

Autonomous Vehicles: A contemporary space to explore shifting time-use dynamics

Profile

My name is Cian McCarroll, I am 25 years old. I am a graduate of TCD with a degree in Geography & Sociology, I currently work in the TCD Geography department. My research explores the temporal significance of contemporary technology in the urban environment. In undertaking this interdisciplinary project, I will operate as a bridge between computer science and the humanities to engage with the social dynamics that are being perpetuated due to an increasing blurring of the lines between the human and machine realms.

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Research Questions

- How do people believe they would spend their time in autonomous vehicles?
- How do people choose to spend their time in autonomous vehicles?
- How does the nature of the space within an autonomous vehicle impact the choice of how people use their time within an autonomous vehicle?
- How does the autonomous vehicle change the spatial dynamics of the urban environment?

Why am I asking these questions?

- The introduction of the autonomous vehicle signifies the creation of a new urban space. This creation of new urban space allows for a direct exploration of how social dynamics shift when a new finite window of time comes into existence due to contemporary technology.
- The autonomous vehicle provides a space within which the emerging temporal structures that are reshaping the interactions between time and labour in the city can be quantified and explored.
- While individual platforms that make up the on-demand economy have been written about, the autonomous vehicle is a space that facilitates the engagement with multiple platforms.
- The belief of how this time will be used may contrast with the reality of how it is used, this will provide insight into the way in which a worker's temporality can inform the understanding of the mediation of time and work in contemporary capitalism.

How am I answering these questions?

- I will be employing a large-scale short answer survey to engage with the more hypothetical elements of the research such as the beliefs and expectations of how this new free time would be used within an autonomous vehicle.
- The survey will be followed up by a small number of in-depth interviews with those that have experienced this time within an autonomous vehicle. These interviews will allow for greater depth in the questioning of how this time was used and why.
- I also intend to interview those that are engaging with the current marketing and deployment of autonomous vehicle technology to see how they believe customers of "Transport as a service" will use this newly available time.

Key Concepts

- Temporal Order: Flexible capitalism naturalises the disrupted workplace and creates a moral order that is full of dilemma contradiction and disorder
- Structured Time: Rationalised and normalised by those that exist within the temporal order – relationally, organisationally and institutionally perpetuated.
- Negotiable Temporality: Temporal entrepreneurship allows individuals to enrich their experience of work time through choice of how best to increase productivity.

Julie Yujie Chen & Ping Sun (2020)

Experience of Time – Scale from large to small

- Technical Acceleration: Processes of production have been increasing in speed since the Industrial Revolution, this impacts the speed of all surrounding processes.
- Acceleration of Social Change: The experience of change increases over time leading to feelings of a space-time compression, an altering of the relationship between space and time in a postmodern setting.
- Acceleration of the pace of life: The feelings experienced by an individual relating to the increased potential of life and the contrasting reality of a shrinking feeling around available time.

Harvey (1989) & Rosa (2015)