of narrative. The basic definition of narrative is that it is “the choice of specific linguistic technique to report past events” (Labov, 1997). But narrative can also be used to tell a story about upcoming events *as if* they had already happened (Beckert, forthcoming, Bruner, 2003). Michał explicitly framed the idea of a future in terms of a story as he explaining the idea to other drivers on the forum. Michał wrote: “we will be able to build a narration that an entrepreneurial taxi driver followed the advice of the minister and cut costs to the minimum”. In their story about the future there was an *initiative event* (deregulation), there was a plot, there were characters, sense of causality and evaluation: all the features of a narrative (Labov 2013:223-224). Michał initially wanted to push the idea of narrative further and spoke about making a series of Internet movies about the car forecasting that: “maybe we will not get an Oscar out of this, but for sure Gowin [Minister of Law] will be until the end of his career associated with a rusty taxi”.

This future taxi, named after the Minister proposing deregulation – “the Gowin taxi” – was picked up by others and became a *collective project* engaging a group of drivers. The first step in creating the future taxi was to find the right car. Taxi drivers began looking for a candidate that would fill the requirements: be in good enough shape to be allowed on the streets and costs no more than 350 € which was the movement's budget of the operation. After looking at different options, and checking out different cars, the social movement purchased a car from another taxi driver (see the picture below). Since the car was going to be used for a “good cause”, the price was lowered to 170 €, which was much less than its market price. The

car was given partly as a gift to the movement and partly exchanged as a market good. Michał put up the photo on the forum *forecasting*: „soon this will be one of the most famous taxis in Poland”.



Having spent time looking for the right car, time and effort had to be invested in making the car look worse. Work had to be put into the car to bring the imagined future into the present. This was not yet the future taxi. Michał wrote: „Please send me suggestions of how to improve the looks, we are starting tomorrow, so please hurry”. Together with others Michał spent two days destroying the vehicle: ripping off the paint, making the engine run loud and creating a special system that would leak water and create steam, symbolizing the poor technical condition of the vehicle. Although there were few drivers physically working on the car in the workshop, more were engaged in the project on the taxi forum coming up with ideas for improvement and providing the necessary materials. Overall 45 users of the taxi forum actively participated in the conversation about the future taxi (with more drivers participating passively in the project by reading the forum) – either by showing support for the project or coming up with ideas and solution.

The work of turning a present taxi into a future taxi was reported to other drivers engaged in the project on the taxi forum. “As of now, we are ripping off the paint; we treat it with chemicals, and it is not that simple, because you have to do it layer by layer. One of the sides has six of them.” Later on the same day “After 15 hours of removing car paint I have had enough. I got home at 5 am”. During the process of creating the future taxi there was a *continual permutation of action* (Strauss, 1993): in discussions on the taxi forum and in the workshop taxi drivers were coming up with creative solutions to problems in attaining the

imagined end in view of the project. And over time the end in view changed as drivers only had a rough idea of what the future taxi should look like.

After many hours spent on bringing the imagined future taxi into the present, with plenty of work and chemicals used to peel of the different layers of car paint, the future taxi was created (see the picture below). The collective imagination of the drivers participating in the project became encoded into an object, thus taking the form of *objectified expectations*. Just like some objects (e.g. monuments, pictures, paintings, and postcards) remind people of the past, the car was an object was meant to objectify the future and trigger the engagement of others to prevent this future from happening. It was what Aaron Cicourel would call a *representational re-description* that was both shaped by and was shaping the imagination of taxi drivers (Cicourel, 2006).

In the story told by taxi drivers future after deregulation the car took the form of a *prolepsis* that is “a figure of speech in which a future act or development is represented as if already accomplished or existing” (Britannica, 2014). Although deregulation was only being proposed, the consequences of deregulation were already present. As an objectification of the imagined ends in view of the upcoming deregulation the Gowin taxi became an instrument of imagination (Beckert, forthcoming).



### 7.1.2 The Future Taxi as a Totem

With the name of the Minister of Law and a “after deregulation” sign, the future taxi began to make its way around the streets of Warsaw. Michał wrote on the forum: „The last 3 days I

have spent only driving the Gowin taxi. The reactions of others are incredible. 100 % positive; by passers taking photos”. The future taxi continued to be a project in the sense that driving the car around required coordination between people. Coordinating this activity required scheduling and planning. A schedule was set up and as different taxi drivers took turns to drive the car around the city engaging others in thinking about the future: convincing other taxi drivers and the general public of the grim future ahead of them.

For the movement against deregulation the Gowin taxi became a *totem* (Beckert, forthcoming). It was at the centre of most of the collective action that took place over the next weeks. Taxi drivers used it to mobilize other drivers and to collect money for the upcoming struggles and to get the attention of the general public and the media. Surprised by the popularity of the Gowin taxi which exceeded their expectation the creators of future taxi considered creating another one but, due to lack of funds and opposition from some drivers, decided not to.

The media found in the future taxi something worth reporting. They did not have put an effort into changing the struggles of taxi drivers in to a story, because taxi drivers have already turned it into one. The Gowin taxi was mentioned on multiple networks. Michał was interviewed as the representative of social movement against deregulation. In one of the television interviews Michał pointing at the destroyed car forecasted: “If this is what you want then ok, all taxi drivers will be driving this type of car.”



Gowin taxi during a happening against deregulation, March 2012



### 7.1.3 Politics of Expectations and the Reportability Paradox

The future taxi was a success in that it was able to attract the attention of other taxi drivers, who devoted funds and their time to the struggle against deregulation, and the attention of the media. This was because, as a narrative about the future, the Gowin taxi was able to overcome, what the sociolinguist William Labov calls, the *reportability paradox* (Labov, 2013: 21-23, Labov, 1997).

Labov came up with the reportability paradox studying the narratives told by people about their life threatening experiences. In his analysis of what makes a successful narrative William Labov argues that to be able tell a story a storyteller needs an audience to provide him with more social space than during a normal conversation. Labov writes: “A narrative is not a typical turn of talk, which is a sentence or less. It is an extended turn, occupying more conversational space than most” (Labov, 2013: 21). But as another sociolinguist John Gumperz has argued: “individuals do not automatically have space to present or develop an argument. They must work to gain and retain their turn and make it possible for others to predict where their own responses can fit in” (Gumperz, 1997: 189). Taxi drivers hoping to mobilize other drivers would not be automatically awarded the space to tell their story.

To receive enough space to tell a story, the ego has to gain the interest of the alter. If he or she does not, this claim towards the extended space can be questioned or contested. This of course was a problem for those hoping to mobilize drivers and the general public in the discussion about taxis. Why should people take the time to listen to the story of taxi drivers about the consequences of deregulation?

This interest of the audience might come from the social position – or symbolic power – of the storyteller (e.g. head of states giving addresses) and/or from the social situation in which the actor is speaking (e.g. grandfather during family dinner, commensuration speech). But the interest of the audience can also come from the story itself. For the interest of the audience to come from the content of the story the narrative has to include something out of ordinary or something unexpected. A successful narration has to be built around, what William Labov calls, *the most reportable event*: “one that is least likely to have occurred and has the greatest effect on the lives and life chances of the participants. It is what the narrative is about” (Labov, 2013: 23). A similar argument about narrative has been made by Jerome Bruner who in his theory of narration argued that “the narrative in all its forms is dialectic between what



was expected and what came to pass. For there to be a story something unforeseen must happen” (Bruner, 2003: 15). The most reportable event then “justifies the automatic reassignment of speaker role to the narrator” (Labov, 1997).

However for a narrative to be successful it is not enough to have a reportable event it also has to be *credible*. If the narrative is to be treated to be a representation of true events and trigger a cognitive or emotional reaction in the audience, the narrative has to be perceived by the audience as credible. Listeners have to believe that the events being described have occurred or will occur as told by the narrator. This leads to a *reportability paradox*: the more reportable an event is the less it is credible and vice versa.

It might seem strange to use Labov theory of narrative to analyse the story of the consequences of deregulation told by taxi drivers. Firstly his theory refers to stories about events that had happened and secondly Labov studied life threatening experiences. However, there is no reason why Labov’s analysis cannot be extended to narratives about events that are imagined to happen in the future. And although deregulation was not life threatening in the literal sense, it was perceived by taxi drivers to be life threatening in the symbolic sense. Taxi drivers presented deregulation as the death of the taxi driver occupation. In 2010 taxi drivers even organized a public funeral of the taxi driver occupation of with a coffin that was meant to symbolize that the lack of enforcement of regulation of the taxi market is killing the occupation.



Public funeral of the taxi occupation, 2010

The story taxi drivers were trying to tell about deregulation was entangled in this inverse relationship between reportability and credibility. In their narration about deregulation the most reportable event was the bad condition of taxis after deregulation. This future was represented, in the form of a *prolepsis*, by the Gowin taxi. The worse the Gowin taxi would look the more it would be out of the ordinary, hence reportable, but at the same time the less it would look as a credible representation of the future after deregulation. If taxi drivers would destroy the car too much, their narration would lose credibility. It would no longer be treated as a representative of reality but rather simply as a joke: “a narrative form (...) which signals from the outset that it is not intended to be an account of true events” (Labov, 2013: 22).<sup>45</sup> If

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<sup>45</sup> The creators of the Gowin taxi did use some comedic elements. Thus, drivers attached a plastic cup at the back of the cab with the sign “please support me”, referring to the upcoming low income of taxi drivers.

they would have not destroyed it enough it would not be out of the ordinary and would not get the attention of the audience.

#### **7.1.4 The Charisma of the Storyteller**

The focus on the content of story as a way of explaining why the Gowin taxi was a successful tool in the politics of expectation should not prevent us from looking at the storyteller. Although Bourdieu was wrong when he argued that one should *always* look for the power of words outside of language (Lahire, 2015b: 89-91), this should not push us to take the opposite view and argue that the power of words *never* comes from outside of language. In the 2012 success against deregulation both the story being told and the storyteller were important. The storyteller and the story cannot be decoupled.

The power of words to create expectations and shape future often comes from the social legitimacy of the spokesperson. As Bourdieu writes:

“The truth of a promise or a prognosis depends not only on the truthfulness but also on the authority of the person who utters it - that is, on his capacity to make people believe in his truthfulness and his authority. When it is acknowledged that the future under discussion depends on collective will and action, the mobilizing ideas of the spokesperson who is capable of giving rise to this action are unfalsifiable because they have the power to ensure that the future they are announcing will come about” (Bourdieu, 1991: 190-191)

In the 2012 struggles over exams the main storyteller was Michał. A large man under around the age of 40 Michał was a central figure in the movement. It was his announcement on the forum that triggered the discussion about the future after deregulation turning the forum into site of hyperprojectivity. He was the one who was usually driving the Gowin taxi and creating dark scenarios. He was *representing* the social movement in the media as a *spokesperson*.

Michał was not the only spokesperson of taxi drivers against deregulation. There were others speaking on behalf of taxi drivers. These included a labour union leader and the director of the largest taxi association. But if they were the priests, the institutionalized representatives of taxi drivers, Michał was the prophet. His position was not formally instituted and he positioned himself in opposition to the institutional leaders. In other words, Michał was an almost ideal typical charismatic figure in the Weberian sense of the term.

This was not Michał's first protest. He was already heavily engaged in collective action during the struggles over OTP and over prices that took place between 2008 and 2010. Together with the 3 other people he was responsible for mobilizing other drivers to participate in collective action. As a gifted speaker, Michał was able to attract drivers to the union and organized a few events and protest. After a series of unsuccessful protests and a power struggle in the labour union, Michał retreated into the private sphere. Being a charismatic type of leader his position was very dependent on success.<sup>46</sup>

Michał reappeared during this time of crises. As Weber would have put it – he was a natural leader in distress (Weber, 2009: 245 ). The situation of crises was his breeding ground. He was interested in the big struggle: blocking the airport or the streets, interrupting city council meetings, going after non-licensed drivers. Like all charismatic figures, Michał disliked institutionalization and routinization. When Michał engaged, he engages fully, focusing entirely on the struggle leaving family obligations and work; forgoing financial calculation on behalf of his mission. He was possessed by the “maniac passion” of charismatic figures that Weber speaks of (Weber, 1978: 242). But his engagement was eventful and required constant appreciation from people who followed him. Without it he lost the *illusio*: the belief that the game is worth fighting.

Michał was an engaging public speaker and agitator. This is not only my opinion established after having interviewed him and watched video recording from the protests but it is an opinion shared by many of the taxi drivers that I spoke to. During the struggles over deregulation in 2012 Michał spoke with great confidence about the specificity of the taxi market and the need for regulation. He told stories about deregulation in other countries and their devastating consequences. He created analogies between what will happen in Warsaw in the future and happened in Ireland and Sweden in the past. He asked rhetorical questions and presented alternatives. Should Warsaw taxi drivers join the likes of Italian and Mexican drivers or should they more resemble German taxi drivers? Is the taxi market going to look like a first world or a third world market? Why was the market re-regulated after 1991? Will people feel safe in a Gowin taxi?

One cannot deny great oratory skills of Michał, his ability to mobilize others and generate ideas. However, for a sociologist, the goal should be to look at the social (that is institutional

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<sup>46</sup> The charismatic leader gains and maintains authority solely by proving his strength in real life. If he wants to be a prophet, he must perform miracles; if he wants to be a war lord, he must perform heroic deeds. (Weber 2009: 249).

and interactional) origins of those skills and the social context in which they developed, were being triggered and recognized by others. As a social movement leader Michał was the child of the taxi forums. It was the Internet forum that connected taxi drivers, who did not know each other in “real life”. The forum was a place where those most engaged in the field could interact on a daily basis, creating over years of conversations both a *thought collective* (Fleck) and a *speech community* (Gumperz, 2009). As one of the administrators of the taxi forum told me:

[The forum] was the only communication platform that somehow consolidated people who on an everyday basis were in conflict with each other if only because they belong to different corporations.

It was in conversation on the taxi forum, the heated debates with other taxi drivers, where Michał was polishing his oratory skills. Michał was one of the most active participants. And it was the taxi forum that was the place of “rites of consecration” (Bourdieu, 1991: 117) before the protest in which Michał was recognized as someone worthy to lead the upcoming struggle. It was also the forum that was the place of, what Garfinkel called, *degradation ceremonies* (Garfinkel, 1956) when he was blamed for failures or misgivings.

The charisma of Michał was important element in the mobilization of taxi drivers because taxi drivers are a particularly difficult audience to capture. Taxi drivers are often great storytellers. They enjoy speaking and have very clear opinions on the world. With a clear view of the world taxi drivers are not eager to forgo their voice, to let others speak on behalf of them, which is a necessary condition if a spokesperson is to represent a group of people. And yet, during 2012, many were willing to follow Michał and let him speak on behalf of them.

### 7.1.5 Confrontation of Stories

The goal of the movement against the plans of ministry of law was to make the struggle of taxi drivers an issue of public safety. Deregulation, Michał argued standing in front of the future taxi, will lead to drivers having to cut costs on security. Speaking to television news he forecasted: “We should be talking about safety of the passengers, who will be endangered”.

On the website created by the movement against deregulation taxi drivers put a warning “Today I have to drive minimum 12 hours a day! What do you think will happen when thanks to minister Gowin, there will be few thousand additional cars? **Will you feel safe?**” (bold in original)” Stickers “Stop deregulation. Gowin deregulation = unsafe taxi” were distributed

among other drivers and glued to the rear windshields. The future after deregulation was presented as something that should be feared not only by the taxi driver, who will work more and earn less, but also by the passenger.

At the same time that drivers were promoting their dark vision about the consequences of deregulation, the minister of law proposing deregulation, backed by groups of economic experts, was pushing a different story. The advisor to ministry of justice told a newspaper: “Thanks to the changes [deregulation of 150 occupations] there will be additional 50 – 100 thousand new jobs (...). Prices for the service of licensed specialists should also drop”. Their vision of the future was backed and justified with the use economic theories; theories that predicted more jobs, better competition and lower prices. In more official documents statements were backed by empirical analysis done of other taxi market and by economic theories of licence systems. In contrast when making his argument against deregulation Michał was relying on folk economics. Since taxi drivers cannot shape the demand for their service, Michał argued, the increase of the number of suppliers will increase the price as each supplier will have to make ends meet with fewer fares forcing him or her to increase the price for the service. The future after deregulation was one with both lower quality and a higher price.

There were only individual situations where the two stories being put forward were publicly confronted. One such confrontation took place during a meeting organized by a Polish newspaper with the minister of law. There a representative of taxi drivers told the minister: Today there is 9 thousand taxis in Warsaw, after deregulation there will be additional 5 thousand. What do you think that the taxi driver will save on? He will save on his car. When we are talking about the quality of service, tell me sir, how will the client verify, if the vehicle is in good condition?”<sup>47</sup> After the debate the minister said in one of the interviews that he found some of the arguments of taxi drivers were convincing, and would be taken into consideration.<sup>48</sup>

## **7.2 Struggling with the Past**

In their struggle against deregulation, a group of drivers led by Michał was able to mobilize a larger group of drivers to fight against an unwanted future. Their struggles over the future

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<sup>47</sup>[http://wyborcza.pl/1,75248,11549069,Gowin\\_\\_bede\\_deregulowal\\_\\_Taksowkarze\\_siegneli\\_po\\_petardy.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,75248,11549069,Gowin__bede_deregulowal__Taksowkarze_siegneli_po_petardy.html)

<sup>48</sup>[http://wyborcza.pl/10,82983,11548505,Gowin\\_\\_Argumenty\\_taksowkarzy\\_do\\_mnie\\_przemawiaja\\_.html](http://wyborcza.pl/10,82983,11548505,Gowin__Argumenty_taksowkarzy_do_mnie_przemawiaja_.html)

were struggles over, what Jerome Bruner called, the *noetic space* that is the culturally specific “collective imagination of the possible” (Bruner, 2003: 15).<sup>49</sup> Gowin’s taxi was part of politics of expectations. However taxi drivers’ struggles over the future were not free floating product of unrestricted imagination emerging out of interactions on taxi stands and in taxi forums. Rather their representations of the future were rooted in the past. As Jerome Bruner argued: “narrative fiction creates possible worlds – but they are worlds extrapolated from the world we know, however much they may soar beyond it” (Bruner, 2003: 94). In fact taxi drivers were successful in their struggles over the future because they had a past they could draw on.

We see this relationship between actors imagining a future and recollecting a past in a forum post written by Michał as he was trying to mobilize others to engage in the upcoming struggles:

“Gentlemen, in a few months you will be out of work. This does not mean that there will be less work that work will be harder to come by. Gentlemen there will be no work! Anyone will be able to become a taxi driver. What this means I do not have to explain. After the famous deregulation of our occupation at the beginning of the 1990s there were around 20.000 taxis in Warsaw. Yes, that is right, 20.000 taxis. (...) Ask your older colleagues what was happening back then”.

Likewise representative of the biggest association of taxi drivers was switching between forecasting and recollecting:

“For us deregulation means the loss of jobs. That is obvious. But I want to say that these types of ideas were already introduced at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s and there was complete chaos on the market. Too many taxis, long queues at the taxi stands, brawls, and the prices were not lower. Today returning to this idea of deregulation is madness.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> We therefore propose to conceive of culture as an interplay of the two - a dialectic between the canonical ways laid down by a society's institutional forms and the possible worlds generated by the rich imaginations of its members, who nonetheless must remain dependent to a large extent upon the society's institutional arrangement. In some deep sense, a culture's canonical ways are brought into question by the products of its collective imagination of the possible - its *noetic space*, as we call it. Yet the culture tolerates those possible worlds in noetic space; they are even nurtured by such "marginal institutions" as theatre, novels dissenting political movements, styles of gossip and fantasy. AMSTERDAM, A. & BRUNER, J. 2000a. *On the Dialectics of Culture Minding the Law*. Cambridge, Massachusetts Harvard University Press.

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0pHPPuiYWk>

During this unsettled time (Swidler, 1986) the temporal orientation of taxi drivers action was being extended both ways. Both were trying to engage others in thinking about the future while at the same time engaging in recollections of the past. Forecasts regarding the future where mixed in with recollections. In this moment of crises, as the institutional foundations of the taxi market were in question, this form of “time travel” (Bloch, 2012: 107-109) between an imagined future and a recollected past was common.

As taxi drivers began to discuss the future after deregulation, making forecasts and creating plans about possible collective action they quickly became immersed in discussions about past events. The prospect of deregulation triggered an engagement with the past that is not characteristic of everyday life guided by routine actions and practical sense. Thus politics of expectations became entangled in “mnemonic battles” (Zerubavel, 1997, Zerubavel, 1996) or politics of memory. Just like the recent struggles over how to deal with financial crises, often became struggles over what ended the Great Depression in the 30’s, taxi drivers struggle over the imagined results of deregulation became a struggle over the results of previous deregulation. As George Herbert Mead pointed out: “the future is continually qualifying the past in the present” (Mead, 1932: 36).

For taxi drivers the deregulation after 1989 provided an analogy that allowed them to make sense of the situation and forecast what was going to happen in the future. To paraphrase Marx, many taxi drivers had the feeling that history was repeating itself. The previous deregulation was recollected and discussed as a farce while the upcoming deregulation as an upcoming tragedy. Of course the previous deregulation could be presented as a farce because, as the famous saying goes, comedy is tragedy plus time.

For Michał and other actors engaged in this struggle over exams and deregulation was in part a struggle to remind taxi drivers, the lawmakers and the general public about the deregulation of the taxi market in 1989. This was a past Michał and many of the other people engaged in mobilization had not personally experienced as taxi drivers. Many of the drivers engaged in the current struggle began driving after 1991, when the market was already in the process of being re-regulated. But this memory of deregulation was part of the collective memory of the occupation. This memory of previous events, like imagination of possible future events, was a social phenomenon. As Maurice Halbwachs pointed out: “It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories (Halbwachs quoted in Olick et al., 2011: 18).



The history of 90's deregulation was not lost – it was encoded in the memory of taxi drivers many of whom started driving after the market began to be re-regulated. As a collective history of the occupation the story of previous deregulation was not taught in schools nor was it commemorated with monuments. The story of deregulation was rather passed between older drivers and the newcomers during conversation on taxi stands. The goal was to bring this memory to the foreground, to bring the story of deregulation to the attention of those who have not heard about this past before, and to remind it those who have. Engaging others in thinking about the future was done through engaging them in recollections of the past.

The existence of this past gave taxi drivers hope about the outcome of the upcoming struggle. The past was perceived as a resource which could be used in the struggle over the future. Thus Jarek, who was at that time not yet a labour union leader, wrote: “This is our chance. We have to remind people, what the market situation was after 1989: wars between cooperatives, physical fights. We have to remind people about those times.” Like many of those engaging in the discussion on forums, Jarek had not personally experienced this as a driver, since he started driving in 2005 almost 15 years after the events had happened. But as a taxi driver, who had been engaged in collective life of taxi drivers, he knew it as if it was part of his own history. Knowledge of previous deregulation was not part of his “autobiographical memory” but rather the “historical memory” of his occupation (Olick et al., 2011: 19). The goal was to bring the past, which for some drivers was beyond their temporal horizon into the present. In other words the goal was to, as Andrew Abbott would put it, *recode* the encoded past.

The past began to be discussed on the taxi forum and taxi stands. Cultural symbols such as “the taxi mafia” and “Wilczek’s law”, which emerged during previous deregulation, were brought back into the debate about the future as drivers were engaging in their struggles over the future of the taxi licence system. The embodied past was turned into objectified memory as taxi forums and in newspapers began to bring back the story of the deregulation in the 90's. We find one article from time in the major Polish newspaper telling the story of previous deregulation: “In 1989 the law of entrepreneurship lifted restrictions. Anyone could become a taxi driver. There were no licences. Quickly the first wars between corporations broke out: piercing of tires, breaking windows and overpricing. To react to this some cities (e.g. Warsaw, Krakow) began to introduce price limits. Licences were introduced, which required a passed exam”.<sup>51</sup> This article was put on the taxi forum and read by taxi drivers thus finishing the

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<sup>51</sup>[http://m.wyborcza.pl/wyborcza/1.105226.11374650.Taksowkarze\\_Otworzenie\\_nasz\\_zawod\\_podniesiemy\\_ceny.html](http://m.wyborcza.pl/wyborcza/1.105226.11374650.Taksowkarze_Otworzenie_nasz_zawod_podniesiemy_ceny.html)

process of social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1991). The memory of previous deregulation was being reproduced in the process of externalization from embodied memory to objectified memory through the act of recollecting and writing, and then through the process of internalization from objectified memory back to embodied memory through reading.

Taxi drivers also began to look for other pasts that could be used in their struggles over the future. Were there other countries where deregulation took place? This past was not part of the embodied memory of taxi drivers but could be reconstructed from objectified memory that is the Internet. Thus drivers engaged in the struggle found stories of deregulation in Sweden in 1990's and in Ireland in 2000's both countries with similar stories of deregulation. Initial deregulation was followed by chaos and a re-regulation of the industry. This past was to be used as a resource in the struggle over the future. When taxi drivers met with the minister of law both the stories of Irish and Swedish deregulation were presented to him as warnings about the consequences of his project.

What helped taxi drivers in their struggle was that they had support of local authorities. The city authorities feared that with further deregulation of the taxi market they will lose control of the market. Like taxi drivers the authorities of Warsaw remembered the previous deregulation as a period of chaos and feared that history will repeat itself. In their struggle against deregulation city authorities sided with taxi drivers against the plans set forth by the minister even though they were members of the same party. With both the city and taxi drivers against him, the ministry decided to back down from the plans to get rid of licences and exams, leaving the decisions whether or not to have exams up the authorities of Warsaw.



Michał Olszewski the vice-president of Warsaw (black suit third from the left) sitting together with representatives of taxi drivers (on the left), opposite the Minister of Law Jarosław Gowin and his team, 12 June 2012

### 7.2.2 Coping with a Problematic Past

But if those hoping to mobilize other drivers to engage in the battle against further deregulation could draw on elements of the past and had an analogy they could use in their struggles over the future, they also had a past that they themselves had to struggle with. This was a more recent past of the last 15 years of collective action, perceived by many taxi drivers as a history of failures. Not only was it a past filled with unsuccessful collectively struggles but it was a past in which those organizing strikes were able to only mobilize a minority of taxi drivers. This past represented the lack of unity and solidarity between taxi drivers.

Previous to the 2012 struggles over regulation, the sequence of collective struggles of taxi driver resemble much the sequence of collective action described by Albert Hirschman: disappointment in the private sphere is followed by hope of changing ones situations through means of collective action, followed by unrealized expectations, disappointment and retreat into private sphere (Hirschman, 1982). This sequence involved both the organizers and participants. The individual trajectories of Michał and Artur, who were central figures in the movement after 2009, were ones of hopes when they started in 2009 about the possibility of a better tomorrow being turned into disappointment after these expectations were not reached— or as they put it in a conversation with me – in their “disenchanted” view about the world and their occupation. Michał returned in 2012 to once again organize collective action, Artur did not. During the struggles over deregulation in 2012 this feeling of disappointment and lack of hope regarding future collective action was something that taxi drivers had to deal with.

One way of dealing with this problematic past of collective action was to hope that it would be forgotten. However, simply forgetting the past of precious strikes would not be possible. Trying to consciously forget something is like trying to fall asleep (Joas, 1996). Previous protest was a very recent past and was encoded in both embodied memory of taxi drivers and objectified memory (pictures, YouTube clips, and Internet websites). If, as Maurice Halbwachs argued, the past can be forgotten when the social context in which it was encoded disappears, during the struggles of 2012 the context of previous failures was ever present.

Since the past cannot just be forgotten actors can try to ignore it or, to borrow Luc Boltanski’s expression, to *close ones eyes* on the past (Boltanski, 2013: 22- 24). Let bygones be bygones. Thus, when one participant of the discussion about the upcoming strikes wrote “my enthusiasm was successfully buried during last protest, in which I participated – and I am not the only one” another responded, to the applause of many other participants of the discussion:

“We should not be discussing what someone did yesterday, but rather what can be done today, because tomorrow there might be nothing left to do”. Don’t dwell on the past, think about the future.

Although the past often cannot simply be forgotten or ignored, sometimes it can be (re)interpreted. It is not always clear whether a previous event was a success or a failure. For example the exact number of participants of a previous protest is not known. Thus when after one of the strikes a Polish newspaper argued there were 500 participants, participants claimed that there were in fact many more, possibly even 1500. The number of participants might not be disputed but rather its meaning and interpretation. After one of the protests during the 2012 struggles over deregulation Michał wrote on the taxi forum: „don’t write that you were disappointed by the number of people protesting. In my opinion, taking into account the weather and the number of people notified, the number of participants (...) was at a very decent level”.

I witnessed such collective interpretation of the past when I was interviewing a group of three drivers who had been engaged in protests. One of the drivers was older and had driven in the early 1990s; the other two were much younger and started driving in the 2000s. I was asking them about the 1990s.

[Me: Were the 1990s a golden age? When I talk to older taxi drivers they tell me that there was a period in the 1990s when there was more work?]

**Younger driver nr 1:** *1990s after deregulation...*

**Older driver:** *Yes, 1990s they were good. Until the end of 1990s it was good...*

**Younger driver nr 2** *Wait, wait. At the beginning of the 1990s after deregulation it was bad!?*

**Younger driver nr 1** *After deregulation it was bad!*

**Younger driver nr 2:** *When everything was deregulated...*

**Older driver:** *There was a period, there was a minister, Wilczek was his name, who completely opened access to the occupation of the taxi driver. And then a big, big wave of newbies entered the occupation, and for some time, for a period of years, one could read articles about taxi mafias, about shootings at taxi stands,*

*these types of horrors. After some time it began to normalize, when the city decided, that it cannot deal with this chaos*

**Younger driver nr 2** *They began to introduce permits.*

The past was recollected and reinterpreted in conversation between the drivers with the younger drivers reminding the older driver of a past that, unlike him, they had not experienced.

But such (re)interpretation is not completely flexible nor is it always possible. For example, one of the biggest strikes of taxi drivers that took place in 2003 – 2004. Taxi drivers were protesting against the introduction of cash registers in taxis. During the highpoint of this struggle there were 5 thousand taxi drivers on the streets of Warsaw. This was the taxi driver protest since 1989. However their protests were unsuccessful as taxi drivers were not able to stop cash registers from being introduced. Likewise, in 2011 taxi drivers took to the street to push for an increase of the maximum price of taxis, but the maximum price was not increased. During the 2012 strikes these struggles were part of the past. In both cases it would be difficult to simply forget or ignore that these protests took place. Many of the drivers either personally remember participating in those strikes or were told about them by the participants. It was also difficult to reinterpret the protests transforming them from a story about disappointment about the results towards a story of successful collective action. Some failures simply cannot be recoded into stories of success. As Andrew Abbott pointed out: “there is a sticky past, despite our ability to rewrite it” (Abbott, 2001: 237).

The third strategy of dealing with a problematic past by those engaged in collective action was by creating, what Anselm Straus called, *belated projections*. Belated projections are alternative visions of the past or, to borrow an expression from the philosopher David Lewis, *possible worlds* that could well have been achieved. For example taxi drivers engaged in struggles would tell me alternative stories of previous protests that ended as successes. Previous protests *could have* been won *if there* just was someone else in charge of them. Or that they were *just about to be won* but *taxi drivers did not strike long enough*. During my fieldwork people engaged in labour unions would tell me alternative histories of the strikes in 2003 – 2004, which would have ended in success, had taxi drivers just continued a bit longer. I was also told how the strikes of 2008 – 2011 would have been successful had there been another leader of the union who would have followed through. Belated projections of the past gave actors hope of a better future. Once blame for previous failures could be attributed to a factor that was perceived to be no longer present or at least a factor that was understood, it

helped those hoping to organize a successful protest in the future to cope with previous disappointment, thus providing them with the *illusio* necessary to invest their time in organizing collective action.

Fourth strategy was not to reinterpret the past or to forget it but to argue that the current situation was fundamentally different from previous collective action. As Einstein once said doing the same thing and expecting different results would be a sign of insanity. A question that both organizers and participants have asked themselves repeatedly: why should people continue to engage if previous action was not successful? Because, the argument was made, this time the situation is different, it mattered more. As Michał put it during the struggle in 2012: “This time it is not about zones [referring to the lost fight over taxi zones in which only a few dozen drivers participated], it is not small shit. This time the matter is, and I was looking for an appropriate word, but I think the word final, capture the situation”. More recently, during my fieldwork, another driver engaged in the union has made the argument that now the situation is different and engaging others will become much easier because of the technological change and the fact that everyone has a smartphone in his taxi and more and more drivers are able to use the Internet.

### **7.3. Conclusion: Politics of Time and the Orchestration of Competing Visions of the Future**

"Collective action serves to reinforce the future orientation by its grand design. But there is always a tension that exists between competing conceptions of futurity – personal, communal, mondial, family, whatever.

The orchestrating of different visions of the future is a central human problem as well as a central problem of history."

Jerome Bruner, *Ignace Meyerson and Cultural Psychology* (2005: 408)

In this chapter I have focused on a single struggle that took place in 2012. The goal was to show that even though taxi drivers have overall been unsuccessful in their struggles over the rules of the market, drivers were able to win their battle over licences in 2012. This chapter brought back the problem of time. Throughout the dissertation I am arguing that neither behavioural nor neoclassical economics take time seriously. On the one hand behavioural and

neoclassical economists neglect the fact that the social world has a temporal order which is created and reproduced through interactions and through institutions, on the other hand they overlook that the actions of economic actors have a temporal orientation which in turn shapes these temporal orders.

In this chapter I focused on the temporal orientation of action or – to go back to the introduction – the role of time in action. During times of crises actors engage in *time travelling*. Actors imagine their future and reflect on their past. This image of the future emerges out of a social process; it is created and reproduced in interaction, through artefacts and in institutions. In other words Shackle was wrong when he argued: “The future is imaged by each man for himself and this process of the imagination is a vital part of the process of decision” (Shackle quoted in Arthur, 2014: 6). Far from being “imagined by each man for himself” different images of the future emerge and are orchestrated within the social process.

I have been arguing that visions of the future emerge out of *politics of time*. Just as there is a time of politics – that is specific moments when people engage in political action (e.g. election cycle, parliamentary commissions, and yearly parades.); there is also a politics of time. By politics of time I mean the *symbolic struggles that take place not over institutions but over events*. These events can include events that have already taken place – in that case it is a struggle over memory – but also events have not yet taken place – in that case it is as struggle over imagination. In the previous chapter we saw how politics of time take place in court as the court creates the “official” interpretation of past events declaring them either as “legal” or as “illegal”. In this chapter I argued that politics of time also take place on taxi forums, taxi stands and in political offices.

Why do taxi drivers work when they work? Because, unlike during many other protests, in their struggle over deregulation in 2012, taxi drivers were successful in politics of time. Not only were they able to push through their vision of the future by drawing on elements from their past, but they were also able to deal with the previous failures of collective action.

## Chapter 8. *Domestic Time: The Temporal Structures of Home*

“The family is kind of a complete society whose influence extends to economic activity as well as that of religion, politics, and science, etc. Everything of any importance that we do, even outside the home, has repercussions upon it and sparks off an appropriate reaction.”

Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society* (1997: xliv)

In order to understand the working time of taxi drivers both neoclassical and behavioural economists focus on the individual. Neoclassical economists argue that taxi drivers make rational choices to maximize their utility, behavioural economists that they are not rational but that they use an income target. Both approaches neglect the social context, that is the institutions and interaction, in which taxi drivers make their decisions or in other words the temporal structures of the economy. To investigate the temporal structured of the economy I have looked at the working time through the prism of *earning time* and *waiting time*. In this chapter I will argue the *earning time* and *waiting time* of taxi drivers is structured by *domestic time*. I will argue that the temporal structures of the domestic domain shape the working time of taxi drivers.

This chapter has the following structure. I start by illustrating the argument that the structures and events that take place at home shape the working time of taxi drivers. I do this by a detailed description of the working life of two taxi drivers, Adam and Jan. I then theorize the problem of the relationship between market institution and home by discussing Andrew Abbott’s notion of linked ecology and extending it beyond its original use. In order to do this I draw on the work of Mary Douglas and her idea of home as a “kind of space” (Douglas, 1991). I then show how the specificity of the ecology that is home and the fact that home and the taxi market are linked ecologies structures the working time of taxi drivers and creates a number of contingencies. I argue that the temporal structures of home create three sources of contingencies between *earning time* and *domestic time*. (1) Taxi drivers cannot be physically at home and in the market at the same time (competing locations); (2) Taxi drivers cannot always act in a way that would work both in the economic logic of the market and in the in gift economy of the home (competing logics); (3) Taxi drivers are sometimes demanded at the



same time in the market and at home due to the “inverted temporalities” of the two domains (competing rhythms).

### **8.1 The Working Time of Adam and Jan**

Adam is 41 year old. He started driving a taxi in 2009. Adam finished a mechanic vocational school but, as he was unable to find a job related to his education, he became a bartender. He worked in the same bar for 12 years. When the owner died and the new owner took over the bar, he was fired. Adam took his case to the labour court and won compensation that allowed him to purchase a good car. He passed a licence exam, waited and finally obtained a taxi licence. Adam likes his job. He likes dealing with cars, enjoys driving and talking to clients. He lives with his wife and a teenage son close to the city centre. His wife has a regular job and a business on the side and his son attends high school. This is how Adam describes his typical day:

*We wake up with my wife at 6:30 am. We leave after breakfast at 7.30-7.40 am and take our kid to school. We live in Saska Kępa and take our kid to school which is close by. We leave him at school at 7.55 and we take Trasa Łazienkowska to my wife's work. She does not have to waste time in traffic, because we can use the bus lane. I take my wife to work. It's 8.10-8.15 am. She leaves and I start working at 8.15. While still driving with her I sign in [on the terminal]. After dropping my wife, I wait for 10 – 15 minutes and I have my first client.*

When the demand for taxis drops after the morning rush Adam does not exit the market but rather waits longer in between fares. Adam spends *waiting time* on becoming, in his words, *a master in playing games on the phone*. He tries to take a break later during the day.

*I try to get home for dinner, between 4 pm and 6 pm and, if I am close to my wife's work, I pick her up so that she does not need to take a bus. At 4 pm I am home, I take a 2 – 3 hour break until 7 pm and go back and drive until 11 pm.*

If Adam comes home around midnight he spends some time with his wife and they go to bed together at 1 am. But sometimes Adam finishes work later. If he is not home after midnight, his wife calls him telling him she is going to bed. Like many other wives of taxi drivers, she calls her husband to check if everything is ok and to ask him how much longer he plans to work. Even though Adam is a large and strong man, she worries and prefers he would not

work at night. And he tries not to. *I think that night is for sleeping, and besides that I spent 12 years working during the night at the bar so I have had enough.*

For Adam all the weekdays look very similar. He works all day and usually takes a break to eat dinner at home in the middle of the day. Saturday is the day devoted to his car (small repairs in a friend's car repair shop) and his family. On Saturday Adam helps at home with cleaning and some bigger housework. He enjoys spending time at home and speaks with affection about his son and his wife: *I will not say that I am newlywed, because I have been married 18 years, but I do not complain about my family life.* Adam contrasts his family life with those of other taxi drivers, who have been married 40 years, and no longer care for their wives. These drivers have no problems with spending whole days driving a taxi or even use their work to get away from home. However, Adam did admit to having used his job as a means to get away from family troubles and household responsibilities.

Adam often drives on Sunday because the fare is higher, he can earn more and it allows him to mend the house budget. Altogether Adam works more than 60 hours a week. Since he is not home most of the time, household responsibilities fall nearly entirely on his wife. This has not always been the case.

*When I worked at the bar I used to work 20 hours straight and then have two days off and during that time I would take care of cooking and this type of stuff, while she went to work every day and took care of her firm.*

Currently his wife does most of the housework: she cooks, shops, and cleans. She is also responsible for the house budget. Adam gives her at least 1500 zł (370 €) each month for the home budget, leaving for himself some money for work expenses (car repairs, gasoline etc.).

Adam has been involved in collective action. On top of the long working hours he devotes his time to night raids against illegal drivers. He is a founding member of a recently created labour union and helps out with the organizational work. He helped to organize the protest against deregulation that took place in 2012. And so did his wife, as she contributed both her time and her skills of graphic design to create leaflets and stickers promoting the protest. The organizers only symbolically paid her for her work.

Jan has a very different working day. Jan is a 56 year old taxi driver. Jan also finished a mechanic vocational school. He has a wife and a grown up son who temporarily lives with his parents on the outskirts of Warsaw. Before becoming a taxi driver Jan held many different

jobs, including in car repair shop and in educational publishing. He started driving a taxi when he was 49 years old. Becoming a taxi driver was not part of the future that he imagined for himself but rather a necessity. However, Jan has been unable to make a virtue out of this necessity and his job is the cause of frustration and disappointment. Asked what he likes about his job he replied: *What can you like about it? There is nothing you can like about this job!* He especially dislikes drunken clients even more so if they are women. If he could find something else, he would change the job. This is how Jan describes his day at work:

*I do not have a typical day, but that's a completely different story. I have a wife in serious health condition, she is an invalid and this means that I can start only when I am able to, and I finish, when I have to, because she calls me and that is it. So usually in the morning there is a routine, which has to be done. And it cannot be predicted how this will go, because sometimes it is ok, other times it's awful. Sometimes I start in the morning, sometimes at 2 pm and still on other days I cannot start at all. (...) We are in constant contact because my wife sometimes feels very bad and it is often the case that I go to work for 2-3 hours and she says 'come back, I'm dizzy or I have this or I have that'. Sometimes she would fall and could not get up, because she has rheumatic disease, so then I have to immediately turn around and go home. Even if Jan's wife is feeling good she encourages him to work less. Sometimes she calls [and says] 'what are you still doing out in the city? Come home'. I tell her, 'I'm far. I'm in Mokotów or Służew'. [She says] 'Drop it and drive home. Do the shopping and come home'.*

Throughout the day Jan remains in contact with his wife. He has to go back home if she is not feeling well, and even if she is feeling good she encourages Jan to work less. Jan does not take a break to go home: *it would not be possible, the distance is too great.* He tries to drive 6 days a week around 9-10 hours each day. Jan did not participate in the protests that took place in 2012.

*I do not have time for this. Of course I fully supported them, but my day is so busy that I do not have time. There is work and home, and other stuff, so there is no way (...) I signed a petition but when they were driving [striking] I was going to the hospital or somewhere else, so you know, it's a completely different world.*

**8.2 Home Matters**

The working lives of Adam and Jan are very different. However in both cases their working time is anchored in events taking place at home that is their *earning time* and *waiting time* is entangled in *domestic time*. In the case of Jan this connection is clear. The illness of his wife shapes Jan’s day. This is best illustrated by the fragment of the interview where Jan says *I can start only when I am able to, and I finish, when I have to*. But if we look more carefully, it turns out that Adam’s labour strategies are also shaped by his home. Adam starts his day by driving his child to school and his wife to work. His *earning time* and *waiting time* are thus entangled in the coordinating agencies that structure the practices of the other members of his family. These coordinating agencies include the school calendar and the working schedule of his wife (see chapter 3). During the middle of the day Adam comes home to have dinner prepared by his wife. He does not work on Saturday, in part, because his wife has a day off from work.

Both Adam and Jan are to some extent “hostages” or “beneficiaries” of events that are taking place at home. While Adam can draw on resources from home as his wife takes over the responsibilities of the domestic domain, and even engages in helping him organize collective action; Jan’s home requires his full engagement, sometimes preventing him from working and participating in protests. Their *earning time* and *waiting time* is not only shaped by the demand for their service, the supply of taxi drivers and the price for their service, but also by events taking place at home: in other words by *domestic time* .

Adam and Jan are not the only two drivers who are members of a home. The majority of taxi drivers I interviewed are like Adam and Jan. They have a partner or a spouse, sometimes they have children. Two younger interviewees were still living with their parents. Two drivers were divorced. Among the 241 taxi drivers that answered the question about family in my survey, 161 (66%) had a partner with whom they lived, 23 (9.5%) did have a partner, but did not live with them and 60 (24.5%) were single. From those 13 were divorced and 7 were widowers/widows.<sup>52</sup>

<b>Partner</b>	<b>Yes, we live together</b>	<b>Yes, but we don't live together</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>(n=244)</b>	161 (66%)	23 (9.5%)	60 (24.59%)

<sup>52</sup> However, even those who live alone are likely to belong to a family. If they are divorced, they might have children, who live with their former spouses, or siblings or parents. In other words all of actors in the taxi market, besides being taxi drivers, are also husbands, partners, fathers, brothers, and sons etc.

### 8.3 Home and Taxi Market as Linked Ecologies

How should we conceptualize the relationship between *earning time*, *waiting time* and *domestic time*? How does the domestic domain influence taxi drivers' labour practices?

I argue that the relationship between the taxi market and the home of taxi drivers can be studied by extending Andrew Abbot's discussion of "linked ecologies". The notion of linked ecologies was developed by Abbott in order to overcome the limits of ecological theory (and one should add field theory) of analysing single social spaces at a time. With the notion of linked ecologies the outside of a social space is no longer considered a fixed environment. The events happening in one ecology become "hostages" of events happening in another. When two ecologies are linked with each other, they become – as Viviana Zelizer would put it – "connected worlds" (Zelizer, 2005b)

Abbott writes about the notion of ecology:

“Ecology thus names a social structure that is less unified than a machine or an organism, but that is considerably more unified than is a social world made up of the autonomous, atomic beings of classical liberalism or the probabilistically interacting rational actors of microeconomics” (Abbott, 2005b: 248).

Abbott uses the notion of ecology to analyse larger social structures such as professions, universities and the states. However, it is possible to extend the notion of ecology to other social spaces that he does not discuss, as he provides us with a very clear definition: “Analytically, the concept of ecology involves three components: actors, locations and a relation associating the one with the other.” (Abbott, 2005b: 248)

Does the social space that is home fulfil those requirements? We cannot find the answer in Abbott but we can turn for help to Mary Douglas and her theory of home as “a specific kind of space” (Douglas, 1991). According to Douglas the actors of the space that is home are more or less clear: the people who are, as they say, living under one roof. The tasks of a home are less obvious. Following Durkheim who argued that home is “a complete society”, Mary Douglas understands home as an “embryonic community”. Home is an economic space, but not just an economic space; an educational space, but not just an educational space; an aesthetic space, but not just an aesthetic space; a moral space, but not just a moral space etc. With social differentiation home has lost its monopoly over many of its original tasks (e.g. children are now educated in schools, people go to work), however it continues to have at

least partial jurisdiction over many of them (Lahire, 2012). When members of a home are a family they become, as Bourdieu argued, a “realized social fiction” that is produced and reproduced by the state (Bourdieu, 1996a). Since it has actors, a location and relation associating the one with the other, home fulfils Abbott's three requirements that Abbott sets out for an ecology.<sup>53</sup>

Once we accept that a home in an ecology, we can start to analyse how the taxi market and the homes of the individual taxi drivers are linked with each other. I argue that they are linked in three ways.

Firstly, the taxi market and home are linked by the taxi driver who is a member of both domains. The taxi driver is, what Abbott calls, an *avatar*: a representative of the home ecology in the taxi market. The success of taxi driver in the taxi market is, in part, a success of the home ecology which he is a part of. If he succeeds in finding clients, members of his family will be able to consume. But, as I will argue in this chapter, the interest of the taxi driver and the other members of the home ecology go only so far and sometimes come into conflict with each other.

This leads us to the second linkage: money. The money which taxi drivers receive in the market is spent at/for home. The money that the taxi driver invests in his job (e.g. buying a better car) is money not spent in the domestic domain. In households in which the taxi drivers provide the only source of income home is completely dependent on the success of the taxi driver in the market. In dual-income households this burden is shared.

Thirdly, home and market are linked by the car of the taxi driver which is, at the same time, a means of production in the taxi market and an element of home: a status symbol and a device used to coordinate activities of different family members (driving children to school, shopping etc.). This is especially the case when the car used to drive passengers is the only car in the household.

The fact that the taxi market and home are linked ecologies allows us to think about the labour strategies of taxi drivers in a new way. Being an avatar of the home ecology in the taxi market exposes taxi drivers to conflicting pressures from both social spaces. We see taxi drivers as being suspended between the two social worlds – Simmel would say two social circles – and

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<sup>53</sup> However, the domestic domain does not fulfil the strict definition of the field. Since home is an “embryonic community”, an undifferentiated institution in a differentiated world, contrary to what Bourdieu sometimes argued, home cannot be understood as a field in the similar way that we can speak about an economic field, a legal field or a political field (see Lahire 2012).

that their labour strategies emerge as a result of processes happening in both domains. Successful labour strategies of taxi drivers become, what Abbott calls, *hinges* that is “strategies that work as well in one ecology as in the other” (Abbott, 2005b: 255). A similar phenomenon was observed by Parsons when he argued, in a much more functionalist language, that: “the normal adult male in modern societies is both an employee and a member of a family household. Although the demands of these two roles often conflict, most men have a heavy stake in fulfilling loyalties to both” (Lahire, 2012).

To understand the way in which the taxi market is linked with the domestic domain and the contingencies related to this linkage we have to turn to Mary Douglas' description of home as a *specific* social space. According to Douglas' theoretical description, the specificity of home lies in its location, its economic institution based on the gift and its temporal structure. I will discuss each of those elements separately arguing how each of them structures working time.

#### **8.4 Home as Location**

The working time of taxi drivers is structured by the physical location of their home. Home is not only a social space but also a physical space. Douglas writes that “home starts by bringing some space under control” (Douglas, 1991: 289). The physical location of home should not be neglected as it has an effect on the strategies of taxi drivers. Adam and Jan discussed at the beginning of this chapter had different labour strategies, in part, because Adam lives in the city centre whereas Jan lives on the outskirts. Adam could return for dinner at home, for Jan it would not make sense. For drivers living on the outskirts of the city there are higher costs related to going back home and taking a break during the middle of the day. *Exiting the market and travelling home takes time*. Having a family dinner in the early afternoon – traditionally a common practice in Poland – is much easier for those drivers who live near the centre of Warsaw. Many drivers can even stay at home if there is no demand for their service during the middle of the day. In chapter 4 I called this phenomenon, analogically to price stickiness, *locational stickiness*.

What is important is not the location of the home in any absolute terms, but rather its location *in relation* to other important locations (the working place of one's wife, the school, the location of companies, the locations for demand of taxis etc.). The positioning of different locations is a deeply social and political process.

As a social space, home requires presence. This distinguishes home from a hotel. Being called a “guest” – an adequate description of a person who is staying at a hotel – by a family member is a serious accusation of a lack of commitment to the common good that is home. Douglas writes “idea of the hotel is a perfect opposite of the home not only because it uses market principles for its transactions, but because it allows its clients to buy privacy as a right of exclusion” (Douglas, 1991: 305). But since many taxi drivers are away 6 days a week for 10 hours a day, the time they devote to being at home is very limited. Wojtek explains:

*To tell you the truth, when driving a taxi, it circles around money. So the positive thing is that you are able to pay the bills or, if you have extra expenses, you go to work a bit longer and earn more. But then, well, you become a guest at your home.*

Andrzej, the CEO, described a similar situation when he drove in the 1990s:

*I took a loan during the good times and then came the bad times. There was some back-up but at that time I was quite busy. My wife never saw me but she knew what it was about. And she really helped me. Psychologically. I was a guest at home. Worse yet, I treated home as if it was a hotel.*

Of course the idea of being a guest is always relative, thus for Paweł, who used to be a truck driver, becoming a taxi driver meant being less of a guest at home:

*Now I am at home at all, back then I was a guest, because these were long 8000 km often two weeks trips, so I was a guest at home. I would appear and leave. I would change my clothes and go to work, now I come back and sleep in bed with my wife, I eat breakfast with her and supper, on Saturday I am at home the whole day, so in this sense there is an improvement.*

But compared to many other occupations, taxi drivers spend much of their day away from home.

The physical absence of taxi drivers is felt by other members of the family. Kasia, the wife of Maciek who works more than 60 hours a week, told me:

*A wife of a taxi driver is destined to be lonely. This is not the type of life where we both go to work in the morning for eight hours. Where we come back and we sit together and organize our time in the afternoon.*



The lack of presence at home is communicated to drivers in different ways: either when they are at home or, over the phone, when they are working. Jerzy, an older taxi driver who works around 60 hours a week, describes how his wife, who is an office worker, tries to keep him from going to work:

*She does not want me to go to work. For example on Sunday, 'Do you have to go? Do you have to?'. I say, 'well I should, I do not have to, but I should'. And on Saturday. During the week she sometimes calls me if I'm not home for a longer period of time: 'why are you driving so long?', but on Saturday and Sunday she does not want me to go, but I have an obligation to go out, because the fees are high.*

Asked in a survey “does your partner try to influence how much your work?” 78 taxi drivers (48%) said that their partner does not influence when they work, 58 (36%) said that they try to influence them to work less and 21 (13%) said that they try to influence them to work more.<sup>54</sup> But the way partners try to influence taxi drivers' working time is difficult to measure with a survey. Not only is the communicated message subtle (e.g. tone of voice when asking the question “when will you be home?”, “how much longer?”), but it also changes over time. One day a wife can be showing the unpaid bills to the taxi driver, implicitly suggesting that there is need for more money, but the next week she might be calling him and asking why he is working so long. Sometimes the messages are mixed as wives both want drivers to earn more and want them to stay more at home.

#### **8.4.1 Home and Market: From Segmentation to Partial Integration**

The boundaries between the taxi market and home have become blurred over the last years. If Weber argued that the separation of the industrial company from the household was one of the two main factors of the rise of capitalist organization of work (appearance of rational accounting being the other), in case of taxi drivers the rise of modern communication technology has led to the opposite process: a move from segmented worlds of home and work to the integration of the two domains (Nippert-Eng, 1996).

Modern technology has contributed to the blurring of boundaries between the two ecologies. In many corporations taxi terminals now allow drivers to sign in and be “in the market” while still being physically “at home”. Wojtek described the beginning of his day:

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<sup>54</sup> However, even among those 78, who answered that their partner does not influence them, 20 answered in another question that their partner would want to them to work different hours than they currently work.

*In the morning I wake up and log in [on the taxi terminal]. Tenth in line. That's ok. I go to the toilet. I eat breakfast. Coffee and cigarettes. Child dressed. And off we go to the kindergarten because, you know, I am already waiting in line. (...) I work from the moment that I open my eyes and not from the moment that I'm physically in my car. Similarly, you know, I can go home for dinner at 4 pm. Sign up. Eat dinner and sip coffee. Watch something on TV. Sit at home. And wait for a fare. I get a fare, I put on my shoes. I leave.*

Grzesiek explains his working day:

*Since 4 months I have a tablet, so there is no longer the need [to wait in the car]. Once I wake up I can sign in, if it's safe, that is, if when I get a fare I will manage to get into the car and get to the client in 10 minutes. This makes it much better, because a person wakes up, signs up, washes, shaves and waits.*

Not only can taxi drivers be one foot in the market while physically being at home, but they can also be one foot at home while not being physically present in the market. Even while away, taxi drivers can participate and contribute to the social life of home. With the introduction of mobile phones and now smartphones and computers, taxi drivers can remain in contact with members of home throughout the day. They are able to coordinate actions with other members of the family: when to eat dinner; who should pick up children from school; who does the shopping and what should be bought etc. Since they can communicate over a distance, taxi driver can be summoned in case of an emergency. Jan's working time would look very differently if his wife would not be able to reach him and tell him that she is not feeling well. Working time is, as Marx pointed out, a *technological phenomenon*.

With modern technology taxi drivers are at the same time "at work" and "at home" leading to a situation where *waiting time* and *domestic time* overlap. In New York City even *earning time* and *domestic time* overlap as drivers talk with their families while driving with passengers (not practiced by taxi drivers in Warsaw). This blurring of boundaries between being "in the market" and being "at home" makes the time allocations models of economic analysis very problematic. The ability to be in the market and at home at the same time means that, as Andrew Abbott pointed out in his critique of Garry Becker's idea of time as a commodity, "time can be multiply enjoyed in a way that purchased goods and services cannot" (Abbott, 2014: 9). A taxi driver can at the same time enjoy breakfast with his wife and not enjoy the fact that he is waiting for a taxi, or can at the same time be annoyed that he

is arguing with his wife over the phone and be annoyed that he has already been waiting for a fare for a very long time.

Although blurred by technological devices, the boundary between work and home continue to exist. While physically at home the taxi driver is only one foot in the market (see Lahire 2010). A taxi driver cannot earn money and drive a customer simply by sitting at home. By law he can also not take other members of home with him to work, for example by driving with his child or with his wife. Similarly, participation in the social life of home through acts of communication mediated by technology (text messages, chatting, phone calls, skype etc.) is not the same as being at home physically, with one's body. Over the phone one cannot participate in many of the activities that take place at home: one cannot help to clean or cook, help a child to do homework, eat a family dinner or sleep together.

#### **8.4.2 Escaping Home, Entering the Market**

Taxi drivers' lack of presence at home often leads to conflicts and sometimes family break-ups. The topic of family problems and divorces is often discussed on taxi forums, on taxi stands and was also a topic of many of my conversations with taxi drivers. Elżbieta, the wife of Marek who has been driving for 5 years and who drives around 80 hours per week, remarked: *My husband sometimes tells me that this person [taxi driver] is getting divorced, that person is getting divorced, because this is not a normal life. Families do not agree to this, I don't agree to this.* Wojtek, asked about the relationship between driving a taxi and family life, told me *taxi drivers' families fall apart. To tell you the truth I do not have a single friend who would have a more or less normal family.*

Not being present at home, being a guest at home can lead to the exclusion from the home/family community. Elżbieta pointed out that she got used to her husband not being at home:

*I have to tell you, that I got used to my husband not being at home and now when he is at home he annoys me (...) I got used to the fact that I decide everything, and now he comes in and makes a fuss, and I'm not used to it. After five years you can get used to your husband not being home.*

This can lead to a spiral, which Hochschild nicely described in the phrase when work becomes home; home becomes work (Hochschild, 1997).

Taxi drivers use their work to get away from responsibilities within the domestic domain. In my survey, among the 152 drivers who had a partner, 88 drivers (58%) agreed with the statement that they have used their work to escape family problems or household responsibilities.

Work escape	Yes	No	Hard to say
N=152	88 (58%)	62 (41%)	2 (1%)

A 31 year old, recently divorced driver explained:

*This is the type of job that when something is happening and you are arguing, you have an alternative. You go to work, you're not at home, and you have a peace of mind. You would not do this if you have a regular job. You would sit at home, grind your teeth and look at the television. But not me, I leave, say goodbye and go to work.*

Events happening at home (e.g. a quarrel with a wife) lead the taxi driver to go to work. Instead of opting for voice and arguing with spouse a taxi driver chooses exit and thus goes to work (Hirschman, 1970). Such an event resonates differently with the two ecologies. The market gains another taxi driver who is supplying his service and, if there already is surplus supply, increases the *waiting time* of other drivers. However, at home this event is seen differently. An exit is perceived as an affront to the family institution. As Mary Douglas points out, “to leave erratically, without saying where or for how long, to come back and go upstairs without greeting, these lapses are recognized as spoliation of the commons.” (1991: 301 ).

Events happening at home can push taxi driver into the market. In such a situation the classical economic model of labour supply becomes turned upside down. The standard models of labour supply in the economic literature are based on the assumption that work is irksome and home is leisure. But in case of taxi drivers this is not always true.

### **8.5 Home as an Economic Institution: The Gift Economy and Gendered Time**

Home demands a certain engagement and a physical presence. Thus the first contingency that a taxi driver faces when establishing labour strategies is related to the fact that taxi drivers

cannot be in two places at the same time. The second contingency stems from the fact that the two domains have different logics

The working time of taxi drivers is shaped not only by the market economy but also by the economy of their domestic domain. This domestic economy is very different from the market economy. Mary Douglas writes about home as an economic institution:

“A home is a tangle of conventions and totally incommensurable rights and duties. Not a money economy, the home is the typical gift economy described by Marcel Mauss. Every service and transfer is part of an ongoing comprehensive system of exchanges, within and between the generations. The transactions never look like exchanges because the gesture of reciprocity is delayed and disguise. (...) It is not just that calculation is too difficult, but more that it suits no one to insist on a precise offsetting of one service against another” (Douglas, 1991: 302).

Unlike a household made up of three students solving problems on semi-market principles, a home is a *moral community*<sup>55</sup> (see also Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006: 164-176). In Polanyi's terms home has a form of integration that is primarily based on reciprocity and redistribution, and not on exchange (Polanyi, 2011).<sup>56</sup>

The reproduction of home requires a number of services and activities to be performed. The house has to be cleaned, food has to be bought and cooked, clothes have to be washed, and children have to be raised. The activities of the different members of home have to be coordinated. Performing and coordinating these activities takes time and effort. Although many of these activities can be outsourced – one can hire a cleaning lady, leave clothes at dry cleaners, send kids to a tutor, eat in restaurants – this requires spare funds, funds that the taxi drivers and their partners often do not have.

The home economy is based on the gift. There is not a bill for every dish cleaned or for every dinner cooked. There is no competition between members of home over exchanges as there is in a market. Not every gift performed by one member of the domestic community is reciprocated by another. Children are, as Viviana Zelizer argued (2005a), often economically

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<sup>55</sup>"A group of students renting a house and solving conflicts over scarce resources on semi-market principles have created a household, but not a home" (Douglas 1991: 297).

<sup>56</sup> The fact that the home economy is based primarily on the gift and not on exchange means that the whole conceptual framework of economics that is used to study markets (price, capital, wages, interest, rent) cannot be simply transposed, to the study of the family CHAYANOV, A. V. 1966. *On the theory of peasant economy*, Manchester University Press, CHIBNIK, M. 2011. *Anthropology, Economics, and Choice*, Austin, University of Texas Press.”.

useless while emotionally priceless; but even among adults there is usually not an equal division of household labour.

The home of taxi driver continues to be a highly *gendered space* where the majority of activities necessary for the upkeep of the household are performed by women. If we return to the two cases of Adam and Jan described at the beginning, we see that Adam leaves the domestic domain almost entirely to his wife, while Jan's domestic domain requires his presence, the former is the typical case and the latter is a deviant case. Asked who performs different activities at home taxi drivers pointed towards their female partners. This was the case with cooking, cleaning, washing, and taking care of children. Budgeting was very often split equally and other responsibilities done less regularly (small repairs at home, garden etc.) being the domain of men. Similarly taking care of children was mostly the domain of women. Out of 58 drivers, who had a child below the age of 16, 45% answered that their partner is the main care giver. Out of 58 drivers only 2 answered that they take care of their children more than their partners. The majority of taxi drivers are “secondary” parents (see Nippert-Eng 1998: 207- 221).

This unequal division of household labour resembles that found in other households in Poland, where the majority of housework is performed by women (Titkow et al., 2004).

<b>Household responsibilities</b>	<b>Only partner</b>	<b>Mostly partner</b>	<b>Rather partner</b>	<b>Equally</b>	<b>Rather me</b>	<b>Mostly me</b>	<b>only me</b>
<b>Cooking</b> (n=161)	45 (28 %)	44 (27%)	24 (15%)	35 (22%)	9 (6%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)
<b>Cleaning</b> (n=161)	36 (22%)	44 (27%)	35 (22%)	36 (23%)	7 (4 %)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)
<b>Washing</b> (n=161)	65 (40 %)	54 (33 %)	20 (12%)	19 (12%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)
<b>Budgeting</b> (n=160)	15 (9%)	15 (9%)	17 (11%)	79 (50%)	19 (12%)	7 (4%)	6 (4%)
<b>Other Responsibilities</b> (n=158)	7 (4%)	9 (5%)	4 (3%)	38 (24%)	56 (35%)	33 (21%)	13 (8%)

Taking care of children	mostly partner	Same	mostly me	Kids are grown up and do not need care	kids do not live with me
N=58	26 (45%)	20 (34%)	2 (3%)	5 (9%)	5 (9%)

The fact that home is a gendered space and that this influences taxi drivers working time can be best seen by looking at the working day of female driver, Anna. In Warsaw there are very few female taxi drivers (less than 1%). Anna, a mother and a wife, works weekdays from 6:30 am to 5 -- 6 pm. Asked what she does after coming home, she answered:

*What a Polish mother (Matka Polka)<sup>57</sup> does. [ironically] I come home, dinner, well, recently my older son cooks, sometimes my husband helps. But generally duties. Homework has to be checked, I have to check whether they did not forget to buy something, washing, this type of stuff.*

Although other members of her family contribute to housework, Ania is the person responsible for coordinating activities that are happening at home. When she has to work more, and will be away for longer period, she warns other members of her family of her absence, telling them: *you will have to manage on your own*. At home it is Ania who is the manager organizing activities of other members of her family (Lahire, 2011, Titkow et al., 2004).

In the majority of cases taxi drivers had wives who were either fully employed (55%) or owned their own business (10%). The older drivers often had wives who were retired or on a pension (16%). Since male taxi drivers spend long hours away from home, this leaves many taxi drivers' wives with a second shift.

	Full Employment	Own Business	Part-time	Maternity leave	Retired/pension	Housework	Other
(n=160)	88 (55%)	16(10%)	6(4%)	5(3%)	25(16%)	10(6%)	10(6%)

Both behavioural economists and neoclassical economists neglect the gender of taxi drivers. Neither *homo oeconomicus* of neoclassical economic nor *homo heuristicus* of behavioural economic has a gender. Even Durkheim, who criticized economics for dealing with abstract

<sup>57</sup> The ideal of a Matka Polska is very significant in Polish history and culture. The ideal is that a Polish Mother (Matka Polka) should sacrifice herself for the good of the family and the good of the country.

economic actors, *assumed* that economic actors are men<sup>58</sup>. To understand the working time of taxi drivers is important to *emphasize that taxi drivers are primarily men*. If taxi drivers are able to extend their *waiting time* and their *earning time* up to 60 hours a week, this is because they do not have “a second shift” at home (Hochschild and Machung, 1989).

### 8.5.1 Contributing to the Gift Economy

The unequal division of housework does not mean that taxi drivers do not contribute at all to the non-monetary part of the home economy. Taxi drivers do help at home, with some taxi drivers helping more than others.

Taxi drivers contribute by coordinating the actions of other members of the family (driving wife to work, picking up a child from school etc.). Often the car used as a taxi is an essential element of home as it is the only car in the household. In my survey, among the 153 drivers who live with a partner 81 (52%) declared that it is the only car in their household.

<b>Do you take your wife</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>To work (n=121)</b>	4 (3.28%)	7 (5.74%)	40 (32.79 %)	70 (57.38%)
<b>From work (n=120)</b>	5 (4.13%)	6 (4.96%)	47 (38.84%)	62 (51.24%)

	<b>Always</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>sometimes</b>	<b>rarely</b>	<b>never</b>	<b>Does not apply</b>
<b>To school (n=59)</b>	8 (13.6%)	9 (15%)	10 (17%)	0 (0%)	21(36%)	11 (18.7%)
<b>From school (n=59)</b>	4 (6.8%)	8 (14%)	13 (22%)	3 (5%)	21(36%)	10 (17%)

Some drivers take their wives to work and/or pick them up from work. This act of driving a wife to work is a typical gift in the Maussian sense of the term. There is no exchange taking place. A wife would never pay her husbands to drive her to work. To speak of a “shadow price”, as Gary Becker does, is to misunderstand this practice. Rather than a market exchange, this service is part of an ongoing system of reciprocity between the different members of the home<sup>59</sup>. From a purely “economic” point of view (in the narrow sense of the term), the

<sup>58</sup> Critiquing political economy of his day, Durkheim argued that the economy is made up of “[r]eal man – the man whom we all know and whom we all are – is complex in a different way: he is of a time, of a country; he has a family, a city, a fatherland, a religious and political faith” (Durkheim 1978:48).

<sup>59</sup> As Bourdieu puts it: And, in fact, as is attested by the work which the logic of the gift has to perform to mask what is sometimes known in French as ‘la verite des prix’ [literally: the truth of prices] (for example, price-tags



practice of driving one's wife often does not make sense. Not only does the taxi driver lose time but he also has to schedule his day around it, meaning that he starts after the morning rush is over and demand drops. Although economically not-rational, the act of taking your wife to work can be well understood from the perspective of home's gift economy.

The gift economy of home also extends to the other members of the family or friends. This was the case for Bartek, who told me how recently he has not been working as much as he usually does:

*Recently there have been some problems with my father-in-law's health (...). So pretty much from the beginning of February I was driving Bródno – Ursynów, Bródno – Ursynów, Bródno – Ursynów. From the hospital and to the hospital and to different doctors. This did not have much to do with work. But it was an expense because you have to fill the tank. From here [home] to Ursynów [hospital] it's 27 km. You have to pay for the parking.*

Although on an everyday basis Bartek drives people to the hospital in exchange for money, he would not charge his father in law for the same service.

The different logics of the market and home can be a source of contingencies when choosing working time. Consider this fragment of my interview with Kasia, Maciek's wife:

[Could you recount your typical day? You wake up and..?]

*I go to work in the hospital. I go to work for eight hours, sometimes longer. Like for example today, I had to stand longer during a surgery. I come home, I make dinner.*

[And does your husband take you home?]

*It depends. For example today he did not. Lately he does not drive me because he thinks that it is an extra cost to come home and then go back. Without it [going home] he stands [waits] without a break.*

[So you don't eat together?]

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on presents are always carefully removed), the money price has a kind of brutal objectivity and universality that allows little scope for subjective appreciation (even if one can say, for example: 'it's expensive for what it is' or 'it's well worth the price you paid for it' (2005: 200)

*No. Not now. There was a long period of time as he told you. There was a long period of time [when we ate together]. But recently his income has become worse so he does not come home but works non-stop. And without dinner too.*

This conflict between the logic of the market and the gift economy of the household can be resolved when either a wife has her own cars or she does not want their husbands to drive them. But it is not always resolved. As members of both taxi market and home, taxi drivers have to face the two competing logics in their everyday life.

### **8.5.2 The Family Budget**

The fact that home is based on reciprocity and redistribution does not mean that there is no money exchanged at home. There is an ongoing transfer of money as children get allowance, and expenses are shared between spouses (Douglas, 1991, see also Zelizer, 2005b, Zelizer, 1995). Partners make economic decisions and calculate their incomes and expenses. But, as Max Weber argued, whereas an enterprise is based on *capital accounting* aimed at increasing *capital*, most homes have a *budget* that is aimed at *consumption, satisfaction of needs and wealth* (Swedberg, 2011: 21). Consumption decisions are discussed and established in interactions between different members of the family. As a place of socialization home creates preferences, wants and needs: “the home tyrannizes over tastes” (Douglas, 1991: 303).

If taxi drivers can be conceptualized as avatars of the domestic ecology in the taxi market, this is because the income of taxi drivers enables members of home to consume. Asked about the financial situation, 62% of taxi drivers declared that they live averagely and cope day to day, 21% answered that they live poorly, and 13% declared that they live well. In many cases taxi drivers were not the main breadwinners. In the survey taxi drivers declared that they were the main breadwinners 46 %, with 29 % declaring that they contribute equally to the house budget and 23 % that their partner contributes more.

	We live very poorly – we don't have enough even for basic needs	We live frugally – on we have to carefully manage on a daily basis	We live averagely – we have for day to day, but we have to save for larger purchases	We live well – we can afford things, without having to save	We live very well – we can afford a certain amount of luxury
<b>All taxi drivers (n= 205)</b>	1 (0.49 %)	41 (20.00%)	136 (66.34%)	23 (11.22%)	4 (1.95%)
<b>Living with a partner (n=143)</b>	1 (.70%)	31 (21.68%)	89 (62.24%)	19 (13.29%)	3 (2.10%)

Besides the problem of not spending time at home, lack of money is the main problem discussed by taxi drivers and their family members. Adam told me: *This is the main problem. It is because of this [lack of money] that quarrels take place. That taxi drivers get divorced.* Bartek, asked whether his wife encourages him to work less or more, answered: *I would say more (...) it's not so much that she pushes me away from home, but that there is simply no money.*

Wojtek, married for a few years, described a process of negotiating his working time between him and his wife. At the beginning of their marriage his wife used to pull him home: *“When I would leave for work for the night, she would call me around 9 pm and say ‘maybe we could eat something?’... Maybe we could order take out? You will work tomorrow”.* But after a few years and growing financial problems the situation has changed currently. *„I tell her: You know what? Maybe I will come home, tomorrow I will work tomorrow’. ‘No, maybe wait some more. Wait and see... maybe there will be more movement [in the market] later”.* And Bartek explained to me:

*There is this conflict because she [his wife] expects effects, right? And I know what the reality is. It is as simple as that. And sometimes she comes on top. That I with foam in my mouth and pain I put on my shoes, go out and say ‘Ok, It's Monday 11 pm, there will be no work, but to have a peace of mind I will go out. Usually it's good that I go out.*

The conflict arises here because while the taxi driver would want to stay home other members of the home ecology would want him to go out and earn money.

## 8.6 Home as a Structure in Time: Conflicting Rhythms and Sense of Dissonance

In chapter 3 I discussed how the earning time of taxi drivers is entangled in the temporal structures of demand for their service. But home also has a temporal structure. Mary Douglas writes “home is not only a space, it also has some structure in time” (Douglas, 1991: 292). Home is according to Douglas a “pattern of regular doing”. It is not only important to be at home, it is also important to be at home *at the right time*. There are certain events in the social life of a home when the demand for presence is higher. Mary Douglas calls these events *assemblies* and focuses on the role of the common meal which she calls a “conclave” (Douglas, 1991: 301).<sup>60</sup> Similarly Boltanski and Thévenot write: “the art of composing a harmonious [domestic] world is first of all, here, the art of bringing people together, of *gathering* them together at key moments such as mealtimes” (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006: 174). Boltanski and Thévenot distinguish other key moments that require presence at home, such as birthdays, anniversaries, baptisms, weddings and funerals, first communions, New Year’s Eves. They define these events as *receptions* (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006: 175). The *temporal flexibility* of receptions is low: one cannot celebrate Christmas on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December or a child’s birthday four weeks later.

Like the demand for their service in the market, the demand for taxi drivers’ presence at home varies over time. There is a certain rhythm to the social life of home. For a taxi driver, who has a family, not being at home during family dinner on a Sunday, during Christmas Day, on a wedding anniversary, for a birthday party of his father-in-law, or when grandchildren come to visit, is different than not being at home during other days of the year. If no one else is at home there is lower demand for taxi drivers to be at home. And taxi drivers, who have a family, often use the time when no one else is at home to go to work. An older driver told me: *Weekends I drive only Saturday so for example today [it was a Saturday] I drove until the morning, on Sunday I will rarely work. Unless my wife [a doctor] goes to work, by daughter is at work, then what am I to do alone at home? Then I will go to work for a few hours.* With no one at home there is nothing pulling drivers to stay at home.

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<sup>60</sup>“The time devoted to the common meal is a conclave, use for coordinating other arrangements, negotiating exemptions, canvassing for privileges, diffusing information about the outside world, agreeing on strategies for dealing with it and making shared evaluation”. (1991: 301).

Mealtimes are a good example of the temporal structure of home. Not every meal is equally important; not participating in some meals is different from not participating in others. Family dinner on a Sunday is an event that demands presence and is different from family dinner on a weekday, which is still different from a breakfast (Douglas, 1972, Sahlins, 2013). In Poland the most important meal is traditionally *obiad*, which is usually during the middle of the day. Some drivers, like Adam, try to go home for *obiad*, but for others, especially those who live on the outskirts of the city, participating in a meal during the middle of the day conflicts with the demand for them in the market. Maciek, who lives on the outskirts, used to pick up Kasia and come back and eat *obiad* with her, but recently due to lower income this does not happen very often.

The working time of taxi drivers emerges at the intersection of the linked ecologies of market and home. As *avatars* of the domestic domain in the taxi market, taxi drivers have to face these conflicting rhythms. Abbott writes: “Since a given ecology has its own characteristic rhythms, connection between two ecologies can depend on the parallels and disparities between those rhythms” (Abbott, 2005b: 254). Taxi drivers are at the same time in demand as fathers, husbands or sons and in demand as taxi drivers. Andrzej, the CEO told me: *I have already said this during our previous meeting, but I will repeat it. The work of a taxi driver has an inverted temporality, compared to what other people are doing.* This “inverted temporality” is created by the fact that taxi drivers coordinate the activities of people who use them. When other people are going to work, taxi drivers already have to be at work to drive them; when others are going back home, taxi drivers are in demand to drive them home. And when other people are engaging in leisure activities, taxi drivers are in demand to coordinate those activities. This inverted temporality of the temporal structure of the market and the temporal structure home leads to family conflicts. Andrzej:

*I estimate that in the group of my drivers 30% have family problems to keep their marriage; 30% and I am not sure if this is not a too positive view, as more have marriages that have survived serious problems. And this is because in order to earn a living, you have to work when your wife is at home. And when your wife is at work, you are at home.*

These contingencies can take place on an everyday basis or culminate during certain special events like New Years’ Eve. I will now discuss both of these cases.

### 8.6.1 Driving During the Night: *Sleeping Time, Trust and Fear*

One of the decisions that taxi drivers have to make is whether or not they want to drive during the night. I discussed in chapter 3 how the decision whether or not to work during the night is a decision regarding the “awkward relations” that a taxi driver will encounter. Working during the night means interacting with drunken clients, while working during the day means interacting with clients who are in a hurry. However the decision whether or not to work during the night often takes place within a home ecology, and other members of the home ecology have certain preferences regarding the working time of their husbands, partners or fathers. A wife might want her husband not to work during the night so that she gets to spend the evening together, while on the other hand children might prefer that their father works at night since they might get to spend time with him during the day when they return from kindergarten or school.

Partners of taxi drivers often have clear preferences against taxi drivers working at night. In the survey I conducted the majority of taxi drivers answered that their wives would prefer if they not work at night. This included those drivers who did drive at night.

	<b>Do you drive during the night?</b>				
<b>Does your wife/partner prefer that you do not work during the night?</b>	Never	Sometimes	Only weekends	I am a night driver	Total
<b>Yes</b>	12 (33%)	24 (59%)	17 (55%)	20 (59%)	73 (51.4%)
<b>No</b>	13 (36%)	15 (37%)	14 (45%)	14 (41%)	56 (39.4%)
<b>Does not apply</b>	11 (31%)	2 (4%)	0	0	13 (9.2%)
<b>Total</b>	36 (100%)	41 (100%)	31 (100%)	34 (100%)	142 (100%)

There are different reasons for this. Working at night upsets the rhythm of a home. Especially in a situation of dual-income households, working at night leads to a situation in which the different family members have different schedules and do not get to spend time together. Mateusz, a recently divorced driver, who used to work at night when he was married, explains:

*If you are not home 6 days a week then what? You come back at 3 in the morning and go to sleep, she wakes up at 7 am, goes to work, you wake up at 11 am, she comes back from work at 4 pm, you leave at 6 pm, or maybe 8 pm, that is complete nonsense, you cannot accommodate the two. I wonder how people accommodate it, for me it was the first stage of the breakdown of my marriage.*

One of the problems with driving during the night is that taxi drivers stop sleeping with their partners. Taxi drivers sleep in their car or during the day. Tomasz, a night driver told me during a conversation between me and three other drivers about night work: *I drove every night. What does this mean? It means that I stopped sleeping with my wife!* Kasia, the wife of Maciek, who usually works during the day but extends his workday until late in the night, told me: *it does not happen often that we would, like a real husband and a real wife, go simultaneously to bed.* Kasia calls her husband before going to bed, informing him that she is going to sleep and asking him if everything is ok and how long he is planning to stay at work. Other drivers receive similar calls. Elżbieta told me:

*We have this ritual, that when I go to be I call him [and ask him] where he is and when is he coming home. He says either 'I'm on my way' or not, and then I say 'I am going to bed, I am not waiting any longer for you', and it is usually midnight or 1 am, so our life is turned on its head.*

This act of sleeping together is not only a question of having sex, but also the simple fact of spending the night together. As Vilhelm Aubert and Harrison White pointed out their analysis of the role of *sleeping time* in society:

“Simultaneity of sleep prevents conflicts and certain kinds of competition. It is closely related to simultaneity of other activities, eating, leisure-time activities, etc., and therefore, significant for solidarity in groups. But simultaneity of sleep within the family, or in other intimate groups, may in itself be a token of solidarity and trust, thereby strengthening the bonds within the sleep group.” (Aubert and White, 1959: 10).

Sleeping together strengthens bonds and establishes trust. On the other hand not sleeping together becomes a problem of trust. On the one hand there is the trust in the safety of the partner on the other trust in his behaviour. Kasia, Maciek's wife, explains

*He [Maciek] drives at night. He drives different people, right? (...) You could go crazy if he does this for thirty or twenty five years. Tell yourself: 'he is definitely seeing another woman at night!' That would be crazy. You would not be able to live and had to break up immediately. You cannot live life like that, I guess. Well, I assume that our relations are normal. Honest. But some people have this problem. I have another problem – I fear for his safety. I hear in TV that a taxi driver was attacked by a passenger. (...) I fear that something happened to my husband. That something can happen to him.*

The aversion of wives towards taxi drivers working at night is, in part, related to certain assumptions about city night life. As Harrison White pointed out, night is associated in western cultures with on the one hand sexual activity and on the other with illegality, evil and crime (Aubert and White, 1959). This fear is not without its merits. Over the years there have been cases of taxi drivers being robbed or even killed.

Although taxi drivers can ignore the preferences of their family members regarding their working time, and often do so, to be able to work at night they need the trust of their wives and partners. The fact that trust is an important element of the taxi market has already been pointed out: for the market exchange to take place taxi drivers and their passengers have to trust each other (Gambetta, 2005, Henslin, 1968). However, for those taxi drivers who have families, it is also important that their families have trust in them and that they extend this trust to their passengers. Firstly, a wife has to trust that her husband is not taking advantage of the fact that he drives during the night to cheat on her. That, for example, when he drives during the night and a prostitute offers him to “pay in nature”, as it sometimes happens, he will say no or that if he drives a drunken woman home from a party and the woman invites him to come in he will decline. That he does not drive during the night to seek out these types of situations. Secondly, the wife has to trust that the passengers will not want to harm her husband.

This trust that allows taxi driver to work during the night is established not only in the interaction between the taxi driver and his wife but also in a broader social context. Other people can shake the trust that exists between the taxi driver and his wife regarding working during the night. This is very well shown by the interview I had with Kasia. When I asked her if she could tell me what types of problems are related to the work of a taxi driver from her point of view, she answered:



*I will tell you, Marcin, that [long pause] I trust my husband. But I have a few girlfriends, who have husbands who are taxi drivers. And they... they do not fully trust their husbands that they do not use escort agencies. My life has been based on mutual trust, until now and [pause] I trust my husband. But my girlfriends laugh at me that I trust him.*

Kasia knew me and trusted me, but still hesitated whether to talk with me about this.<sup>61</sup> A similar issue of larger networks that shape the trust between a husband and a wife, and the problem of night work was told to me, in the form of an anecdote, by Bartek. Asked about the role of trust in his relationship with his wife, he answered:

*There is this anecdote that I always tell, how at the beginning of our marriage, or maybe it was even before, I visited [my mother in law]. I had this binder with business cards. And the majority of the pages were filled with business cards from escort agencies. You know that when you drive a client, I don't know if others told you, but when you drive a client [to an escort agency] you get money, right?! Smaller or larger sums, but there is always an extra bonus. And my mother in law, the clever person that she is, looked through this binder. The biggest conflict, besides the fact that she looked through my stuff, was not that I have these [business cards] but that when she showed them to my wife she said: 'he could be driving there!' She told my wife that!! And my wife responded, not knowing that my mother-in-law does not understand the business: "Well, that would be great. The more the better". And then there was conflict. And then we had to explain to her, that I am going there for work related reasons. I go there to earn money and not [to use the services].*

Unlike his mother-in-law, Bartek's wife trusts her husband that the interaction between the taxi driver and the escort agency which takes place during the night is merely an economic transaction. She trusts that the taxi driver does not receive any other types of benefits for bringing clients to this place and not to another.

Like many other elements of the domestic domain, the trust between spouses is part of home's gift economy. As Simmel pointed out: "trust 'is a gift'; one cannot *require* it to be granted

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<sup>61</sup> She was able to openly talk about the problematic issue of trust between her and her husband because she trusted me. And told me so during the interview: *You know, I know you since you have been a child. I know who you are. I know that you will not take advantage of this in any way, right? But that you will write a thesis about it.*

like we require not to be disappointed, once it has been granted” (Simmel quoted in Quéré 2007: 113, emphasis in original). However, while one cannot require the trust, one can act in a way that one thinks will encourage trust. Some drivers, who drive during the night, withhold information from their wives not to raise their suspicion and so that they not worry. Bartek would not tell his wife about all the fights, sometimes physical, that he had with customers so that she would not worry. Maciek took the opposite strategy and told his wife those stories that others would likely keep to themselves. Maciek’s wife told me:

*There was a time when it was popular that prostitutes would use taxis. Now they don’t any more. They drive less. I don’t know why (...) And they are eager to pay in nature. So there are moments. And my husband is very open about telling me about this. But we are not kids (...) Maybe it’s better to know what is going on than not to know.*

One of the decisions taxi driver faces is whether or not he will work during the night. This might be financially a good strategy, but it conflicts with the rhythm of the domestic domain as members of the home ecology no longer sleep together. The night is an event differently seen in the two domains. The night is a time in the market when the prices are higher, however at home the night is a time for sleeping. For taxi drivers who want to work during the night a basic level of trust is essential. Without trust, working at night becomes a family problem. If a wife does not trust her husband it becomes difficult for her to answer the question “why does my husband want to work at night?” Without trust she will have problems believing him when he tells her that he works during the night only because of economic reasons. This will result in conflicts.

**8.6.2 Working on New Year’s Eve**

"That’s why I hate these New Year’s that fall like fixed maturities, which turn life and human spirit into a commercial concern with its neat final balance, its outstanding amounts, its budget for the new management. They make us lose the continuity of life and spirit. You end up seriously thinking that between one year and the next there is a break, that a new history is beginning; you make resolutions, and you regret your irresolution, and so on, and so forth. This is generally what’s wrong with dates."

Antonio Gramsci, *“Sotto la Mole,”* January 1, 1916

Although conflicts between the temporal structure of the taxi market and the temporal structure of home can take place on an everyday bases they often cumulate during specific moments. Probably the strongest conflict between the temporal structures of the taxi market and temporal structures of home takes place during New Years’ Eve. New Years’ Eve is the one day of the year when the demand for taxis is highest. During New Years’ Eve a taxi driver can earn 2 – 3 times the amount that they earn on a good day during the rest of the year, as people use taxis to get to and come back from celebrations. Adam, whose typical working day I described at the beginning of this chapter, drives during New Year’s Eve. He is in the majority of taxi drivers who do that (according to my survey).

	<b>New Year 2011 (N=235)</b>	<b>New Year 2012 (N=241)</b>	<b>New year 2011 and 2012 (N=235)</b>
<b>Yes</b>	157 (67%)	155 (64%)	136 (56%)
<b>No</b>	78 (33%)	86 (36%)	99 (44%)

During New Year’s Eve there is high demand for the service of taxi drivers. But there is also high demand for their presence in family life. Even though it would make economic sense to drive during this night and celebrate the New Year’s on a different day, there is a large group of taxi drivers who do not drive. Andrzej, the CEO and former taxi driver, explains:

*A taxi driver is also a human being and New Years’ Eve happens once a year, so there is always a group of drivers that want to celebrate, to spend the New Years’*

*Eve somewhere. Because [a taxi driver thinks] 'last year I worked, two years ago I worked, so this year I will celebrate with my wife.' Because you have to take into account our wives, who spent New Year's alone or [have to] look for another company.*

The same problem, but this time seen from a perspective of Kasia whose husband, Maciek, always works on New Year's Eve:

*Every New Year's Eve my husband is working. So even if we are going somewhere I will be going alone. My husband joins me around 11 pm. He is there for midnight. An hour after midnight, 1:30 am, he leaves the party and goes back to work. And he works until 7 o'clock in the morning because currently this is the only day during the year where there really is a lack of taxis (...) You are not a wife and you will never be a wife so you will not understand what a woman feels if she has no company and if she is left alone. But you have to understand that this is money for the next days – for keeping the house, for our life or for some investment.*

If taxi drivers are to be successful avatars they have to establish strategies that work in both domains which is not easy. Some taxi drivers try to reconcile demand in the market and demand at home. They do this by switching domains. One strategy is to drive until the evening (for example until 10 pm) and then go home for the night to celebrate and possibly, if one did not have too much to drink during the night, to go out in the morning to pick up those still finishing their celebrations. The other strategy is to come back home for a short period of time to celebrate the start of the New Year and then go back to work. Taxi drivers go home around midnight to have a symbolic glass of champagne with their family or friends and then go back and drive during the night.

Sometimes this domain switching is not planned. Bartek describes how he ended up driving on New Year's Eve even though he was not planning to drive during the night:

*We went with my wife for a New Year's Eve party. I felt bad and did not drink. Just like that. And my wife found some friend of hers and they began discussing their womanly topics and I could not [really participate]. It was long after midnight, 2 – 3 am, I think. And people began to look for taxis. So I told my wife: listen honey you sit here and I will pick you up in the morning. I will do a few rounds. This is how I worked, from 3 am to 6 am.*

*Shit, I was able to earn 350 zł (80 €). I came back [to pick up my wife] and we went home.*

New Year's Eve is an excellent opportunity to earn money, however at home this event is perceived as a *reception*, that is, an event that should be celebrated with friends and family. This creates a conflict for the taxi driver who is a member of both domains. Taxi drivers can try to resolve this conflict by domain switching and being both in the taxi market and at home but this is not the same as fully participating in the family celebration.

## **8.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have argued that in order to understand the working time of taxi drivers we have to go beyond the taxi market as a field of forces and field of struggles, and look at the structures and events that take place at home. It is not enough to look at *earning time*, *waiting time*, and *political time* we also have to look at *domestic time*.

In this chapter I argued that looking at the relationship between the market and home can be done by looking at how the temporal structures of the market intersect with the temporal structures of home. This can be done by extending Andrew Abbott's notion of linked ecologies and avatars. Seeing the taxi market and home of taxi drivers as linked ecologies and taxi drivers as avatars of the domestic domain in the market is useful because it allows us to avoid two fatal mistakes that are characteristic of many studies that deal with the domestic domain. One mistake is the mistake of those who follow Garry Becker and make the assumption that the head of the family (father) is an altruistic dictator who individually makes decisions that are best for the entire family. He does not need to take anyone else into consideration when making those decisions. The other, equally fatal mistake is to treat the family as simply a market or a zero-sum game where each actor is fighting with the others for limited resources. In this perspective home becomes a battlefield where armies of different strengths compete for territory (Bourdieu, 1996a). By looking at home as ecology we can see both the elements of conflict and the elements of cooperation. I have argued that the domestic domain is a site of negotiations and conflicts and these conflicts structure taxi drivers working time.

As avatars of home, taxi drivers face dissonance. They face dissonance because the time spend in the cab is time not spent physically at home. They face dissonance due to the lack of sufficient income. They face dissonance because the logic of the home economy (gift) is

different from the logic of the market (exchange). Finally as avatars taxi drivers face dissonance because home and market often have inverted temporalities. As Andrew Abbott has pointed out:

“The internal forces of competition in the avatar’s ecology tend to drive the avatar in directions unforeseen ahead of time. There is, in that sense, no way to build a perfect hinge. No structure can be built that can completely escape the differing pressures of interaction within two different ecologies”. (Abbott, 2005b: 269)

I have thus arrived at the fourth and final answer to my research question. Why do taxi drivers work when they work? Taxi drivers work when they work because, in many cases, taxi drivers are avatars of the domestic domain. Put differently, the temporal structures of home – what I have called *domestic time* – structure taxi drivers’ *waiting time* and *earning time*.

## 9. Conclusion: Working Time as Instituted Process

"The element of time is a chief cause of those difficulties in economic investigations which make it necessary for man with his limited powers to go step by step; breaking up complex question, studying one bit at a time, and at last combining the partial solutions into a more or less complete solution of the whole riddle"  
Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics*

The working time of taxi drivers has been a topic of an ongoing debate within economics. The debate started when a group of behavioural economists argued that, contrary to neoclassical theory of labour supply, taxi drivers do not choose their working time rationally but rather rely on an income target. Taxi drivers' use of an income target is not a rational strategy because they end up working more when there is no demand for their service, and less when there is demand. Since the original study was published in 1997 there have been a number of studies confirming the behavioural approach, defending the neoclassical view, and trying to recombine the two.

This dissertation provided an answer that is different from both the answer provided by neoclassical economists and the one provided by behavioural economists. I have argued that explaining taxi drivers *working time* requires looking at *earning time*, *waiting time*, *political time*, and *domestic time*. This conclusion will start with a short overview of what I have argued in the different chapters and then bring the different topics together and point out the main argument of the dissertation and its broader theoretical implications.

I started by looking at *earning time* in chapter 3. I argued that taxi drivers' *earning time* is shaped by the fact that taxi market is a linking ecology and that taxis are coordinating agencies. As coordinating agencies taxis are entangled and dependent on multiple other coordinating agencies. These include calendars, schedules and other social institutions. One of the central coordinating agencies structuring the *earning time* of taxi drivers is the state, which has the symbolic power to establish public time and public calendar which structure the demand for taxis.

But taxi drivers' working time is not only *earning time*. Currently taxi drivers spend much of their time waiting for customers. In other words working time is structured by *waiting time*. I

looked at waiting time in chapter 4 and chapter 5 where I analysed both the macrofoundations and the microfoundations of *waiting time*. In chapter 4 I looked at *waiting time* as a macro phenomenon. I traced the changing patterns of *waiting time* to the macro changes occurring in Poland with the transition from socialism and capitalism. During socialism, due to the macro phenomenon of the shortage economy, taxi drivers did not have to wait for passengers but had to wait for cars, cars parts and gasoline; while passengers had to wait for taxis. In the capitalist economy of surplus supply of labour taxi drivers have to wait for passengers as surplus supply spills over into the taxi market, increasing the number of taxi drivers. Some people become taxi drivers because they are unable to find another job. Waiting time is a macro phenomenon because it comes from the spill over effect.

In chapter 5 I argued that although there are macrofoundations of *waiting time*, *waiting time* is produced and reproduced at the micro level in the daily activities of taxi drivers. Looking from the perspective of the taxi driver, I argued that taxi drivers are unable to plan their working time due the uncertainty of demand and an excess of possible courses of action. To cope with this uncertainty drivers resort to routines and observation. I argued that taxi drivers become skilled observers that look for locational niches, that is, they try to position themselves in relation to other drivers with whom they are competing for fares. However, overall their labour strategies lead to a situation of *collective self-exploitation*: as drivers extend their own working time they contribute to the extension of not only their own *waiting time*, but also the *waiting time* of other drivers.

In chapters 6 and 7 I looked at working time as a political phenomenon by investigating *political time*. In chapter 6 I argued that although taxi drivers have not directly struggled over working time, they have struggled indirectly by struggling over the number of taxis and the price of the service. I argued that taxi drivers work when they work because their collective struggles over market institutions have been mostly unsuccessful. I anchored the problem of collective action in the social structures of Warsaw the taxi market and the self-identification of taxi drivers as independent entrepreneurs. In chapter 7 I focused on a successful struggle in which taxi drivers were able to prevent further deregulation from taking place by successfully engaging in *politics of time*.

Having discussed working time as a market and political phenomenon, I argued in chapter 8 that working time is entangled in the temporal structures of the domestic domain. I described how taxi drivers can be suspended between the temporal structures of the taxi market and the temporal structures of their domestic domain. Taxi drivers, who are husbands, partners and



fathers, face a series of contingencies due to the competing logics and different rhythms of *earning time* and *domestic time*.

### 9.1 The Temporal Structures of Working Time

“The economy, then, is an instituted process. Two concepts stand out, that of “process” and its “institutedness”. Let us see what they contribute to our frame of reference”

Karl Polanyi, *The Economy as Instituted Process* (2011: 6)

My analysis of *earning time*, *waiting time*, *political time* and *domestic time* can be read, dissected and criticized separately. However, the aim of the different chapters was to contribute to a single larger argument about the nature of *working time*. This single larger argument of my dissertation is that *working time of taxi drivers is an instituted process*. Both the “institutedness” and the “process” element of working time are important.

Working time is an *instituted*. The idea that working time is instituted can be found in the works of both Marx and Weber. For Marx working time was instituted by the power relations between capital and labour, for Weber working time was instituted by the ethos of workers.

The working time of taxi drivers is instituted differently than the working time of many other occupations and professions. In case of many occupations working time is instituted by the fact that people that have fixed hours of work. This is not the case with taxi drivers. Although taxi corporations in Warsaw sometimes introduce schedules forcing drivers to work certain hours, overall taxi drivers are “free” to choose when and how long they want to work. This “freedom” is not restricted by the state which, unlike in the case of pilots or truck drivers, does not introduce a limit to the number of hours that a taxi driver can work.

However, the fact that taxi drivers do not have fixed hours of work does not make their working time less instituted than the working time of other occupations. As I argued in chapter 3, the *earning time* of taxi drivers is structured by a number of social institutions such as the seven-day week or the religious and state calendars. These institutions establish temporal structures of demand for taxis as they structure the activities of people who take taxis. *Waiting time* is structured at the macro level by the capitalist system which is a system of surplus supply of labour and at the micro level by the routine activities of other taxi drivers who contribute to surplus supply. *Domestic time* is instituted by the gendered division of

housework and by the family calendar which is made up of events that require presence at home.

The working time of taxi drivers is instituted by different forms of integration. Polanyi writes:

“A study of how empirical economies are instituted should start from the way in which the economy acquires unity and stability, that is the interdependence and recurrence of its parts. This is achieved through a combination of a very few pattern which may be called forms of integration. Since they occur side by side on different levels and in different sectors of the economy it may often be impossible to select one of them as dominant so that they could be employed for a classification of empirical economies as a whole (...) Empirically, we find the main patterns to be reciprocity, redistribution and exchange” (Polanyi, 2011).

We see all of the three forms of integration that Polanyi distinguished instituting the working day of taxi drivers. *Earning time* is instituted by exchange and redistribution, because although the exchange between the driver and his fare takes place in the market, the fare is first redistributed by the taxi corporation among its taxi drivers through the dispatch system (see chapter 5). *Waiting time* is instituted by redistribution as surplus supply is solved by taxi corporations with a queuing system. *Domestic time* is instituted by the gift economy of home that is based on reciprocity and redistribution.

The institutedness of taxi drivers working time emerges out of multiple relations of power. *Earning time* and the income of the taxi driver is dependent on the price of the service and the costs of belonging to a taxi corporation which emerge out of a struggle between taxi drivers, taxi corporations and the city of Warsaw. *Waiting time* is dependent on the power relations between taxi driver, taxi corporations and clients. If taxi drivers did not have to wait for customers before 1989 but have to wait for customers now this is because the relations of power changed. *Domestic time* is dependent on the power relations between the taxi driver and his wife regarding the division of household labour.

While being instituted, the working time of taxi drivers is also a process. Working time is a process because it is reproduced in everyday activities. *Earning time* is reproduced each day as people act and interact with each other. Taxi drivers get into their cars and drive. They try to cope with uncertainty by either falling back on routines or by observing the market. Taxi

dispatchers pick up the calls from clients. Customers perform activities that then need to be coordinated by taxis. *Waiting time* exists because people become taxi drivers and they go out to work on an everyday basis. *Political time* exists because taxi drivers engage in different strategies of voice that aim to change the temporal structures of working time. *Domestic time* exists because people perform activities at home. These activities contribute to the reproduction of working time but they can also be a source of transformation.

As an instituted process, the working time of taxi drivers is anchored in multiple temporal structures. What I mean by temporal structures are on the one hand social structures that are ways of ordering time (hence temporal *structures*), but on the other hand social structures that have a history (hence *temporal* structures). An example of a temporal structure that is currently shaping taxi drivers' working time is the five-day working week. The five-day working week structures *earning time* of taxi drivers as people take taxis to get to work and to get from work. Thus, the five-day working week is a temporal *structure* because it is a way of ordering time. But the five-day working week is also a *temporal* structure because it is an institution that has a history that goes back to political struggles over working time in the XIX century. The temporal structure of the five-day working week emerged on top of an older temporal structure which was the seven-day week that emerged with modern religion.

The multiple temporal structures that shape the instituted process of taxi drivers working time are nested within one another. This idea of nested temporalities is not novel and can be found – expressed either implicitly or explicitly – in the works of the more historically oriented social scientists (Pomian, 1984, Abbott, 2001, Sewell, 2005, Braudel, 1960, Lahire, 2015a). However these works have until now left no impact on economic sociology.

In chapter 3 I showed the nested temporal structures of demand and *earning time*. A singular and unique event such as a woman waking up late for work and taking a taxi to make it on time is nested in the temporal structures of her working schedule, which is nested in the temporal structure of the five-day working week, which is nested in the institution of the seven-day week. In chapters 4 and 5 I showed the nested temporal structures of *waiting time*. I showed how *waiting time* emerges out of the everyday practices of taxi drivers who make decisions about whether to go home or continue driving. But these day-to-day activities are nested within the larger temporal structure of people becoming taxi drivers as a result of capitalism being a system of surplus supply of labour and the Polish state undergoing post-socialist transformation.

Because different temporal structures are nested within one another – if we are to understand working time as an instituted process – we have to look at both the eventfulness and uncertainty of the day-to-day decisions of taxi drivers, which is the domain of the micro-sociological approach, but also the *longue durée* that characterizes the historical approach. While we can say that taxi drivers work when they work because every day they “choose” to go to work and their passengers “choose” to take taxis, we can also say that taxi drivers work when they work because of the struggles that took place in the XIX century which created the five-day working week that continue to structures the *earning time* of taxi drivers or because of the processes that increased the participation of women in the labour force that are beginning to reshape *domestic time* and the division of labour at home. Since temporal structures of working time are nested in one other we are dealing with a situation that Veblen described as *cumulative causation* (Veblen, 1898b).

Although I have analysed the temporal structures of *earning time*, *waiting time*, *political time*, and *domestic time* separately, these structures often overlap. *Waiting time* for example overlaps with *political time* as social movement leaders simultaneously wait at a taxi stand and try to convince other drivers to engage in collective action.

This overlapping has increased with modern communication devices (mobile phones, dispatch systems, Internet). Modern technology has enabled actors to communicate with each other without being physically in one another’s response presence. In other words technology has redefined what Ervin Goffman once called the interactional order and thus reshaped the different temporal structures that emerge from this order. As taxi drivers can now participate in political discussion on the taxi forum without leaving home, *domestic time* and *political time* overlap. Similarly with the development of modern dispatch system there is now an overlap of *waiting time* and *domestic time*. Modern dispatch system allows taxi drivers to wait for customers at home, while mobile phone and smartphones allow drivers to participate in family life without being physically at home. With modern technology the boundary between enterprise and household, in other words between *earning time* and *domestic time*, which according to Max Weber was the central element in the development of capitalism, becomes blurred.

As Marx pointed out, the temporal structures of working time are dependent on available technology. But these technologies are in turn shaped and reshaped by the power relations of the people who use them. Thus taxi drivers are able to use the taxi dispatch system to

communicate with each other and promote collective struggles only when they do not target taxi corporations but rather city authorities.

The overlapping and conflicting rhythms of different social domains at the macro level present a problem for actors at the micro level. Since there is no grand designer of the temporal architecture different social rhythms do not necessarily fit together. Conflicting rhythms present a problem for managers of taxi corporations who want to make sure that even though it is a Christmas Day, and many taxi drivers want to be with their families, enough of them goes out and drives for the taxi corporation to satisfy demand. It is a problem for taxi drivers who have to cope with the fact that they are at the same time demanded at home and in the market.

There are diverse strategies of coping with these conflicting rhythms. Managers try to solve this problem by switching from a *laissez-faire* attitude of allowing drivers to pick their working time to a managerial organization of shift work. Taxi drivers try to resolve the conflict of temporalities during New Years' Eve by *domain switching* between earning money (*earning time*) and celebrating with family (*domestic time*). But these strategies are not always successful leading to situation of conflicts and crises.

A good metaphor that helps us understand working time as an instituted process is music. Different authors have pointed out that music is the best analogy for thinking about the relationship between social structure and time (e.g. Bell and Goetting, 2011, Pomian, 1984, Douglas, 1991, Abbott, 2011). Sometimes the different temporal structures of working time of individual taxi drivers create a harmony allowing the taxi driver is able to integrate the multiple times into his or her life. For example because the wife stays at home and takes care of the domestic domain the taxi driver is able to work long hours; or the movement leader is able to mobilize drivers for protests while waiting for a fare or while spending time at home. But often the different temporal structures create a sense of dissonance or, to borrow Andrew Abbott's expression, a "rhythmic cacophony" (Abbott 2001: 238). Chapter 8 showed that this problem of a rhythmic cacophony is particularly present in the conflict between taxi drivers' *earning time* and *domestic time*, as due to inverted temporalities taxi drivers are at the same time demanded by the market institution and by the institution of home.

## 9.2 The Multiplicity of Time

To recapitulate the central argument of this thesis, working time is an *instituted process* anchored in multiple temporal structures. This idea of economic activity as an instituted process is of course not new and can be found in the works of Karl Polanyi. However, the idea has received surprisingly little attention in economic sociology. Considering the central position of Karl Polanyi in economic sociology and the ongoing discussions about the notions of embeddedness and double movement, the notion of an instituted process remains unappreciated and is often taken for granted.

Over the years economic sociologists have focused on the “institutedness” of economic life but not on its processual character. It is as if the idea that economy is a process can be either ignored or simply taken for granted. But as the analysis of taxi drivers’ working time shows that the fact economic life is a process should not be taken for granted. In fact it is just the opposite: the idea of economic activity as a process can be one of the central contributions of new economic sociology and a vantage point for its critique of economics.

The idea of economic activity as a social process can be a vantage point for its critique of both behavioural and neoclassical economics. Economics as a discipline has struggled to theorize time (Currie and Steedman, 1990, Winston, 2008, Steedman, 2003). In neoclassical economic the market is not a process, but an instant. This was pointed out by Hayek who argued that: “The principal difficulty of the traditional analysis existed certainly in its complete abstraction of the element of time. A concept of equilibrium when, in reality, had application only to an economy timelessly conceived could not be of great value” (Hayek quoted in Morgenstern, 1976)). Similarly the neglect of time in economics was also pointed out by Shackle (Shackle, 1967). But although these Austrian economists were right in their critique of neoclassical economics for the neglect of time and the need to study the economy as a process, they kept thinking about time in terms of *solipsistic time* rather than *social time*. Although they rightly thought of economic action in terms of a process, they were unable to see it as an *instituted process* or in other words a social process. It took somebody like Karl Polanyi, who being born and raised in Vienna was very familiar with the Austrian tradition but also with the anthropological literature, to grasp that economic life is both *instituted* and *a process*.

Understanding working time, or more generally economic action, as an instituted process requires putting the element of time at the centre of analysis. It is therefore useful to go back to the equation I have introduced in the introduction of this dissertation:

$$\text{Working time} = \text{waiting time} + \text{earning time} + \text{political time} + \text{domestic time}$$

One might think that time should not be of great importance in this equation, as time is both on the left side and on the right side of the equation. Since it is both explanandum and explanans, basic arithmetic would seem to suggest that one should be able to present the equation in a simplified form:

$$\text{Work time} = (\text{waiting} + \text{earning} + \text{politics} + \text{family}) \text{ time}$$

Nothing could be further from the truth. Abstracting time from the equation would only be possible if time would in each case mean one and the same thing. However, throughout this dissertation I have argued in favour of a plural conception of time. I have done so both on a theoretical level and on an empirical level.

In my theoretical investigations I have followed in the footsteps of those authors who have analysed the plurality and heterogeneity of time (Braudel, 1960, Abbott, 2001, Pomian, 1984, Halbwachs, 1980, Jaques, 1982, Gurvitch, 1964). These authors have argued that time is not one thing: the time of eventful history is different from the time of long durée; the qualitative time of experience is different from quantitative time of clocks; linear time coexists with cyclical time.

In my empirical investigations of taxi drivers' working time I focused at the role of both quantitative time and qualitative time.

I analysed the institutionalization of time through the public calendar and other social institutions. I looked at how quantitative time structures the speed at which taxi drivers have to get to their customers. I also discussed how the clock as an artefact allows taxi drivers to observe the market and anticipate demand. Since taxi drivers know what time it is they are able to synchronize their actions with the temporal order of the city.

But I have also looked at the qualitative dimension of working time. In chapter 3 I described the experience of having to get to the customer on time. I argued that the 15 minutes that taxi drivers' have to pick up a customer can be a source of stress at the beginning, but over time becomes just another routine. I analysed how the experience of *earning time* depends on the type of client with whom the taxi driver is interacting. Thus, *earning time* is more irksome when dealing with a "problematic" client who is either drunk or in a hurry to get somewhere than with a nice client. Driving with a customer who demands the driver to drive faster or who is rude is different than driving with a customer who is an interesting conversation

partner. *Waiting time* can be irksome or pleasurable depending on the people who one is interacting with at the taxi stand. *Domestic time* can be experienced not only as leisure, but also as work depending and that contrary to what economic models assume work is sometimes used as a way to avoid domestic life.

In this dissertation I looked at time as something that is related to *meaning* but also something that is related to *power*. I showed how the temporal structures of *earning time* and *domestic time* cannot be understood without looking at the different meanings that are attached to New Year's Eve. In chapter 7 I showed how *politics of time* requires understanding meanings attributed to past events and to certain images of the future. But time is not only about meaning, but also about power. Being able to do something faster/slower than others is a form of power. Taxi corporations that are able to provide their service faster have market power. Before 1989, having customers wait for them at taxi stands put taxi drivers in position of power. Taxi drivers were able to choose their own clients. Time is also related to power in the sense that having the ability to make others imagine a future or interpret a past event in a certain way is an important form of power over them.

Although I have discussed different forms of time, I have focused on the idea of *time as a social relation*. *Earning time* is a relation between the taxi drivers and their fares. *Waiting time* is a relation between the person waiting and the person for whom the waiting is done. *Political time* is a relation between taxi drivers, corporate owners and the state; between the existing present and an imagined future. *Domestic time* is a relation between different members of home who negotiate and communicate with each other. More generally, time is a relation because when people recollect a past, coordinate in the present or imagine a future they do so in interaction with one another, with the help of artefacts and in the larger context of social institutions. This relational character of time is impossible to grasp starting with the individual.

Thus, at this point, we are able to return to the theoretical question asked at the very beginning of this dissertation of why we need economic sociology if there is already a science called economics. However this time we return to it equipped with the knowledge that has been gained through the investigation of an empirical case of taxi drivers working time. By looking at the working time of taxi drivers, a topic studied by both behavioural and neoclassical economists, we see that the answer to this question of why we need economic sociology is that we need economic sociology because in economic life time is a relation.



### 9.3 Time and Embeddedness

Investigating the temporal structures of working time required a theoretical vocabulary. However, such a vocabulary was largely missing because economic sociology has until now focused mainly on the synchronic view of the market structured by institutions, networks and culture. Thus, one of the theoretical contributions of this dissertation was that it created a language that would help us study time in the economy. I introduced a series of new terms: *time of action*, *time in action*, *politics of time*, *linking ecology*, and *prolepsis*. I have also extensively and eclectically borrowed notions used by other social scientists. Thus from Maurice Halbwachs I borrowed the notion of *temporal flexibility* to describe the struggles over time and to classify different markets on a temporal dimension and through a type of goods/services being exchanged. From the anthropologist Maurice Bloch I have borrowed the notion of *time travelling* to capture the situation where people are engaged in imagining a future and recollecting the past. From the historian Krzysztof Pomian I have borrowed the idea that the social order can be described as *temporal architecture* that is made up of *coordinating agencies*. From Andrew Abbott I borrowed the notion of *encoding* to describe how past social structures continue to exist in the present in the form of cultural symbols. From Jens Beckert I borrowed the idea of *politics of expectations* to makes sense of the struggles that take place over the images of the future.

One way of anchoring the vocabulary developed in this dissertation in the larger project of economic sociology would be to introduce an umbrella concept of “temporal embeddedness”. However, there are two reasons why introducing the notion of temporal embeddedness would be a mistake. Firstly, it would be a mistake because there is a fundamental ambiguity related to the notion of embeddedness and speaking about temporal embeddedness would only further contribute to this ambiguity. Secondly, the idea of “temporal embeddedness” would wrongly suggest that “temporal embeddedness” is another dimension of embeddedness just like cognitive embeddedness, cultural embeddedness, political embeddedness or emotional embeddedness. This is not the case.

From the start the concept of embeddedness has been filled with ambiguity. From the beginning the concept of embeddedness underwent “a great transformation” (Beckert, 2009a). First used by Polanyi as a broad statement that aimed at capturing the relationship between the economy and society, the notion of embeddedness was reintroduced into economic sociology by Granovetter who reduced it to capture the influence of networks on economic action.

However over time embeddedness became an umbrella concept for economic sociology that was extended to include ever new “social factors”, leading Granovetter to argue that: “[embeddedness] has become almost meaningless stretched to mean almost anything, so that it therefore means nothing” (Krippner et al., 2004). Since then more authors have followed Granovetter in questioning the continued usefulness of the concept beyond a simple heuristic principle.

In his careful analysis of Polanyi’s work, Kurtulus Gemici pointed out that Polanyi did not stick to one use of the concept. At times Polanyi seemed to suggest that *all economies are embedded*, while at other times that the XIX century economy became disembedded from society. Polanyi used embeddedness both as a methodological principle and as a theoretical statement. Over the years this ambiguity has led to a never ending argument with some authors arguing in favour of the “always embedded” approach, while others defending the “gradational approach” (Gemici, 2008). Introducing the concept of “temporal embeddedness” to capture the role of social time in the economy would only further contribute to this confusion.

But the problem lies not only with the ambiguity that is inherent in the notion of embeddedness. Introducing the notion of “temporal embeddedness” would seem to suggest that we are dealing with a dimension of embeddedness, similarly to cultural embeddedness or political embeddedness, while in fact what we are dealing with something much more fundamental than that.

The fact that social time cannot be reduced to being another dimension of embeddedness can be best seen by returning to the most developed typology of the notion of embeddedness introduced by Zukin and DiMaggio who distinguish between cognitive embeddedness, cultural embeddedness, structural embeddedness, and political embeddedness (Zukin and DiMaggio, 1990). By returning to this typology we are able to see that the element of time is at the heart of each and every one of those dimensions discussed by Zukin and DiMaggio.

Zukin and DiMaggio first distinguish cognitive embeddedness: “By ‘cognitive embeddedness’, we refer to the ways in which structured regularities of mental processes limit the exercise of economic reasoning. Such limitations have for the most part been revealed by research in cognitive psychology and decision theory” (Zukin and DiMaggio, 1990: 15- 16). If we can speak about cognitive embeddedness of the economy this is, in part, because economic decisions takes place *in time* and actors have to make decisions under *time*

*pressure*. This temporal urgency of economic decisions has social origins because it comes from the institutions and interactions in which economic actors are entangled. Taxi drivers do not have much time to reflect on where to drive next or whether to continue driving, because other taxi drivers are competing with them for fares and because their clients are in a hurry to get somewhere. Taxi drivers are also equipped with cognitive artefacts made by humans that help them deal with this situation of time pressure.

Similarly cultural embeddedness cannot be understood without time. Zukin and DiMaggio write about cultural embeddedness: “When we say that economic behaviour is “culturally” embedded, we refer to the role of shared collective understandings in shaping economic strategies and goals.” (17). If we can speak about shared collective understandings shaping economic action this is because there is a memory of the social process and past structures and events become, as Andrew Abbot points out, encoded into the present in the form of cultural symbols (Abbott 1999). The best example of such a shared understanding that shapes economic strategies and goals is the collective understanding of New Year’s Eve as a day that should be celebrated. There are other cultural symbols inherited by taxi drivers and their customers from the past. Thus, the negative attitudes of some of Warsaw citizens towards taxi drivers are anchored in the social structures of the socialist system and the privileged position of taxi drivers in that system. These past social structures of the taxi market became encoded in the derogatory notion of “*złotowa*” that continues to be used to describe taxi drivers in the present. In chapter 4 I argued that the temporal structures of the transformation of the taxi market that took place between 1989 and 1992 have been encoded in the present in the cultural symbols of “the Wilczek reform” and “taxi mafia”. These cultural symbols were then mobilized during struggles over regulation that took place in 2012. Cultural embeddedness is nothing different than the encoded memory of the social process.

Likewise one cannot think about structural embeddedness without thinking about time. DiMaggio and Zukin write about structural embeddedness: “More important than either cognitive or cultural embeddedness is what Mark Granovetter has called ‘structural embeddedness’: contextualization of economic exchange in patterns of ongoing interpersonal relations” (Zukin, DiMaggio 1990: 18). The fact that interpersonal relations are “ongoing” means that they take place over time. The ongoingness of economic interactions is instituted and (re)negotiated in a social process. Taxi corporations give their drivers 15 minutes to get to the customer and require that they wait 5 minutes for the customer before turning on their meter and 15 before leaving. The interactions between taxi drivers and their fares are also

nested in larger temporal structures such as the religious and state calendar which structure the activities of people who take taxis.

Finally, DiMaggio and Zukin discuss political embeddedness. They write: “By ‘political embeddedness’ we refer to the manner in which economic institutions and decisions are shaped by a struggle for power that involves economic actors and nonmarket institutions, particularly the state and social classes” (1990: 20). But a struggle for power involves time. Political struggles take place at a certain *point of time*; they *take time* and they are *about time* as different actors engage in *politics of time* that is in symbolic struggles over imagination and memory. This time is social as actors imagine their future and recollect their past in interactions, with artefact and in the context of institutions.

However, time is also central to understand the political embeddedness of markets in a much broader sense. Neoclassical economics treats market exchange as an instant. But a market exchange is not an instant but a process. This might be a very short process like in the case of financial markets or a longer process like in the case of taxi drivers. Markets are, to return to Janos Kornai’s definition, “a process over time, an ensemble of chains of events overlapping in time”. Because market exchanges are processes rather than instants some actors have interest in speeding up these processes, while others have an interest in slowing them down. As I showed in chapter 3 many of the conflicts that take place between taxi drivers and their customers are struggles over the speed of the service. The interests of the two sides are not always inline. Customers want to get to their destination as fast as possible while taxi drivers want to avoid having an accident or receiving a speeding ticket. Control over time of others is, as Berry Schwartz pointed out, a crucial form of power (Schwartz, 1974)

Just as we cannot think about cognitive embeddedness, cultural embeddedness, structural embeddedness and political embeddedness without time, we cannot think about emotional embeddedness without studying the temporal structures of social life. Nina Bandelj, who recently introduced the notion of emotional embeddedness, writes:

“I urge researchers investigating the social foundations of the economy to recognize that emotions influence economic action not only because they shape an individual’s utility function or economic role performance, but also that emotions matter because they result from, and are influenced by, interactions that an individual has with other social actors during economic processes” (Bandelj, 2009: 348)

Studying emotions requires studying time. Many of the emotions that are central in economic life have a temporal dimension to them. Hope and fear have to do with images of an uncertain future, while disappointment and regret have to do with the interpretation of the past. In other words, if we are to follow DiMaggio proposal of “endogenizing the animal spirits” of Keynesian economics (DiMaggio, 2002a), we have to introduce the element of social time into the study of economic action. But this time is social time because, contrary to the economic approach to cognition and action, thoughts and feelings related to an uncertain future and the recollections of past events emerge in interactions and in the context of institutions and artefacts.

Thus a temporal element exists in all dimensions of embeddedness. This means that instead of speaking about temporal embeddedness we should rather speak about the embeddedness of temporality. This would highlight the fact that embeddedness in the broadest sense of the term – defined by DiMaggio and Zukin as “contingent nature of economic action with respect to cognition, culture, social structure, and political institutions” – has a temporal dimension to it. However, the notion of embeddedness is filled with such ambiguity and antinomy that it is simply better to express the methodological foundations of economic sociology by following Bourdieu in treating economic practices as total social facts and Polanyi’s theoretical contribution understanding economic life as an instituted process.

#### **9.4 Time and the Economy: A Research Agenda for Economic Sociology**

Rather than being an end to this dissertation, this conclusion should be treated as a start of the conversation about the need to study the role of time in the economy. Building on this PhD dissertation there are several directions which are worth pursuing.

Firstly, the extensive research carried out as part of this dissertation should be further developed. On the one hand it means looking more closely at what taxi drivers are actually doing, how they observe the market and how their routines develop and change and contribute to surplus supply. On the other hand it means trying to get access to big data that is currently gathered by taxi corporations. More interviews should be conducted with family members to better understand the temporal structures of domestic time and the negotiations that take place at home.

Furthermore, the work on the Warsaw taxi market should be situated in the context of other taxi markets around the world. Was a shortage of taxis characteristic of all socialist countries?

To what extent is the waiting time characteristic for all taxi drivers in capitalist countries and how does it vary depending on the *variety of capitalism*, that is on the specific institutional arrangements surrounding the taxi market? How does taxi drivers' waiting time differ in New York, London, and Paris?

Secondly, the analysis of this dissertation should be extended beyond the taxi market to other transportation markets which I have described in the introduction as *linking ecologies*. Does the concept of a *linking ecology* help us to describe the structures and processes of other transportation markets such as the airline industry, the logistic market (DHL, FedEx) and the bus market? Does the notion of *temporal elasticity* contribute to our understanding of the exchanges taking place in those markets? Are the struggles over time similar to those in the taxi market?

Thirdly, analysis should be carried out to see in what way the state, which has symbolic power over public time and the public calendar, is able to shape the temporal structures of the economy.

Fourthly, the notion of *politics of time* should be further developed. This could be done for example by looking at how during the most recent financial crises struggles over an imagined future were anchored in competing interpretations of the Great Depression.

More generally, the language developed in this dissertation to describe the temporal structures of the working time of taxi drivers should be applied and extended by analysing other empirical case studies. The goal of this research would be to theorize and study economic life as an instituted process or a structured temporality. The structured temporality of economic life should be studied by looking at the multiple and overlapping temporal structures. This PhD dissertation was a step towards that goal.

## **Appendix 1. Economic Literature on the Working Time of Taxi Drivers**

The starting point for the discussion about the labour strategies of taxi drivers was the publication of *Labour Supply of New York City Cabdrivers One Day at a Time* (Camerer et al. 1997). The authors of the article argue that labour strategies of taxi drivers do not behave according to the neoclassical theories of labour supply. The neoclassical, or the “life-cycle”, model of labour supply assumes individual utility over a lifetime. This model has very straightforward predictions: “individuals should respond positively to transitory positive wage changes” (Camerer et al. 1997: 407), in other words they should work longer when wages are high and less when they are low. This prediction turned out to be wrong with regards to the New York taxi drivers who, having the possibility to choose their own hours of work, did the exact opposite – they worked longer on days when it was difficult to earn money and shorter when it was easy. From the perspective of rational choice theory this is irrational as driving according to the neo-classical model would provide drivers with higher income.

The authors of the study, who have since then become key figures in behavioural economics, argued that the rational actor model should be replaced by a behavioural one that would include psychological factors of “loss aversion” and “narrow bracketing”. Both “loss aversion” and “narrow bracketing” are central findings of behavioural economics, a sub-discipline that incorporates psychological findings into study of economic phenomena. Loss aversion stands for the fact that individuals dislike losses more than they enjoy gains of equal size. And narrow bracketing is a cognitive mechanism whereby actors simplify decisions by isolating them from the entire stream of decisions (Camerer et al. 1997: 410). The behavioural model assumes that taxi drivers treat every day separately and set a target which, when reached, makes them stop working. This is very different from the neoclassical model of action where “[t]he end of each fare is a decision point for the driver. The driver can continue to work or can end the shift” (Farber 2005:55). The taxi driver stops working when “the marginal utility of leisure increased to the point at which it was optimal to stop” (Farber 2005:52). According to behavioural economists the income target is the result of the bounded rationality of economic actors. It is a form of mental accounting: treating each day separately is computationally easier than calculating across many days. “This [choosing a target] is computationally easier than cracking the ongoing balance of forgone leisure utility and marginal income utility – which depends on expected future wages – required for optimal intertemporal substitution” (Camerer et al. 1997: 426).

What makes taxi drivers particularly interesting for economists is that, „unlike most workers in modern economies, [taxi drivers] are free to choose their own hours [of work]” (Crawford/Meng 2011:1912). Thus, according to behavioural economists, taxi drivers present a *critical case* for checking neoclassical theories of labour. If *even* taxi drivers are not free and rational in their choices – in the way that neoclassical economists assume them to be free and rational – then the neoclassical theory is not likely to be suitable for all the other occupations where individuals are *less* free to choose their labour strategies.<sup>62</sup> The authors of the original study were aware of the nature and weight of their findings, as they wrote in the conclusion of their study: “Because evidence of negative labour supply responses to transitory wage changes is *so much at odds with conventional economic wisdom, these results should be treated with caution*” (Camerer et al. 1997:433 emphasis mine).

Since the publication of the article the behavioural approach has been verified by multiple studies on taxi drivers in different settings: in Singapore (Agarwal et al. 2013; Chou 2002) and Kenya (Dupas and Robinson 2013). Drawing on experiments and large GPS data sets authors confirmed that drivers use income targets to make their labour strategies. But the study has also been criticized from a neoclassical viewpoint arguing that taxi drivers are rational (Farber 2005, Farer 2014), and there have been studies that tried to reconcile the two approaches (Crawford and Meng 2011; Farber 2008).

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<sup>62</sup> This is something Juliet Schor points out in her critique of the neoclassical view. “The crux of the neoclassical story is that workers determine hours. But do they? Not according to the evidence. Every study I have seen on this topic has found that workers lack free choice of hours. They are limited in both how much and how little they can work” (Schor 1991).



## **Appendix 2. Literature Review on Taxi Drivers in Social Sciences**

There is a large literature on taxi drivers in the social sciences. Ever since Robert Park included “the cabman” as someone who would be worth studying (Park 1915), a lot of work – most of which is ethnographic and historical – has been done on this occupation (for an extensive literature review see Anderson 2004: 15 - 26). One reason for the popularity of taxi drivers is that, as Peter Bearman points out in his study of doormen (Bearman 2005: 1), sociologists have a tendency to study populations perceived to be “deviant” (gang members, prostitutes, junkies) and taxi drivers are often perceived as such (Henslin 1967; Vidich 1976). However this “deviant” element of taxi driver behaviour (gambling, cheating passengers or sexual promiscuousness) does not characterize all the work that has been done on taxi drivers, nor is it the interest of this study.

One of the main topics discussed in the literature on the taxi market has been the question how taxi drivers and their customers establish trust, in other words how the problem of cooperation is solved (Beckert 2009). The topic of cooperation is central in the work of Fred Davis (1959), James Henslin (Henslin 1968; Henslin 1967), Fred Anderson (Anderson 2004), Diego Gambetta and Heather Hamill (Gambetta 2005). As Anderson points out “cab driving is, rather, dependent on the possibility of mutual trust based on a minimal amount of information shared between complete strangers” (Anderson 2004:132). The market is characterized by something that Fred Davis described as the “fleeting relationship” between the cabdriver and his fare (Davis 1959). Unlike other occupations such as doctors, schoolteachers and hairdressers, taxi drivers are unable to create a lasting relationship with their customers.<sup>63</sup> “In a Large City like Chicago – writes Davis – the hiring of a cab by a passenger may be conceived of in much the same way as the random collision of particles in an atomic field” (1959: 159). Due to this “fleeting relationship” a taxi driver works with limited knowledge about who his next customer will be and, unlike other professions, he cannot build a reputation. As there is a lack of information on both sides of the market, the taxi driver is exposed to “stick ups, belligerent drunks, women in labour, psychopaths, counterfeiters and fare-jumpers” (Davis 1959: 159), while the customer on the other hand is exposed to dishonest taxi drivers (Balafoutas 2011).

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<sup>63</sup> This is characteristic of big cities. Bill Jordan and Andrew Travers (1999) show that taxi drivers try to and sometimes are able to create more lasting relationships in small cities and rural areas.

To cope with uncertainty taxi drivers create classifications of passengers (Davis 1959; Gambetta 2005; Henslin 1967; Mathew 2008). These classifications are based on stereotypes and beliefs that allow drivers “to order experience, reduce uncertainty and further calculability of the tip” (Davis 1959: 159). The role of classification schemes is first to screen passengers and later to adjust driving behavior in order to get a higher tip. For example if a passenger is “qualified” as being a businessman, the driver would drive faster as businessmen are perceived as always being in a hurry; with old people quite the opposite as they prefer slow rides and politeness, while young people will hear the story of “how hard it is to be a taxi driver” as they are more sympathetic (Davis 1959: 164). The service becomes “individualized” in hope for a better tip at the end of the trip. These classification schemes are embedded in the social context. They are based on the stereotypes and beliefs about certain groups (ethnic minorities, or gender, age, class related) and stories one has heard from other drivers. Thus gossip among drivers plays a very important role (Anderson 2004; Gambetta 2005; Mathew 2008).

Whereas some authors using an interactionist perspective focus on the problem of cooperation, other authors using a more structuralist viewpoint focus on the problem of competition. This literature shows that what Davis called the “random collision of particles in an atomic field” is actually a world with a certain structure and a constant struggle between different actors (managers of taxi corporations, brokers, dispatchers, taxi drivers, regulators, police officers). In order for the market to function, more or less stable relations between these actors have to be established. The best examples of these struggles can be found in the literature under the notion of “taxi wars” that have taken place between taxi drivers and/or different taxi companies. These “wars” have taken place in New York at the beginning of the XX century (Hodges 2007), in Sweden after the deregulation of the market in the 1990s (Slavnic 2011), in South Africa, France, San Francisco and Manchester. Intensive struggles have taken place when taxis were being introduced; after deregulation (Slavnic 2011); with the introduction of new technology – cars at the beginning of the XX century (Hodges 2007) and GPS at the beginning of the XXI (Mathew 2008); and with the arrival of new incumbents trying to change the existing *status quo*. In some cases the phrase “war” is just a metaphor for companies trying to outcompete each other (a “price war”) or using dubious business methods to gain advantage (Slavnic 2011), while in others these were real violent conflicts between mafia-like structures (Hodges 2007). Conflicts take place not only between different taxi corporations but also within them. In his analysis of a taxi cooperative in Israel, Asaf Darr shows that in order for a taxi cooperative to function certain rules have to be established (Darr

1999). These include rules on how the organization functions, how the fares are distributed (especially who and when gets the most profitable fares) and most importantly how are conflicts within the cooperative resolved.

The taxi market has also received attention from historians, especially if we include the studies on horse drawn cabs. There have been works on the taxi industry in Paris (Papayanis 1996), London (Georgano 1972; May 1995; Warren 1995) and New York (Gilbert and Samuels 1982; Hodges 2007). What these studies show is that the taxi market underwent a great transformation from horse carriage in the XVII century, the introduction of cars at the beginning of the XX, to mobile phones and GPS in the XXI. Special attention has been paid to the changes that have taken place in the XX century around the Great Depression and the changes after 1970s commonly known as the process of neoliberalization (Mathew 2008, Hodges 2007). Mathew argues that in the US the taxi industry was one of the first to switch from Fordism to post-Fordism. In the 1960s the owners of taxi corporations were not able to create a Fordist control over drivers' work (Mathew 2014). Drivers would often negotiate the fare with the passenger without starting the meter and pocket the entire sum; since they were working on commission this affected the profit of the company (Mathew 2005: 81). In the 1970s the institutional rules were changed and taxi drivers began to lease taxis and medallions for a certain amount each day and kept the money that they earned. The institution of leasing which some economists dealing with the taxi industry call "the best solution to the principal-agent problem of selling the firm to the worker" (Farber 2003: 2) was according to Mathew a way of "shifting risk downwards to those who have the least power within the system" (Mathew 2005:81). Before the introduction of the leasing system in New York drivers shared the profit that they made during the day. This meant that the uncertainty related to the job was shared by the worker and the company. If there was a bad day due to the weather or an accident, the company and the taxi driver shared the costs. With the introduction of the leasing system it was now the taxi driver who would suffer.

## **Appendix 3. Interview Questions**

### **Warm up question:**

1. How have you become a taxi driver?

### **A typical day at work:**

2. Can you tell me how does your typical day at work look like?
3. When do you work; at what times?
4. How many hours per week do you work?
5. Is each day similar to the other or are they different? (the amount of work and the time of work)
6. Is your work time regular? (When do you work/when you don't work?)
7. Do you discuss with someone when you work (with wife, colleagues, and friends)?
8. Are weekends the same as the days during the week? If not, in what way are they different?
9. What do you do before going to work?
10. Do you have breaks in work? When, how long are they?
11. Are you doing other things, running errands when working? (e.g. shopping)
12. When you are working, do you think about the end of work? Why and in which situations?
13. When does your work day finish? Are you thinking about it?
14. What do you do when your work day finishes? Do you have any kind of routine? For example going back home or for a beer or a match?
15. Do you plan ahead how many hours will you work?
16. Are there certain hours, times, when you especially like to work?
  - a. Do you work in those hours?
17. Are there certain hours, moments, when you don't like to work?
  - a. Do you work in those moments?
18. Are there periods of time when you HAVE TO WORK? (Because your corporation or other taxi drivers demand it?)

### **Work day is related to your earnings, I have a couple of questions about that:**

19. Some taxi drivers set up a certain sum of money, which they are trying to earn every day. Are you trying to reach a certain sum each day?
  - a. Are you able to achieve the income target?
20. Do you talk with other taxi drivers about your earnings?
  - a. Can you remember the last conversation like that? Can you recount it? Was it similar to other conversations?
21. Is being a taxi driver your only way of earning money?
  - a. If another occupation: How do you combine those two occupations? When do you engage with one, and when with the other?

**I am interested in the changes to your work rhythm. This relates to the smallest changes, for example when you start work later or finish later/earlier than usually because you had a "bad day" or a "good day"; and those slightly bigger changes, e.g. the differences between a Wednesday and a Saturday; and the larger ones, the periods of time when you worked more or less or at different hours than usually.**

### **Long-term changes**

22. During the period when you were a taxi driver, how did your rhythm of work change?
  - a. Was there ever a time when you worked differently than now? When was that?
23. How did it happen that you changed the hours when you work? What was going on in your life at that time?
24. Was there a period in your life when you WORKED MORE? When? Why?
25. Was there a period in your life when you WORKED LESS? When? Why?
26. Have you ever not worked for a longer period of time?

### **Temporary changes**

27. Are there days when you work for a shorter period of time than usually?
28. Are there days when you work longer hours?
29. Are there certain days when you never work? (e.g. Christmas, holidays, wife's birthday)
30. Does it happen that the work day finishes unexpectedly? When and why that can happen? (e.g. when somebody vomits in a car/ unexpected call from wife etc.)
  - a. Can you recount such a situation?
31. Have you ever spontaneously decided to get in a car and start working?

**I am also interested in your free time as it is related to the work time. The more a person works, the less free time they have. That's why I have a couple of questions about what you do in your free time.**

32. Do you have any spare time for yourself? What do you do then?
  - a. Hobby
  - b. TV (specific programs)
33. Do you go on holidays? (When? How often? Where? With whom?)

**I am also interested in your family life. I will ask some questions about your family and personal life, if that's ok? I am interested in getting to know more about taxi drivers' family lives and how is it connected to work.**

34. Can you tell me something about your family? / Do you have a partner/Children?
35. Does your family life influence in any way your work?
  - a. Hours when you work?
  - b. The amount of time spent at work?
36. And does your work influence your family life?
37. Is it difficult to juggle both work and home? Is it a problem? In what way?
38. Have you ever been torn between the feeling that you should work and the feeling that you should spend time with your family?
  - a. In which situations? Can you recount the last one? Was it similar to others?
  - b. If yes, how do you deal with that?

## **WIFE**

39. Does your wife work?
  - a. Does your wife's work influences the decision about when you work? (e.g. do you drive her to and from work?)
40. Do you discuss with your wife how much TIME YOU SPEND AT WORK? (Do these conversations turn into quarrels?)
  - a. Can you recount the last such conversation?
41. Do you discuss with your wife how much money you EARN?
  - a. Can you recount such a conversation?
42. Does your wife/partner or your children expect that you will be at home at certain moments? What happens if you are not there?
43. How do you share the household chores?

- a. Who cleans?
  - b. Who cooks?
  - c. Who picks children up from school/friends/extracurricular activities?
  - d. Who does the shopping?
  - e. Do you have pets? Who walks them? (Does this influence when you work?)
44. How do you combine your work and your household responsibilities?
45. Have you ever used work to avoid household responsibilities?
46. Who manages the money at home?
- a. Do you give your earnings or a part of it to your wife? Do you have a joint bank account?
47. Do you talk with your wife when you work? Do you ever text or call her?

**The last couple of questions concern the protests and the union.**

48. Are you a member of the union?
- a. If so, since when?
  - b. If not, have you ever thought about joining?
49. Why did you join?/Why not?
50. Have you participated in the protests organized by taxi drivers? If so, in which ones?
51. Have any of your friends participated/ not participated as well?

**Demographics**

Age:

Education

Years of being a taxi driver:

Other occupation:

Income:

Do you have any mortgages or loans?

## Appendix 4. Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a part of a PhD research project in sociology. The project is about the life and work of taxi drivers in Warsaw. Your answers are very important as they will allow me to better understand this issue. All the answers are anonymous. They will not be published with the surnames and names. This research has a purely scientific character and will not be used for commercial purposes. There is also a prize! Three vouchers, either for Saturn or for Carrefour, each worth 250 PLN, will be drawn among the people who fill out this questionnaire and leave their email or mobile number (there is a space for that at the end). The reward will be drawn only from among licensed taxi drivers on the 1st of October 2013. The winners will be informed.

If you have any questions about my project or this questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact me at [marcinserafin29@gmail.com](mailto:marcinserafin29@gmail.com). Thank you for your help!

Filling out this questionnaire should take you about 20 minutes.

**To start, a couple of questions concerning the moment when you became a taxi driver.**

**1. When did you become a taxi driver (which year)? \_\_\_\_\_**

**2. Was that your first job?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

**3. What did you do before becoming a taxi driver?**

- I had my own company
- I worked in a public institution
- I worked in a private company
- I was a professional driver (e.g. truck driver, delivery driver)
- I was a student
- I was unemployed



Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**4. What exactly did you do before becoming a taxi driver?**

**(Last occupation)?**\_\_\_\_\_

**5. How did you become a taxi driver?**

*(You can tick multiple boxes)*

- I was encouraged by a friend
- I was encouraged by a family member (Who?): \_\_\_\_\_
- I could not find another job
- I wanted to be a taxi driver since I was a child
- I lost my previous job
- I was directed towards this job by a jobcentre
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Before you became a taxi driver, has anyone discouraged you from this form of employment?**

*(You can tick multiple boxes)*

- Yes, a friend who is a taxi driver
- Yes, a friend who is not a taxi driver
- Yes, a family member (who?) \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes, somebody else (who?) \_\_\_\_\_
- No, I was not discouraged

**7. Has anyone in your family worked as a taxi driver?**

- Yes (indicate who?): \_\_\_\_\_
- No

**PART I: WORK**

**To start I have some questions about you and your everyday work.**

**8. How many hours did you work last week?**

-----

**9. Last month, have you worked on one day more than:**

*(Tick only one box in each row)*

	<b>Yes, more than once a week</b>	<b>Yes, once a week</b>	<b>Yes, less than once a week</b>	<b>No</b>
14-16 hours:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12-14 hours:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10-12 hours:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8-10 hours:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**10. What time did you work over the last 7 days?**

*(Take into account any breaks, e.g. Monday 6:15-12:30, 15:00-19:30)*

- Monday (what time?) -----
- Tuesday (what time?) -----
- Wednesday (what time?) -----
- Thursday (what time?) -----
- Friday (what time?) -----
- Saturday (what time?) -----
- Sunday (what time?) -----

**11. Last week, did you work...**

- more than usually?
- the same as usually?
- less than usually?

**12. Do you...**

- work more than other taxi drivers?
- work the same amount of time as other taxi drivers?
- work less than other taxi drivers?

**13. Do you have a regular work rhythm (specific hours when you try to work)?**

- Yes, always
- Yes, usually
- No

**14. Do you go back home for breaks during your work?**

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Yes, if I am close to home
- Never

**15. Do you agree with a statement "I try not to go back home during my work hours because it is later difficult to motivate myself to leave again to work"?**

- Yes
- No

**16. Imagine that one day you have been working for 9 hours already when you get a client who wants to go to a destination which is close to your home. What would you do after delivering the client to her/his destination?**

- I would finish work and go back home
- I would go back home for a break, planning to work again later
- I would keep working

**17. Did you work?**

*(Tick only one box in each row)*

	Yes	No	N/A (I was not a taxi driver at that time)
At New Year's Eve 2011/2012	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At New Year's Eve 2012/2013	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**18. Did you work?**

*(Tick only one box in each row)*

	Yes, all days	Yes, two days	Yes, one day	No	N/A (I was not a taxi driver at that time)
During Christmas (24th, 25th and 26th) 2012	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Last Easter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**19. Do you drive at night (after 10 pm)?**

- Yes, I am mainly a night driver
- Yes, but only during weekends
- I am not a night driver, but I sometimes drive at night
- No, never

**20. Do you agree with a statement "As a religious person I try not to work on Sunday and during religious holidays"?**

- Yes
- No

**21. Do you have a daily income target ?**

- Yes
- No           à Question nr 25

**22. How much is it?**

-----

**23. Do you manage to achieve it?**

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

**24. Do you agree with these statements?**

*(You can tick multiple boxes)*

- I work at certain hours and keep to them even at the expense of a daily wage
- I try to work towards my set daily wage, even if that means working longer hours
- If I achieve my set daily wage, I finish work no matter what hour it is
- If there are clients, I keep working even after achieving my set daily wage
- None of the above

**25. What would be a good daily wage?**

-----

**26. Do you use a calendar to note your fares, petrol expenses etc. (it can be a normal, paper calendar, an electronic one or an excel document at your computer)?**

- Yes, I note down the fares and petrol expenses
- Yes, I not down the fares
- No

**27. How many days last month were you not able to work because of the problems with the car?**

-----

**28. During the last month how many of your clients tried to flee or did run out without paying?**

*(If there was not such case, write in 0)*

-----

**29. During the last month how many of your clients did not show up?**

*(If there was not such case, write in 0)*

-----

**30. During the last month how many of your clients caused problems (quarrelled, did not want to pay, could not explain where they were going, were aggressive, vomited etc.)?**

*(If there was not such case, write in 0)*

-----

**31. Do you have regular clients who arrange the pickups directly with you?**

*(If not, write in 0)*

-----

**32. Do you go back to one stand (e.g. at a certain train station or the airport)?**

- Yes, I usually wait at a certain stand (which one?) \_\_\_\_\_
- No

**33. Do you think that being a taxi driver will be your last occupation?**

- Yes
- No

**In this part I am interested in your views on your work.**

**34. What do you like about your work?**

*(Please enter from 1 to 5 things, the order does not matter)*

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

**35. What do you dislike about your work?**

*(Please enter from 1 to 5 things, the order does not matter)*

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

**36. How much do you (dis)like your work, on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 meaning you do not like it at all, 10 meaning you like it a lot)?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**36. Do you agree with these statements?**

*(You can tick multiple boxes)*

- If I were to earn more, I would like my job
- I used to enjoy being a taxi driver
- If I had other options, I would quit being a taxi driver
- I will probably not be a taxi driver in the future
- I will continue to be a taxi driver in the future
- None of the above

## **PART II: FAMILY LIFE**

**37. Do you have a wife/husband or a partner?**

- Yes, we live together
- Yes, but we do not live together → question nr 58
- No → question nr 58

**38. Your wife/husband/partner**



- full time employment
- has her/his own business
- has a part time employment
- has a casual, seasonal work
- is on maternal/paternal leave
- is retired à question nr 42
- is in school à question nr 42
- takes care of home à question nr 42
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**39. What does your spouse/partner do?**

-----

**40. Do you drive your spouse/partner to work?**

- Yes, always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Never

**41. Do you pick her/him up after work?**

- Yes, always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Never

**42. Does your spouse/partner encourage you to...**

- work less?
- work more?
- She/she is not trying to not influence how much I work
- N/A

**A couple of questions about household chores.**

**43. Who in your household is responsible for cooking?**

- Solely my spouse/partner
- Mainly my spouse/partner
- Rather my spouse/partner
- We share this responsibility equally
- Rather me
- Mainly me
- Solely me

**44. Who in your household is responsible for cleaning?**

- Solely my spouse/partner
- Mainly my spouse/partner
- Rather my spouse/partner
- We share this responsibility equally
- Rather me
- Mainly me
- Solely me

**45. Who in your household is responsible for doing laundry and ironing?**

- Solely my spouse/partner
- Mainly my spouse/partner
- Rather my spouse/partner
- We share this responsibility equally
- Rather me
- Mainly me

- Solely me

**46. Who in your household is responsible for other household chores (e.g. walking the dog, taking care of the garden, fixing things)?**

- Solely my spouse/partner
- Mainly my spouse/partner
- Rather my spouse/partner
- We share this responsibility equally
- Rather me
- Mainly me
- Solely me

**47. Who in your household is responsible for the household budget?**

- Solely my spouse/partner
- Mainly my spouse/partner
- Rather my spouse/partner
- We share this responsibility equally
- Rather me
- Mainly me
- Solely me

**48. How many hours per week do you spend on household chores?**

-----

**49. Do you treat household chores as work?**

- Definitly yes
- Rather yes
- Rather no
- Definitly no

**50. Do you agree with these statements?**

*(You can tick multiple boxes)*

- If I didn't have family obligations, I would drive more
- If I wasn't concerned for my family, I would drive less
- I would like to spend more time with my family
- My work is less tiring than my household duties
- None of the above

**51. Have you ever used your work as a way to take a break from your family problems or to avoid household chores?**

- Yes
- No

**52. What is your spouse's/partner's view on your work?**

- Positive
- Rather positive
- Neutral
- Rather negative
- Negative
- Very negative

**53. Why does she/he has such a view?**

-----

-----

-----

-----

**54. Does your spouse/partner prefer that you do not drive at night?**

- Yes
- No

**55. Who contributes more to the household budget?**

- Me
- Equally
- My spouse/partner

**56. My work as a taxi driver...**

- has a very positive influence on my family life
- has a positive influence on my family life
- does not influence my family life
- has a negative influence on my family life
- has a very negative influence on my family life

**57. Do you agree with these statements?**

*(You can tick multiple boxes)*

- My spouse/partner wants me to earn more money
- My spouse/partner wants me to find a different job
- My spouse/partner wants me to drive at different hours than I do
- My work is a source of family conflicts
- None of the above

**58. Have your work as a taxi driver ever contributed to the breakdown of your relationship?**

- Yes
- No → question nr 61

**59. To what extent did your work contribute to the breakdown of your relationship?**

- My work was the main reason
- My work was one of the reasons

**60. Did the breakdown concern your marriage?**

- Yes
- No

**CHILDREN**

**61. Do you have children younger than 16 years old?**

- Yes (what age?): \_\_\_\_\_
- No → question nr 66

**62. Do you drive your children to kindergarten/school?**

- Yes, always
- Yes, usually
- Yes, sometimes
- No, never
- N/A

**63. Do you pick them up?**

- Yes, always
- Yes, usually
- Yes, sometimes
- No, never

N/A

**64. Does the fact that you have children influence when you work?**

- Yes, to a large extent
- Yes, to some extent
- No, it does not

**65. Who in your household is responsible for childcare (cooking, playing, helping with homework etc.)?**

- Mainly my spouse/partner
- We share the responsibility
- Mainly me
- My children are old enough, they do not need that much care /Dzieci są na tyle dorosłe, że nie potrzebują opieki

**PART III. PROTESTS AND THE UNION**

**66. Have you participated in protests:**

*(Tick only one box in each row)*

	<b>Yes, I helped in organization</b>	<b>Yes, I did</b>	<b>No, I did not</b>	<b>I was not yet a taxi driver at that time</b>
At the Palace of Culture (September 2011)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At Gazeta Wyborcza (April 2012)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At the Prime Minister's Office (May 2012)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





**73. Why/Why not?**

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

**74. How many of your friends are members of the taxi drivers' union?**

- None of them
- 1-5
- 5-10
- 10-20
- 20-30
- More than 30

**75. Do you agree with these statements?**

*(You can tick multiple boxes)*

- Labour unions are useful, they help to achieve the interests of diverse work groups
- Labour unions are only interested in their own goals and interests, and not in those of the taxi drivers
- Taxi drivers should not organize into labour unions because they are entrepreneurs
- I do not trust the labour unions
- I have had bad experiences with the labour unions
- None of the above

**76. Besides the protests, do you participate in any other activities in support of the taxi drivers (e.g. editing the newspaper, participating in the meetings, running the Internet forum)?**

- Yes (please specify what you do): \_\_\_\_\_
- No

**77. Do you read newspapers for taxi drivers (e.g. taryfa.info)?**

- Yes
- No

**78. Do you use Internet forums for taxi drivers (including Facebook)?**

- Yes, I read and I post (please specify which ones): \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes, I read (please specify which ones): \_\_\_\_\_
- No

**We are nearly finished. I just have a couple of questions about your car**

**79. What kind of car are you driving at the moment (model, year of production)?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**80. Does the car you are currently driving belongs to..**

- You?
- A person close to you (e.g. family member)?
- The taxi corporation?

**81. Is this the only car in your household?**

- Yes
- No

**82. How many years are driving that car?**

-----

**83. What is your favourite ca brand?**

-----

**84. Do you agree with these statements?**

*(You can tick multiple boxes)*

- I ought to buy a new car soon
- I do not have money to change my car
- My corporation presses me to change to a new car
- I will probably have to change the corporation I work for because I do not have an appropriate car
- I had to change the corporation because of the car issues
- None of the above

**We are almost at the end. I just have some general questions, which will not be shared with anyone.**

**85. Sex**

- Woman
- Man

**86. Age** -----

**87. Place of birth**

- Warsaw
- Other (please specify):

-----

**88. Marital status**

*(You can tick multiple boxes)*

- Single
- In a relationship
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed

**89. Education**

- Elementary school
- Technical
- Secondary (vocational school or high school)
- Higher education (without the diploma)
- Higher education (with the diploma, BA or MA)
- Other:

-----

**90. Which corporation do you work for?**

- Ele
- Sawa
- Super
- Volfra
- MERC
- Glob
- I am not in a corporation
- Gold
- Grosik
- Euro

- Bayer
- Wawa
- Halo
- Itaxi
- Mytaxi
- Other:

-----

**91. How long have you been with that taxi corporation?**

*(please insert the number of months if it is less than two year, and years if it is more)*

\_\_\_\_\_

**92. Which taxi corporations have you worked for before?**

Corporation	Year

**93. Have you ever driven for the occasional transport of persons?**

- Yes
- No

**94. Have you looked for other job opportunities during last 6 months?**

- Yes
- No

**95. Is driving a taxi the only source of your income?**

- Yes à question nr 97
- No

**96. If not, what are your other sources of income?**

*(You can tick multiple boxes)*

- Retirement
- Rent
- Full time employment (where?): -----
- Part time employment (where):-----
- My own business
- Commissioned work
- Other: -----

**97. What is your mother's (main caretaker's) occupation?**

- Elementary school
- Technical
- Secondary (vocational school or high school)
- Higher education (without the diploma)
- Higher education (with the diploma, BA or MA)
- Other:

-----

**98. What did she do when you were 14 years old?**

-----

**99. What is your father's education?**

- Elementary school
- Technical
- Secondary (vocational school or high school)
- Higher education (without the diploma)
- Higher education (with the diploma, BA or MA)
- Other:

-----

**100. What did he do when you were 14 years old?**

-----

**101. What is your income per month (after taxation)?**

*(If you are uncomfortable giving out that information, please leave this space blank)*

-----

**102. How would you describe the economic situation of your family?**

- We live very poorly – we don't have enough even for basic needs
- We live frugally – on we have to carefully manage on a daily basis
- We live averagely – we have for day to day, but we have to save for larger purchases
- We live well – we can afford things, without having to save
- We live very well – we can afford a certain amount of luxury

**103. If you would like to participate in the prize pool (a voucher to Saturn or Carrefour for 250 PLN), please enter your email below.**

-----

**104. Would you agree to meet for an additional interview (which would last around an hour), at a time and place convenient for you?**

- Yes *(please enter your email, if you have not done so above)*

-----

- No
- I have been already interviewed

**105. If you would like to add some additional information or comment, here is a space to do so.**

-----

-----

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