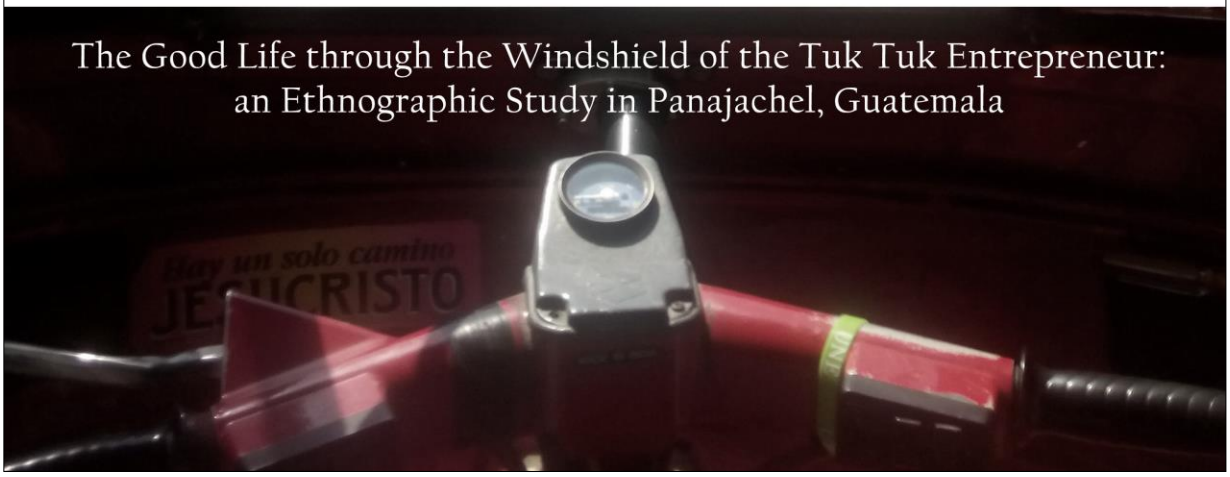
Lars Bulters & Margo Kosters

THE PURSUIT OF OPPORTUNITY

The Good Life through the Windshield of the Tuk Tuk Entrepreneur: an Ethnographic Study in Panajachel, Guatemala



The Pursuit of Opportunity

The Good Life through the Windshield of the Tuk Tuk Entrepreneur:
an Ethnographic Study in Panajachel, Guatemala[1]

[1] Front-page photograph by Margo Kosters. Design by Lars Bulters

Universiteit Utrecht 

Bachelor Thesis 2014-2015
Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology

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June 2015

Contents

Acknowledgements

In September 2014, we started building the foundation for the research we would be conducting in Panajachel, Guatemala. Through inspiring discussions with our supervisor, Kees Koonings, we found and refined our focus on Panajachel's tuk tuk drivers. In the field, he supported us through endless skype sessions and invaluable e-mail discussions. We would like to thank Kees for keeping our minds sharp and for his advice throughout the research project. In Guatemala, we received great support from him and Marie-Louise Glebbeek with finding a host family and our transition into the field. Furthermore, we would like to thank our peer-feedback group consisting of Liza Hokke, Sinde de Strijcker, Noortje Labrujere and Milou beens. They stood by us when we needed partners to spar with and were very constructive in their feedback.

The last twelve months, Lars Bulters and I worked together intensively on our research. It was a year full of joy, intellectual, and personal insights. Lars is a very analytical and intelligent research partner. He communicates in a bright manner and is able to keep track of our meta-connections and the overall progress. Working with him made the last year of my Bachelor not only more enjoyable, but academically speaking, more profound as well. I am very grateful for his support during the whole process.

- Margo Kosters

From the first words in our research proposal to the last ones concluding this thesis, I have benefited from Margo Kosters' tireless and positive attitude. I am very happy with how smoothly our collaboration developed throughout this past year. Gaining trust, forming a bond with the locals and being able to understand them emotionally as well as rationally are some of Margo's qualities that contributed immensely to the quality of the data we gathered. All I can say is thank you.

- Lars Bulters

Panajachel in the 1930s

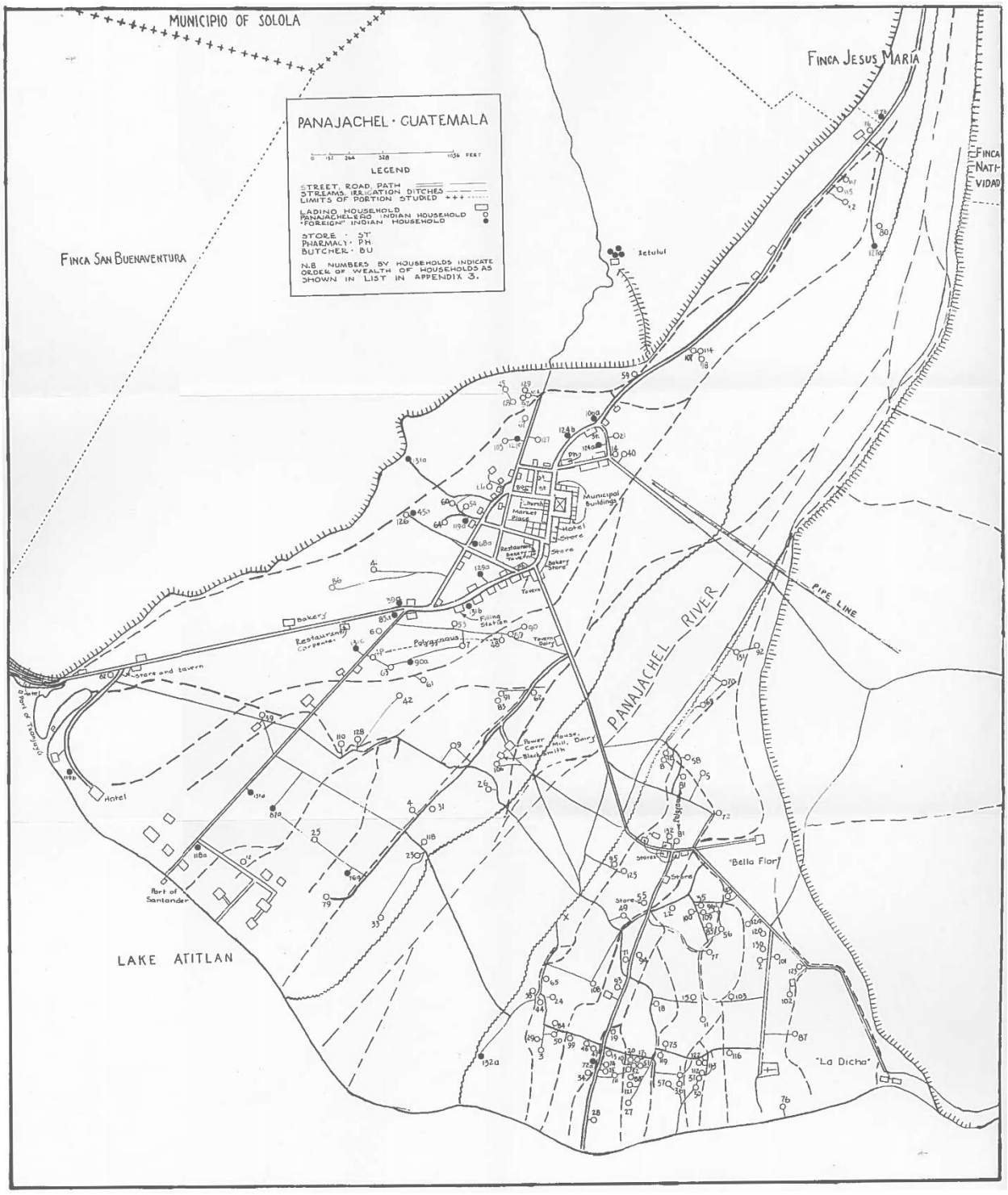

Figure 1: Panajachel in the 1930s (Tax, 1953)

Panajachel in 2015

Figure 2: Panajachel at the time of our research (Google Maps, 2015)

Tuk tuks in Panajachel

Figure 3 Tuk tuk drivers waiting for passengers near the river (Picture by Margo Kosters)

Introduction

Every early morning, the two main streets of the small town of Panajachel, Guatemala, *Calle Santander* and *Calle Principal*, come to life with fumes and noises from the busy traffic. Three-wheeled, motorised tuk tuks form the largest part of the traffic as they bring locals, wares, and tourists to their destinations. With the large amount of local people and tourists commuting in and out of Panajachel, it is no surprise that it is a very entrepreneurial town. However, this business-oriented character is nothing new to *Panajacheleños*.

In 1963, Sol Tax published his book 'Penny Capitalism.' He discusses how locals used money to operate within the context of the competitive market economy in Panajachel in the 1930s. There are no longer 800 *Panajacheleños* as in the time of Tax's fieldwork, but a population of over 11.000. Despite various changes and developments in and around Panajachel since Tax's time in the field, poverty is still very much present. Their monotonous diet, often consisting solely of tortillas, the amount of children working in the streets and the precarious sheet metal constructions many of the locals live in are proof of that.

The first of the Millennium Development Goals is the ambition to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger in the world, but the way in which this goal is being reached for by the UN and NGOs has been subject to increasing opposition. Critics say that the western ethnocentric approach to poverty alleviation is not only morally wrong, but also ineffective. As Dambisa Moyo puts it " there is a largely unspoken and insidious view [that people] cannot improve their own lot in life without foreign guidance and help" (Easterly, 2009). The solution to eradicating poverty, then, lies within the countries themselves. As Amartya Sen (1999) states, the key lies in development through freedom and opportunities.

Development broadens a community's opportunity structures and the space of what is possible. When looking at this approach, we find the assumption that individuals hold an intrinsic will to move towards something, loaded with meaning, bigger than ourselves. A theory central in our research is the concept of the *Good Life* by Edward Fischer. As Sen (1999) points out, the Good Life is comprised not only of agency,

opportunity structures, but also of aspirations, fairness, dignity, family and social relations, material resources, health and physical security, and larger purposes and projects (Fischer, 2014: 211). Research on the pursuit of happiness goes back to ancient Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, but, in accordance with most critics, Fischer adds important weight to local perceptions to the equation. Doing research on happiness has a great societal relevance by its contribution to our understanding of poverty. Furthermore, happiness and wellbeing play an important role within current development indicators (Graham, 2005: 49; Fischer 2014). In-depth research of local perceptions of poverty and happiness is needed in order to expose and resolve existing shortcomings in the current poverty alleviation and development paradigm.

In this thesis we will focus on how tuk tuk drivers perceive the Good Life in relation to their own entrepreneurial livelihood. The focus of this study will be on the tuk tuk drivers in Panajachel. There are approximately 300 tuk tuk drivers in the village. These drivers work with 161 tuk tuks and all save two of them are men. Ages vary between 17 and 45. Not all of them are the owners of the tuk tuk they work with. The main question guiding our research is:

How does entrepreneurship help tuk tuk drivers in Panajachel, Guatemala achieve the Good Life?

In order to formulate a comprehensive answer to this question we look into the concepts of the Good Life, micro-entrepreneurship, and the informal sector. Anthropology concerns solving human problems through ethnographic fieldwork in different social contexts (AAA, 2012). With this study we hope to contribute to the relatively new field of study of positive anthropology. This kind of anthropology offers conceptual alternatives and practical suggestions based on inductive ethnographic understandings of what people say they want from their lives (Fischer, 2014: 65).

Approach

The main focus of our research is on the individual perceptions tuk tuk drivers hold. When conducting research on meanings people give to their lives, this is best measured with an qualitative research approach. In this section we will explicate the overall research design

and demonstrate why we use this design to answer our main question. This has many advantages as we aim to represent their perspectives.

During the eight weeks of fieldwork in Panajachel we gathered data through various ethnographic methods like participant observation, interviews and informal conversation. In the beginning phase of our research, we utilised the survey research technique. We did not use the survey data for statistical analysis, but rather as a means to get in touch with our target population. The data obtained through conducting this survey gave us a baseline understanding with respect to the tuk tuk population in general and provided us with the opportunity to recruit informants. The usage of a questionnaire in the beginning phase of our research helped us to build rapport with the tuk tuk drivers. After the first week, drivers started to recognise us as we walked through the streets of Panajachel. This was a fruitful result from the survey and gave us the opportunity to engage in more meaningful conversations in order to gain deep insights into the meaning tuk tuk drivers give to their lives.

The major part of our data was gathered through informal conversations. Tuk tuk drivers work long hours and during their breaks they often visit their families or run errands. So, we had to balance engaging in conversation with them standing still, resulting in them earning less money, with riding along. As a consequence, most of the conversations took place from the back seat of their tuk tuk, while driving around the town. During our next ride we would pick up the subject where we left off and continue the conversation.

Occasionally we would invite a driver to a cup of coffee to learn more about a certain subject. In this way we could ensure a more tranquil pace of conversation because of the absence of time pressure present when riding a tuk tuk. These interviews were more structured in character than informal conversations in that we used lists of topics to keep track of the ground we covered.

In addition to interviews, we gathered data by means of participant observation. Whilst this term represents an oxymoronic methodical contradiction in itself, the field of research we examined posed additional challenges. We participated and observed in and during daily activities of the family and by catching rides from many tuk tuk drivers. True participant observation, however, would include participating in *driving*. Due to numerous limitations, amongst which included our limited knowledge of the streets of

the town and various legal requirements for tuk tuk drivers, we were confined to the back seat.

The people of Panajachel form a very close and open-hearted community. Striking up conversation and getting to know new drivers was greatly influenced by this welcoming characteristic. Although most of our conversations and interviews took place from the back seat of tuk tuks, we were also invited to homes, gatherings, and hangouts. A lot of the data we gathered was improved by the welcoming culture of the people of Panajachel.

During our fieldwork we stayed with a local family of five. The head of the family, Alejandra, owns a tuk tuk herself which she leases to a good friend Nicolás, who became a friend and a key informant of ours. Alejandra's son Lucas, a former tuk tuk driver, occasionally drives the tuk tuk as well. The rest of the family cooks and sells food at a local school and in the evening from a *comedor* (street stall) in *Calle Principal*.

The family provided a valuable gateway to the community, by introducing us to different drivers and telling us about the customs of the locals. The family's embeddedness in the local community also proved valuable for triangulation purposes. By hearing their perspective, we could construct a more thorough understanding of certain stories and events.

During our fieldwork we worked together very closely. We chose a complementary approach by dividing the research along the different aspects of entrepreneurship and the Good Life. In this way, each of us focused on the concepts that interested them most. Nevertheless, because of the interconnected character of the concepts, the data gathering process had the same intertwined characteristics. This made it possible to constantly check and balance our findings. Throughout the gathering and reporting process, we helped each other by taking a critical look at the work we had done so far. Margo Kosters focused on local perceptions of the Good Life, while Lars Bulters looked at entrepreneurship. This distinction aside, through our intensive collaboration, every chapter of the resulting thesis is as much Margo's as it is Lars' work.

In the first week we decided to introduce ourselves to the people in the field as a team. Later we noticed that walking around and interviewing people together, we would get more attention from tuk tuk drivers we had met before than we did when walking

around by ourselves. We used this to our advantage by setting out together and splitting up occasionally to meet and report back later. As the weeks progressed, we noticed that almost all of the drivers started recognising us. They would wave, high-five, or sound their horn at us as they drove by us. Fun-factor aside, this rapport we built turned out to be extremely useful when talking to drivers about more touchy subjects, such as poverty or personal opinions on the police, and it made it possible to have longer conversations. Additionally, we felt that we ourselves were getting more and more comfortable talking to them, seeing some of them more as friends than just informants. This made it easier to ask drivers out for a coffee or for lunch for more in-depth interviews. That being said, it is important to take into consideration the various ethical concerns of doing field work.

Anthropologists often face difficult situations in which tacit knowledge become visible through participant observation and extended field periods (AAA, 2012). Conducting an ethically responsible study was our main concern in all stages of our research. We prepared ourselves beforehand by studying the AAA ethical code and deliberating on the possible significant moments in which these guidelines might be most useful. During our research we informed every informant we have spoken with about the aim of our research project and what will be done with the gathered data. By doing this, we can assure having informed consent and conducting an ethical research. We are aware, however, that asking for informed consent is not without its limitations. We doubt that it is possible for an anthropologist to completely cover all the consequences of participation assumed to be part of informed consent. Nevertheless, we feel that we informed our participants to the best of our abilities. In addition, we handled our findings in a sensitive manner and kept our records confidential in all stages of our research.

As every anthropologist in the field, we faced differences in power relations and friendships. Befriending more and more tuk tuk drivers required balancing expectations of existing informants with finding new informants. As Panajachel is a small town, and the streets were our field, being constantly visible to our informants made us very conscious about who passed us, lest we forget to greet one. This may seem trivial, but during the conducting of the initial survey, we found that the small amount of rapport we built with new informants thus far was subject to considerable upkeep.

One other important ethical aspect was the income informants forewent while engaging in conversation with us. Considering the low average income of tuk tuk drivers,

we felt that by talking to them in the streets, we forced them to forego income. This could influence rapport negatively, we thought, so we decided to take rides from and to the corners of town instead to ensure compensation for their time while avoiding attracting participants for the wrong (financial) reasons.

Our thesis is constructed in the following manner. First, we build the concrete theoretical and conceptual bricks of our argument in a conceptual framework. The next chapter focuses on the context of our field work, namely Panajachel, Guatemala. The third chapter explores the characteristics of entrepreneurship and regulation in the tuk tuk sector. Chapter four looks at Fischer's concept of the Good Life through the windshield of Panajachel's tuk tuk drivers. Concluding our thesis, in the last chapter we argue that an entrepreneurial attitude is an important step towards achieving the Good Life.

Conceptual Framework

In this conceptual framework we will give an outline of the concepts and theories used in our research. The central topic of our thesis is how entrepreneurship helps tuk tuk drivers achieve the Good Life. We will examine the connection between improvement of wellbeing and entrepreneurship. First, we shall define the concept of poverty and the different ways the international community responds to alleviate poverty. Second, we will shed light on the informal sector, regulation and micro entrepreneurship. Finally, we will focus on the Good Life. Our research is focused on Guatemala, notably the Lake Atitlán region. Therefore, we describe the economic and social situation of both the macro and micro levels of our research with respect to this region. This can be found in the context chapter.

Poverty

Poverty is a concept that is very common in popular and academic discourse alike. Poverty exists in all cultures in some form or another. While some would say that poverty is tied to insufficient financial income, popular expressions state that one does not need money to be rich (i.e. not poor) by referring to poverty as quality of life, tying the concept to subjective well-being, and chance. Nonetheless, poverty has long been subject of worldwide debate.

While the central objective of the Millennium Development Goals has been to reduce poverty by half by 2015, almost every policy is seen in the light of poverty reduction in official discourse, and debate about the exact meaning of this objective has continuously increased (Stewart et al., 2007). Before this goal can be achieved, thus, it is necessary to define poverty more precisely. What is poverty exactly and who do we consider to be poor?

Stewart et al. (2007) describe four alternative approaches to defining poverty: the monetary approach, the capability approach, the approach of social exclusion as defining poverty, and the participatory approach. These distinctions have to do with the question whether the definition should include social, cultural, or political aspects in addition to material aspects.

The monetary approach is perhaps the most commonly used way of looking at poverty. It assumes a certain poverty line and defines any shortfall of income below this line as poverty. The capability approach measures poverty in terms of the ability to achieve certain minimal or basic capabilities, focusing on indicators of freedom and value of life rather than monetary wealth. The idea of poverty in terms of being able to meet basic needs of life is very common among scholars such as Ahmad et al. (2011) and Sen (1999) who state that poverty is a condition of insufficient income with the inability to meet the basic needs of human beings as a result. Sen (1999) argues that this is an essential perspective to understanding poverty, because the deprivation of essential capabilities reflects in mortality, morbidity, undernourishment, illiteracy, and other failures. This approach is closely tied to the concept of social exclusion, yet Stewart et al. (2007) argue that it is important to distinguish capability deprivation from social exclusion.

As we have seen in Sen's (1999) capability approach, wellbeing is influenced by inadequate wealth and shortcomings of agency. This condition is 'unfree' in Sen's terminology. The notion of frustrated freedom is a category initiated by Victor et al. to describe the position in which one's levels of experienced agency are high, but income is low. One's experienced sense of poverty is fortified by high levels of agency. In other words, when the subjective individual agency grows, individuals experience a growing level of frustration, because their income and social capital do not accommodate this additional freedom (Victor et al., 2013).

The approach of poverty in terms of social exclusion looks at exclusion from ordinary living patterns, regardless of monetary income or the conceptualisation of a meaningful life of the individual. These first three approaches all assume that there is an objective way to set or define a poverty line, basic capabilities, or ordinary living patterns respectively. The problem is that these thresholds are in fact not universal and are often imposed externally. The participatory approach that Stewart et al. (2007) present is an answer to this problem in that it takes into account the meanings that the people themselves give to the concept of poverty and being poor.

The multidimensional character of poverty is also emphasised in the World Bank research initiative *Consultations with the Poor*. The aim of this project was to get the insider perspective on poverty by conducting qualitative research on an unprecedented

scale among the poor of 23 different countries. Led by Deepa Narayan (1999), the research shows how perceptions of poverty differ across cultures, and stresses the importance of the meaning the people affected give to being poor: the focus on subjective poverty.

In this research we shall combine Stewart et al.'s participatory approach, Sen's capability approach, and Narayan's conception of subjective poverty to explore the social dimension of poverty and well-being. Focusing on the meaning that people attach to poverty and well-being allows a better understanding of how local social processes and livelihood strategies influence those concepts. Chambers (2005) shows an important connection between poverty in the participatory sense and livelihood. He states that livelihood consists of flows of different kinds that support the well-being of the individual and his family. In addition, he sees the security of livelihood, in the sense of physical safety, rights security, reliability of access to resources, income and food, and basic services as essential to well-being. In the struggle against urban poverty it is exactly this security that proves to be exceptionally hard to maintain because of the constant growth of the urban population (Kasarda & Rondinelli, 1992: 256). When livelihood security deteriorates or disappears completely, families are faced with the threat of poverty. In the next section light will be shed on international efforts to alleviate poverty through aid and cooperation.

Development interventions and poverty alleviation

Although different forms of international development cooperation existed before, the constitution of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in 1944 preluded the post-World War II international reparations and international economic development cooperation paradigm. The World Bank grants low-interest loans to Less Developed Countries (LDCs) to stimulate economic development (Mason & Asher, 1973; Balaam & Dillman, 2014:26). The aims of the World Bank are focused on poverty alleviation through financial support. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was constituted in 1966 firstly to help build nations which could withstand crises, and secondly to stimulate the kind of growth that improves the quality of life (UNDP, 2014). When we look at the UN system, we find there is no established convention for the designation of countries or areas to the 'developed' and 'developing' categories (United Nations, 2013). Development can be defined as any diverse and multi-faceted process of

predominantly positive change in the quality of life for individuals and society, in both material and nonmaterial respects (Simon, 2003:8). According to the World Bank, a 'developing country is one in which the majority lives on far less money than the population in highly industrialised countries' (Hernandez et al., 2014). All in all, there is no fixed definition of a development country.

Before the 1980s, there was a great level of international development assistance channelled through state programmes or projects. A turning point in this paradigm came when the focus shifted to facilitating small poor producers within the informal sector with microfinance programmes. The origin and effectiveness of development intervention through microfinance, a very popular method nowadays, is a contested subject (Banerjee et al., 2013: 1). It is a strategy to accelerate the process to alleviate poverty by providing poor people with small amounts of credit to set up their own business (Ahmad et al., 2011). Since the 1970s microfinance has come to be seen as an important development policy and poverty alleviation tool (Stewart et al., 2010: 8, Dalglish, 2008: 55). Both terms (micro credit/finance) are used interchangeably and represent the range of financial services which are specifically designed for the poor (Brau & Woller, 2004: 2-3). Micro Financial Institutions (MFIs), or developing technical assistance centers, were introduced as a development intervention to help poor people who would normally be excluded from formal financial systems. Clients are low-income self-employed people (Jansson & Wenner, 1997: 8-9; Brau et. al., 2009). These MFIs help poor micro-entrepreneurs by giving training and consulting and as a result, this leads to self-employment and better incomes (Brau et. al., 2009).

Poor people are usually excluded from financial services because they do not have adequate collateral, which means greater financial risks (Brau & Woller, 2004: 2, Jansson & Wenner 1997: 34). The borrower may have collateral, but it may not be considered acceptable by the financial institution. The main reason for this is the poorly organised and funded property registries, which make it a difficult and expensive task for the financial institution to verify the existence and ownership status of the collateral. Another reason for the difficulties with collateral is the judicial systems in many (Latin American) countries (Jansson & Wenner 1997: 34). This lack of access to credit is often seen as the main reason for poor people remaining in poverty (Hermens & Lensink, 2007: 1).

Consequently, poor people develop informal and community-based financial arrangements (Brau & Woller, 2004: 2).

However, as will be shown in the following chapters, the tuk tuk drivers we studied had no access to microfinance. Hence, their entrepreneurial success was affected through other factors, which will be highlighted in the next sections of this conceptual framework.

Informality, regulation, and micro-entrepreneurship

Families who live under the threat of poverty see themselves forced to intensify the use of human capital of the family. By putting more family members to work they aim to generate enough income to maintain well-being and avoid the consequences of social exclusion and capability deprivation. They often end up working in the informal sector because of the unavailability of regular jobs and because of the relatively low barriers to market entry for both setting up a small informal business or finding employment in an existing one (Biles, 2009; Dalglish, 2008; De la Rocha, 2001; Kasarda & Rondinelli, 1992). In this paragraph we will examine the debate regarding the informal sector and more specifically the characteristics that it has.

In the early 70's, when the concept of the informal sector was first coined, it was thought that the sector would shrink and ultimately vanish as a result of modernisation; however, nothing of the sort happened. In fact, the informal sector today represents a significant portion of the world economy (Chen, 2012; De Soto, 1989; Blunch et al., 2001). Theoretic debate about the informal sector and its implications spiked during the most recent recession. One of the most prevalent explanations for this sudden increase in interest is the global growth of the informal sector (Chen, 2012).

In the 70's, the informal sector was seen as primarily a way for the poor to provide themselves with income and a safety net in times of need. This dualist perspective views the sector as a system completely separated from the formal sector (Sethuraman, 1976). A decade later, the structuralist school disputed this separation and stated that the informal sector did indeed have connections with the formal sector, albeit in a limited way. According to this perspective, the people in the sector provided capitalist enterprises with ways to reduce their costs of labour and input, consequently, increasing their competitiveness in the formal market (Castells & Portes, 1989).

Hernando de Soto (1989) was among the first to connect the formal and the informal sector to development. From his legalist position, he estimated that the combined assets of the informal sector in the world total at US$10 trillion. He sees workers in the informal sector as victims of the current legal systems in developing countries, because it deprives them of the means to expand and develop, and legally protect their businesses. Legal protection is essential, not only because it not protects businesses and assets, but it also records their very existence and serves as a collective memory of businesses and their properties that are crucial to negotiation. De Soto thus argues that legal systems are the gateway to economic success. By making it nearly impossible for informal entrepreneurs to gain access to these systems, they are condemned to poverty, even though the informal sector makes up the better part of any developing country (De Soto, 1989; Blunch et al., 2001)

Like De Soto (1989), Schumpeter (1949: 66) sees an intricate connection between entrepreneurship and development. He defines development as "the carrying out of new combinations", and he sees entrepreneurs as the ones who carry out these combinations. They are the means by which society is transformed and improved.

This perception of entrepreneurs as the essence of societal and economic development is, however, a very classic approach to entrepreneurship in that it focuses on wealth accumulation and economic growth as the main reasons for people to resort to entrepreneurship in the informal sector. The people involved in the various micro-enterprises that make up the informal sector do not always, if at all, have development in mind, however, but rather feel forced to start their own business.

Within the informal sector Dalglish (2008) recognises survival micro-enterprises on the one hand, characterised by low skilled, low-cost, low return activities, and entrepreneurial micro-enterprises on the other hand, which tend to require more skills on the part of the business owner and a greater use of capital and technology in production. In this research our focus will be on survival micro-enterprises. Dalglish also illustrates that a lot of micro-entrepreneurs entertain middle class aspirations. They have a so called desire, loaded with moral, economic and symbolic values, to become a member of the middle-class (Fischer & Benson, 2006: 12). In this way 'survival micro-entrepreneurship' should be seen as contributing to more than just the survival of the entrepreneur and his or her loved ones. However, micro-entrepreneurs in developing

countries often divide their time between several occupations to cover the costs of production and distribution of their entrepreneurial services. It should be stated also, that in these kinds of enterprises not much of the surplus that is earned (if any) is reinvested in the enterprise, but instead is used for supporting the entrepreneur's household (Dalglish, 2008: 68; Long, 1979). Next, we shall take a look at the characteristics of micro-entrepreneurship in the informal sector.

Chattopadhyay (2008) describes three different entrepreneurial phases: the motivational phase, the planning phase, and the establishment phase. In the first phase entrepreneurs form their ideas and expectations, giving shape to their business concept. In this phase entrepreneurs discuss the different aspects of the business to the people in their discussion network. This helps with obtaining resources like information, capital, property, credit, etc. In the second phase the entrepreneurs make preparations for setting up their firm. In the third and final phase the focus is narrower, on problem solving, daily errands, and exchange. The transitions between these phases are not automatic, however, and rates of progress vary greatly. The social relationship entrepreneurs have to certain social networks, that they employ for different tasks, develops between these transitions (Chattopadhyay, 2008). In order to understand the impact on meaning construction of entrepreneurship in the light of subjective poverty, these phases help to compare entrepreneurship in different cultural settings. As we shall see, these phases do not necessarily correspond to the way micro-entrepreneurs behave in the informal sector.

The typical requirement for working in the informal sector is the ability to exercise physical work. As a result of these low barriers, the informal labour market tends to be overcrowded and highly competitive. This places all the market power in the consumer's hands, lowering prices and returns. This is especially true in relatively small, isolated, markets, where entrepreneurs do not enjoy the freedom and opportunities present in less isolated markets (Dalglish, 2008). Jobs are characterised by high intensity and irregular working hours, they are not officially registered, and employees do not enjoy social security or legal protection (Kasarda & Rondinelli, 1992). Work in the informal sector typically includes petty trading, self-employment, irregular wage work or very small micro-enterprises in manufacturing and services (Allen & Thomas, 2000).

Another important characteristic of the informal sector is the importance of social capital and networks. Sen's (1999) capability approach relates higher socioeconomic

status to enhanced capabilities. Correspondingly, Howell and Howell (2008) state that higher economic status is linked to different positive outcomes, such as an increase in life expectancy, a reduction of malnutrition, and a decrease in infant mortality. In addition, an increase in income and wealth results in increased purchasing power, in turn leading to an increase in consumption and, conclusively, to improvement of well-being. It should be noted, however, that this approach mainly focuses on financial income and wealth. While the influence of income and financial capital is very large in the informal sector, it can't be denied that social aspects and perceptions of generating income are perhaps of equal importance.

These social aspects take shape in social networks, and the resources accessed through these networks are commonly referred to as social capital (Lin, 1999). There has been some debate about to what extent one can actually speak of capital in terms of social interaction, since it can only exist between people. Most scholars now agree, however, that social capital encapsulates relations of trust, mutual support, reciprocity, social cohesion, solidarity, and interconnectedness of institutions (Pretty & Ward, 2001; Eade, 2003; Chambers, 2005). This will also be the approach to social capital in this research.

Social networking and its effect on entrepreneurial success have been examined extensively. Chattopadhyay (2008) shows that social capital is indeed the powerful determinant of entrepreneurial success, because it entails the relation between the entrepreneur and other providers of resources that are necessary for establishing a business successfully. Social networks provide an invaluable source of knowledge, support, and access to distribution channels required.

Acs et al. (2010) discuss how numerous studies of the relation between social capital and entrepreneurial opportunities show an intimate connection between the two: entrepreneurs are far more likely to attract investors if they have social ties to these investors. In terms of microfinance and entrepreneurship in the informal sector, social capital means being able to share information, coordinate activities, and make collective decisions. In this context increased social capital translates to increased opportunities and capabilities, as well as reduced subjective poverty (Balogon, 2011).

The way people employ their networks vary according to needs. Social networks are not fixed constructions. The people involved "purposefully design the structure their social relationships to enhance their chances of discovering opportunities" (Acs et al.,

2010: 60). Hence, social networks can be seen as the social context of business that can be activated according to different needs, and social capital reflects the quality of these networks and how much one can rely and act on them to achieve these needs. In this sense, social capital could be defined in terms of reputation, as how much an individual can achieve through their social networks. In the context of poverty alleviation, it is clear that social capital plays a vital role in the equation. Yet how does one go about and increase or maximise social network potential?

In short: regardless of the reasons of market entry, micro-enterprises play an important role in almost all economies, be they developed or developing. While reasons for micro-entrepreneurship vary greatly between economic contexts, in most developing countries people engage in micro-entrepreneurship for survival purposes. Reasons for this are mainly capability deficiencies: the lack of education for the poor, and the unaffordability of technology and finance. Without legal protection, workers in the informal sector need to rely on other resources to secure their livelihood, which they find in the social realm (Dalglish, 2008; Shaw, 2004). In the following chapter, we examine the meanings drivers attach to these limitations.

The Good Life

The meaning people ascribe to the Good Life is subjective to their agency. This is the power to act and the sense of having control over one's own destiny (Fischer, 2014: 207) Agency acts on choices, which are structured through political-economic processes that transcend the individual (Ferguson 1999; Tsing 2004; Li 2007; Thin 2012 in Fischer, 2014: 6). The individual sense of wellbeing is deeply linked to others and depends on social relations and perceptions. Wellbeing requires a capacity for aspiration as well as the agency and opportunity structures to make realising aspirations seem viable (Fischer, 2014: 5).

Although readings on happiness and the Good Life go back to Aristotle, it is a relatively new field of research. Doing research on happiness is of great importance because it can deepen our understanding of poverty (Graham, 2005: 49). There are two sorts of happiness. Hedonic happiness stands for everyday contentment and Eudemonic happiness stands for the experienced fulfilled life (Fischer, 2014: 2). In our research we will make use of the ideas of Fischer on the Good Life, which are in line with the latter

category. Seligman defines wellbeing as people's' positive evaluations of their lives. These evaluations include positive emotions, engagement, satisfaction and meaning (Seligman, 2004: 1). Fischer states that people's views of wellbeing cannot be reduced to material conditions like income, health and security. His focus is on the non-material qualities that define the Good Life, which he collects in the concepts of aspiration, opportunity, dignity, fairness and commitments to larger purposes. He examines wellbeing and the Good Life by looking how different sorts of values inform economic relations (Fischer, 2014: 1-2). Fischer made a comparison between the ways people in Germany and Guatemala engage in the market to pursue their own visions of wellbeing.

Since our research project was conducted in Guatemala, we will only discuss the Mayan coffee farmers in Fischer's theory in this context. They are involved in export trade because they envision a better future for themselves and their children. As Fischer found, they want to achieve *algo más* (something more). Aspirations held by coffee farmers are constructed in the difficult circumstances of their daily lives. They are aimed at increasing income in order to pay for children's education and to buy land to provide their families with economic security. With the expanding international coffee market, new opportunity structures where created for smallholding farmers. This bought them a new situation where they could exercise their agency and pursue their aspirations and work on their subjective wellbeing. Aspiration consists of the hope for the future informed by ideas about the Good Life. It gives direction to agency (Fischer, 2014). Aspirations call attention to the proliferation of hopes and desires. Desiring is an ongoing and future-oriented process (Fischer & Benson, 2007: 803). It locates economic preferences in a personal context where behaviour embodies shared moral values (Fischer & Benson, 2007).

As stated earlier, most micro-entrepreneurs aspire to become part of the middle class. This assumes that their being entrepreneurs is a means to exercise power over one's socioeconomic status. This is what the concept of social mobility comes down to: it is the movement in social status or position by an individual (Blau, 1956; Sorokin 1999). Wellbeing is built upon cultural valuations of fairness and dignity. These concepts are conceptualised in different ways by individuals and cultures. Work is an important part of one's identity and dignity. It gives one a sense of self-respect and a fulfilling life. Labour offers the opportunity to cultivate practical skills and knowledge which are embedded in local experiences. Because of this embeddedness, dignity is given to a practice. When a

practice is loaded with dignity, we can see it as a virtue. MacIntyre defines a virtue as excellence at a given practice that can range from mastery of a particular skill to caring for one's family to any number of life projects we use to define ourselves and our character (MacIntyre, 1984). This is in line with the Aristotelian Good Life, in which virtue is understood as human excellence (Fischer, 2014: 212).

When we look at the Guatemalan case, one frequent aspiration is the increase of income which empowers individuals to pay for the education of their offspring, or to buy land which provides greater economic security. These examples reflect a strategy to expand the range of what is possible for Guatemalans (Fischer, 2014: 207). When we see aspiration as the will to do something, we find that it is insufficient to drive change. The will also needs a way, which represents the space to operate among a range of substantive opportunities (Fischer, 2014: 208). To power this process, the market provides a key venue through which people can pursue projects of their lives as well as their visions of the Good Life (Fischer, 2014: 211).

The effectiveness of aspirations and agency is limited by the available opportunity structures in a given society. These opportunity structures are comprised of formal and informal norms, market relations, principles and practice of legal rights. Opportunity structures define the space of the possible (Fischer, 2014: 6). This space of the possible can be linked to Bourdieu's habitus concept. Habitus are systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures which are predisposed to function as principles to generate and organise practices. They can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organising action of a conductor (Bourdieu, 1990: 53). As Durkheim puts it, there are no clear cut boundaries between the various domains of the moral life (Durkheim, 1893: 69) He informs us that the individual is dominated by a moral reality which is greater than himself, namely, collective reality (Durkheim, 1897: xxxvi-xxxvii) Hence, individuals are part of morally laden structures.

As we have seen, aspirations are morally loaded future-ambitions. Moralities are aspirational because they look to the way things should be. Morals are internalised views of excellence and worth which are seen by the beholder as constructing their identity and pathway towards the Good Life (Fischer, 2014: 212). The expression of moral projects by individuals is conditioned by institutional frameworks (Fischer, 2014: 214). Human beings are individuals with purposes or projects. These projects have to utilise the

inherently limited resources of time and space to overcome constraints which they confront (Giddens, 1984: 113). The concept of moral projects Fischer uses is descriptive and ethnographic in nature (Fischer, 2014: 202). Economic decisions by humans are informed by moral projects (Fischer, 2014: 212). Lives are filled with meaningful projects which range from providing family needs to political and religious commitments to mastering a skill or craft (Fischer, 2014: 210). For example, in the eye of Mayan farmers, coffee is not seen as a way to get rich, but as a significant source of income that can keep a family out of absolute poverty. The coffee alone is not sufficient to sustain their families. However, it is an important source of additional income, one strategy among several in the household economy (Fischer, 2014: 140-141).

Larger purposes have to be meaningful, but their meanings are not determined by an absolute code or political point of view (Fischer, 2014:7). In Guatemala and in Germany life projects were driven by certain values and a desire to live the Good Life. (Fischer, 2014:218) Possessing larger purposes and working for meaningful projects go beyond self-interest and are central to wellbeing among German shoppers as well as Mayan farmers (Fischer, 2014:7).

To conclude, the Good Life is not a state of being but an ongoing aspiration for something better that gives meaning to life's pursuits (Fischer, 2014:2). Notions of the Good Life orient the aspirations of agency. It offers a framework through which individuals can interpret their own actions as well as those of others. All of this is bounded by the realm of what is seen as possible (Fischer, 2014: 6).

Context

> *'Guatemala is a land of flowers and green burgeoning trees, of misty blue-tinted mountains and rushing watery torrents; of Arcadian Indian Villages and tinted Spanish colonial towns; all set on a burning, fiery subterranean river which extends from the southern border of Mexico to the Northern coast of South America'*
>
> *(Lloyd, 1963: 9)*

In contrast to the country described by Lloyd, life in post-war Guatemala is tainted by social, political and economic conditions which increase feelings of danger and uncertainty (Fischer & Benson, 2006: 52). The country suffered almost four decades of war, when the oppressive government set its goals against the peasants and indigenous groups. This led to polarised relations between the state and the Mayan peasantry (Colletta & Cullen, 2000: 52). When we take a look at the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) context, remnants of colonialism cause social stratification between Indian groups and mestizo groups, with the first group possessing a lower social status than the last (Beal, 1954).

With the conclusion of the most violent period of the Guatemalan civil war, relative security returned to the country, and now tourism provides wages for more than half of the economically active population in the region (Ratner & Gutiérrez, 2004). Present-day Guatemala is a predominantly poor country that struggles with several development issues, such as health, malnutrition and literacy problems (CIA, 2014). During the post-WWII period, Guatemalan government officials promoted economic development via import-substitution policies. These policies changed when the Guatemalan economy was facing growing debt in the 1980s. As a consequence, periods of neoliberal export-led development policies were implemented, which were endorsed by the World Bank (Fischer & Benson, 2006:53). Labour productivity and income potential are hindered by the lack of investment in human capital by the Guatemalan government (Almeyda & Branch, 1998). With almost half the population beneath the age of 19, Guatemala has the youngest population in the LAC region (CIA, 2014).

According to a recently published World Bank report, Guatemala is the only Latin American country where the poor have been getting poorer (Hernandez et al., 2014: 6-7). More than half of the Guatemalan population lives below the poverty line, and 13% lives in extreme poverty. The country has one of the highest malnutrition rates in the world (CIA, 2014). According to Fisher, the majority of the poor in Guatemala are Maya peoples, and the country's political and economic elite are predominantly Ladino (Fischer & Benson, 2006:52).

In the Lake Atitlán region, the tourism sector has grown rapidly since 1980. According to an Indian saying, the Atitlán Lake's bottomless depths reach the end of the world (Lloyd, 1963: 113). 'Panajachel is on the main highway and is the centre from which to visit all the villages where Quiché, Cakchiquel and Tz'utujil people still live' (Lloyd, 1963: 114). As Tax wrote in 1953, the towns surrounding Lake Atitlan form a strategic position in Guatemala, because they are positioned between the warm lowlands and the highlands (Tax, 1953: 1). In his work Tax describes the route a hypothetical tourist would follow through Panajachel: 'If questioned, he may recall that he did go through a little town called Panajachel on the way to his hotel, but that there was nothing there to attract attention. But in most cases the tourist has not seen Panajachel' (Tax, 1953:11). Penny Capitalism (1953) is the product of the fieldwork of Tax in Panajachel during 1936-1941 (Hinshaw, 1975). With *Penny Capitalism*, Tax meant a society which is 'capitalist' on a microscopic scale. On this level, every man owns his own firm and works for himself, as a 'free entrepreneur,' producing without any machines. Although there is money, there is little and the commerce which takes place in the society is without credit (Tax, 1953: IX).

With the coming of MFIs to Panajachel, commerce is not without credit anymore. In the field we explored whether tuk tuk drivers are able to access credit easily. Guatemalan people and indigenous farmers often face difficulties in obtaining loans directly from banks. They have little education, do not have proper guarantees and no existing credit history. Moreover, they do not understand the paperwork that is required and they do not feel comfortable about their Spanish language skills and hence they do not relate well to Spanish-speaking professionals (Lyon, 2011: 70). As a consequence, small borrowers, particularly in rural areas, are most likely to get credit through MFIs. They charge high interest rates (as high as 36%) and initially allow borrowers access to relatively small amounts. MFIs regularly require borrowers to form groups in which they

are mutually responsible for borrowed funds (Brau et. al., 2009; Olivares-Polanco, 2005: 56). Financial interventions have an impact on social relations because of their economic effects (Ackerly, 1995 in Johnson & Rogaly, 1997: 13). When we look at the broader view towards the LAC region, there is a commercialisation process going on in the MFIs. Commercialisation is constituted by profitability, competition between actors, and regulation. Many International Organisations (IOs) are stimulating this and are welcoming NGOs to enhance this. Consequently, the perception of MFIs as profitable businesses is increasing in the LAC region (Christen, 2001 in Olivares-Polanco, 2005:1).

With *Penny Capitalism*, Tax's research initiated the concept of the informal sector, without explicitly saying this. In Guatemala the total number of people working in the informal sector is high (51,5% of Gross National Product) (Schneider, 2002: 12). In Guatemala many entrepreneurs are active in the informal sector. These enterprises are very small, mostly not employing more than two workers. In 2010 the World Bank conducted a survey amongst 300 informal business owners, and 53% of them reported that they would like to register their firms officially and would be willing to pay to learn how to register. Formalisation means better access to finance and legal protection. Registration of enterprises not only benefits entrepreneurs, but also the broader national economy by expanding the tax base and levelling the economic playing field by equalising marginal costs and incentives between formal and previously informal firms (Hernandez et al., 2014: 50). The World Bank survey reported that most entrepreneurs in the informal sector are female (56%) and married (65%). Workers in Guatemala are less schooled than their peers in other LAC economies and the overall employment growth was below the average for the LAC region. Furthermore, the country has fewer specialists (with engineering and scientific skills) in areas most crucial to entrepreneurship and innovation (Hernandez et al., 2014: 39).

In our research, we will focus on tuk tuk drivers, a phenomena Tax certainly would not have seen while he conducted his fieldwork in Panajachel. Tuk-tuks are motor tricycle taxis and they are very popular on roads in Asia, but are rarely seen on western roads (Pamanikabud, 1997). Nowadays, not much research has been conducted on tuk tuk driving in the Lake Atitlan region. However, there is a linkage between Tax's research on micro-entrepreneurs in Panajachel and our focus on tuk tuk entrepreneurship.

Tuk tuk entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is developmental in nature: it encompasses seeing opportunities, starting new businesses and developing these into more profitable ventures. The view that entrepreneurship is a very important requirement of development has gained wide acceptance amongst scholars (Sen, 1999; de Soto, 1989; Fischer, 2014). From our conversations with locals, it quickly became clear that in Panajachel everyone is an entrepreneur to a certain extent. People seem to be supporting themselves with an eclectic mix of entrepreneurial activities. Whether it is street food, clothes, or shoe shine: everything is for sale. People seem to dismantle their small business as quickly as they start new ones when they discover that they are not earning enough or they see new opportunities.

This chapter provides a closer look at the ways in which entrepreneurship manifests itself in the lives of tuk tuk drivers in Panajachel. By paying attention to how the tuk tuk sector is shaped, to the relationship between drivers and owners of tuk tuks and to the driver's own subjectivity with respect to their activities, we provide insights into the various entrepreneurial attitudes present in the field.

Roaming for profit

> *The big, grey catholic church towers over the flat, empty square surrounded by a few small trees. A short lady in the traditional blue güipil from San Antonio is resting underneath one of them, clutching her belongings in a colourfully embroidered cloth. Her feet are bare and underneath the wisps of grey hair her eyes are shut. It is exceptionally hot today. The sun scorches the silent square, contrasting the busy roads surrounding it.*
>
> *Two red-and-white tuk tuks race down the street overlooking the square in quick succession. The last of the two smoothly swerves into the parking space outside of the bank. The vehicle has not yet come to a complete stop before the driver jumps out of the tuk tuk onto the pavement and quickly dashes into the large white building*

of the bank, the engine of his tuk tuk humming patiently behind the little red hatch on its back.

In the meantime, the first tuk tuk has made its way to the other side of the square, and the driver is unloading bags of fruit from the back seat. His green shirt wet from the heat, he leans the bags against a blue and yellow fruit stall. The man behind the stall smiles at the driver and shakes his hand. The driver returns to his seat behind the wheel and drives off.

Meanwhile, the other driver has made his way back out of the bank and he finds his tuk tuk stuffed with a family of five, piled on top of one another in the back seat. The two women in colourful traje and the man patiently stare ahead. In addition to various plastic bags and embroidered cloths filled with groceries, they hold one small child and a teenage girl in their laps, while they wait for the driver to take his seat. A few words are exchanged and they drive off into the busy streets.

There are exactly 161 commercial, motorised, three-wheeled tuk tuks, or *mototaxis*, in the public transport sector of Panajachel. All of the 161 tuk tuks in Panajachel have their permit number (*linea* 1 through 161) painted in big numbers on the front and the back of the vehicle. Most of the *lineas* are shared between multiple drivers, so there are about three hundred drivers in total. Nearly all are male: only two drivers are women, contrasting drastically with the worldwide average of sex distribution in the informal sector (Hernandez et al., 2014: 51). the majority of the participating drivers are between the ages of 24 and 35. With respect to ethnicity, almost all of the drivers reported identification with one of the Mayan ethnic groups, particularly that of Kaqchikel. Additionally, all of the interviewed drivers are members of one of the many churches in Panajachel, most of them from a protestant denomination.

Working days generally start between six and seven in the morning, when the first commuters arrive on boats from the other villages around the lake, children make their way to school, and others commute to their jobs. After the first waves of boats have arrived and the town has come to life, drivers start to make rounds through the streets. They are

guided by the many Transport Police (PMT) officers and one-way roads. Busy places in terms of tuk tuks and potential passengers seem to be the marketplace, the docks, and the bridge crossing the river west of town. These locations form a convenient route that drivers circulate. A typical working day ends at around nine in the evening. Since most tuk tuks are shared between drivers, it is very common for drivers who retire to their homes to hand it over to someone else who drives the tuk tuk during the night.

While some of the 300 tuk tuk drivers (especially the younger ones) return to their homes after calling it a day, a great many of them, like Lucas, have side businesses that they tend to before, after, or during driving. These side businesses mainly include food stalls or *comedores* and small *tiendas*, where they sell snacks, lunch and liquor, in Panajachel or one of the nearby towns. These are usually run by their wives when they themselves are driving. This goes to show that tuk tuk driving is a very flexible job. Drivers choose their own working hours, breaks, and where and how they work. For this reason it is easy for them to combine tuk tuk driving with other types of business. Some drivers run errands for shopkeepers to and from different places in town, while others help street vendors transport their belongings for some extra income.

When the municipality limited the amount of permits to 161 in Panajachel, the cost of a tuk tuk with a (government-issued) permit costs about Q42.000 (€4920)[2]. As soon as the permits ran out, however, this price skyrocketed: tuk tuks with permits nowadays change hands for no less than Q125.000 (€14.642). A price this high makes obtaining a tuk tuk extremely complicated, because loans that high are very hard to get, let alone pay off by most of the people in Panajachel.

Consequently, the majority of the drivers do not own the tuk tuk they use, and they have to pay a daily fee, called *quota*, of Q100 (€12) to Q150 (€18) to the owner. The only exception to this rule is the Sunday, when drivers do not have to pay a quota. Additionally, they have to pay for the fuel they use. The surplus is theirs to keep, so drivers work hard to maximise this remainder: most drivers reported working twelve to fourteen hours a day, six or seven days a week. After a full working day, drivers are left with Q0 (barely making the quota) to Q200 (€24) (an exceptionally good day). These long hours are

[2] Throughout this thesis we use the exchange rate of Euros to Quetzals of €1 = Q8.54. Amounts in Euros are rounded.

stimulated by the fact that, aside from these financial obligations towards the owner of the vehicle, drivers are also responsible for making sure that the tuk tuk they use gets the required weekly and monthly maintenance. This means that, even though the owners financially pay for the maintenance, drivers spend a considerable amount of time in workshops to get their tuk tuks serviced.

Naturally, owners who drive do not have to pay the daily *quota*. Most non-owners share the idea that, being a tuk tuk owner, one would earn a lot more money than by renting a vehicle. Maintenance costs and taxes, however, turn out to be quite high. As a consequence, owners report that the daily quota most of the time only just suffices to cover these expenses. Regarding tuk tuks as a business, then, investments are limited to the necessary parts to keep the vehicle running, paid for by the owners. They cut corners by using out-dated parts as long as possible and replacing them with other out-dated parts, only upgrading them to more efficient versions when the industry forces them to by ceasing production of said part. Alejandra saw herself obliged to spend Q800 (€94) on the front wheel suspension system of her tuk tuk to upgrade it to parts from 2012, because a 2006 spring needed replacement, which turned out to be discontinued. In order to fit a 2012 spring on the vehicle the whole front fork had to be upgraded.

Another type of investment is cosmetic in nature: in order to stand out among all the other tuk tuks, many drivers have collaborated with the owners of the tuk tuk to decorate theirs with comfortable cushions, religious slogans, names, brands, and all sorts of coloured lights. Sometimes the owner and driver share the financial burden of decorating the tuk tuk, while most of the time it is the driver that decides and pays for enhancements, with the owner's permission. Considering the relatively low daily return on driving a tuk tuk, decorations and augmentations are large investments, and not every owner or driver is prepared to bring such amounts to the table. The ones who do, however, seem to believe that it is worth it, because, they say, standing out helps generating revenue. A closer look will be taken at the role these decorations and reputation in general have in the work of tuk tuk drivers, but first it is important to explore the subjective side of driving a tuk tuk.

Whenever asked about their work, most of the drivers reported only their work as a driver as the means to supporting their families. While most drivers would not describe themselves as particularly entrepreneurial, almost all of them have some sort of

extraneous work that has at least some entrepreneurial characteristics. Jairo owns a food stall that he takes out after his work as a driver, for example, and Lucas builds model furniture which he sells to prospective architecture students. Other drivers strike deals with shopkeepers to transport their wares, or they team up with some family members to give complete tours around Panajachel and nearby towns. This type of additional work is so common and intertwined with daily life, that to the drivers it does not come to mind when asked about their jobs. Kasarda and Rondinelli's (1992) theory with respect to livelihood security finds evidence in this illustration in that the threat of poverty forces people to take on multiple jobs in the informal sector. While middle-class aspirations were ubiquitous among drivers, the major part of the money earned through driving their tuk tuk was spent on supporting their household rather than their business. We shall discuss the aspirations drivers entertain and the constant threat of poverty more in-depth later on.

With respect to Chattopadhyay's (2008) three entrepreneurial phases (motivation, planning, establishment,) it has become apparent that the specific characteristics of entrepreneurial activities by tuk tuk drivers in Panajachel do not follow these sequential steps in a distinguishable manner. The borders between the three phases are blurred and more often than not, drivers skip them all together and establishment, networking, and planning do not follow a predetermined order. This shows a way of thinking that seems to emphasise short-term results, which looks to be characteristic for the people in the informal sector in Panajachel.

When we take this in mind, we see that the lives of the people in the tuk tuk sector are shaped by entrepreneurial activities, be it in a more localised, poverty-induced form. Owners and drivers alike need additional sources of income to support their families. While drivers are not the actual owners of the vehicle, they do personalise them and use them to earn additional income other than what they earn from transporting passengers. Owners themselves too employ the drivers for this purpose. Drivers and owners have only slightly different positions on the entrepreneurial spectrum, the main difference being related to equity held by the owner.

Standing out

Looking at how drivers see their own work and lives themselves provides an interesting perspective of working in the informal sector in Panajachel. Conversely, a large part of the work tuk tuk drivers do depends on how *other* people view *them*. This brings the subject to reputation, which plays an important part in the work of tuk tuk drivers. In addition, owners sometimes have trouble finding drivers who treat the vehicles, and themselves, well: there have been many occasions in which drivers would drive drunk and/or recklessly, damaging the vehicle and the reputation of the *linea*. Most drivers know each other, but sometimes by the number of the tuk tuk they drive, rather than name. Locals also pay attention to these numbers for a number of reasons: if one forgets something on the back seat of a tuk tuk, through the *linea* it is often quite easy to contact the driver. Additionally, if a driver is drunk, driving recklessly, or provides service otherwise unsatisfactorily, families tend to talk about these experiences referring to the *linea* in their conversations, and they and their close ones will avoid taking rides with said driver.

Marcos's experience as a tuk tuk driver serves as an illustration of how driver reputation is characterised: he used to drive the same tuk tuk every day, when the rumour spread that he was an alcoholic. True or not, locals started avoiding his services and he felt that he could only earn money from tourists or other visitors who did not know about this rumour. When he got into a dispute with the tourist police over a bag that a tourist had reported stolen by Marcos, the owner of the tuk tuk decided to find a new driver and no longer leased it to him.

This illustrates how a driver's reputation (whether good or bad) can influence his or her work very strongly. While in Marcos' case everyone knew who he was, most of the time it is the *linea* number, and not the driver, to which people attach their opinions. Remembering a tuk tuk's *linea* is also an easy way to localise and contact tuk tuk drivers. Nicolás, for example, got into an argument with a lady during our stay. She had lost her phone, upon which she contacted the transport police. By means of his tuk tuk number they were able to contact Nicolás to meet them, but they did not find the phone in the tuk tuk. The lady then offered him Q300 (€35) for the phone, showing her suspicions of him having stolen it. Nicolás claimed he did not have it, suggesting that another passenger might have taken it, and they left it at that. Tuk tuk drivers are not responsible for lost

belongings. Yet another driver, Felipe, claims that the owner of his tuk tuk refused to lease it to Felipe any longer because of a similar situation.

When asked what a new driver needed to do to improve his or her reputation, most answers involved good service, no alcohol, and a lot of patience. While denouncing misbehaving drivers to the authorities does not seem to happen often (other than as a means to contacting a driver in case of lost belongings), severe damage to a driver's reputation has resulted in multiple drivers quitting their job and finding work elsewhere. They could not meet their quota any longer. Drivers who prove themselves to the community, however, profit from this because hotels and tourist agencies keep the phone numbers of reputable tuk tuk drivers on speed-dial. A spot on this on-call list is very valuable to drivers for entrepreneurial reasons.

As stated earlier, drivers and owners spend a lot of money on modifications and decorations for their tuk tuk. Drivers feel that personalised tuk tuks will make passengers remember them more easily and secure future clientele through a combination of recognisability and service. At the start of the tuk tuk-era in Panajachel, they were therefore brightly colored and highly personalised. The municipality then decided to place restrictions on what type of decorations were allowed, banning complete paint-jobs, large stickers, and obscene messages. The restrictions on decoration left many drivers unpleased:

"If I could make my tuk tuk stand out more, people would remember my vehicle and my service. (…) Now I'm a number, people forget." (David, tuk tuk driver)

Building a reputation as a driver takes a lot of effort. One has to gain local trust and clientele through long hours and friendly service. Many drivers seem to think that the rules forcing all tuk tuks to look similar does not help this fact.

In addition to restrictions regarding decorations, the municipality tightened the reins on other aspects of the tuk tuk sector as well. In the next paragraph a closer look will be taken at these regulatory characteristics of the tuk tuk sector.

Rules of the game

> *It is getting dark and shopkeepers are storing their merchandise for the night. The main shopping street is full of cars, pick-up trucks, and colourfully lit tuk tuks. We are in the back seat of one*

of them. Since there are four of us, one person has to sit next to the driver in the front, one leg inside the vehicle, the other dangling from it. Patiently, the driver makes his way through the busy sounds, traffic and fumes of the weekend. The small straw hat atop his head bounces happily as we scale the lumpy street towards our home.

Just before we get to the corner we need to turn, he suddenly stops the vehicle. He presses his face against the windshield and cranes his neck to look into the street. 'You should walk,' he tells our friend sitting next to him, 'I'll pick you up around the corner.' Without questioning, she gets out of the tuk tuk and walks around the corner. We follow her at a slow pace until we pass three PMT officers in bright yellow jackets who are directing the loud flows of traffic in and out of the town with their whistles, traffic cones, and big gestures.

As soon as we see their backs, our friend hops back in, and without a word we drive off into the night.

As illustrated by the situation described above, traffic in Panajachel is a very busy and strongly regulated by police officers. Any time of the day the streets are filled with cars, pickup trucks, chicken busses, motorcycles and, of course, tuk tuks. Most of the traffic is concentrated on Calle Principal and its various intersections. Walking in any street one must constantly keep an eye on the traffic to prevent getting run over. Emmanuel, the chief of the transport police (*Policia Municipal de Transito,* PMT), saw the traffic grow exponentially in the past ten years:

"We have around two thousand vehicles driving the few roads in Panajachel at any one time"

It goes without saying, then, that all these vehicles in such a small town cause a rather constant traffic jam. This is especially the case when some of the larger pickup trucks or cars try to navigate the smaller streets and alleys around the town. Even though these bottlenecks tend to occur a bit further from the centre, somehow the traffic jams occurring as a result of these "Idiots, tourists and ignorant rich people [who] ruin it for

all of us" (Pedro, tuk tuk driver) tend to reach the main arteries of Panajachel rather quickly.

Traffic in Panajachel then, the municipality decided, had to be regulated. In order to cope with the big influx of vehicles, the police of transport (PMT) came into action on busy intersections and known bottlenecks. From seven in the morning to eight or nine at night, every day of the week, traffic is controlled and monitored by several PMT officers. At some intersections they serve as human traffic lights, guiding the flows of vehicles with hand gestures and whistles, while in other parts of the town they guide the traffic by means of bright yellow traffic cones. Additionally, from one in the afternoon to two, Calle Santander is off-limits to all vehicles, because at that time the local children leave their schools to go home. At this time the traffic at the start of Calle Santander is guided away from the street by several PMT officers.

With respect to tuk tuk drivers, the municipality experienced other types of problems as well: there were many incidents of drivers asking extremely high prices for rides, robbing or even molesting passengers and causing accidents by driving recklessly, or distracting themselves with loud music. With the growing industry of tourism in Panajachel and the concerns of safety in general, it was decided that something needed to be done about the behaviour of tuk tuk drivers in addition to the growing traffic in the town.

In addition to intensifying traffic surveillance, the municipality passed several laws banning four-wheeled vehicles from certain parts of town, and restricting aspects of tuk tuk driving more specifically. The new laws went into effect in 2010. From that moment tuk tuks were allowed only three passengers on the back seat, the speed limit for tuk tuks was set at 20 kilometers an hour, and loud music and headphones were banned.

Additionally, with respect to the vehicle itself, limitations were imposed. Drivers were no longer allowed to make alterations to the appearance of their vehicle that deviated too much from the official description in the papers associated with the tuk tuk. This meant that tuk tuks with paint, drawings, large stickers and darkened window foil had to be reverted to their original state. Time passed, however, and nowadays small stickers, accessories, improvements to the seating, and non-offensive words on the canvas or body of the tuk tuk, as well as music inside the vehicle are being tolerated. Drivers seem to be testing the limits regarding these rules, not unlike Lucas, who had a relatively large sticker

portraying Bart Simpson spraying graffiti on the back of his tuk tuk. Apparently, the PMT decided that it was too large, in fact, and Lucas had to remove it or risk a fine.

Regarding the drivers themselves, rules were imposed that aimed to manage the drivers' behaviour towards passengers and other road users. In addition to the age limit of 16, and the requirement of a regular driver's licence (obtainable from 16 years of age), drivers are obliged to obtain a special tuk tuk driving permit. This permit has their driver number, a picture, and their name on it and has to be displayed clearly inside the tuk tuk at all times. The permits have to be renewed annually. To obtain one, drivers have to go to the municipality and show several documents in addition to a Q60 registration fee: basic identification, a valid driver's licence, and proof of good conduct, signed by the local authorities. Furthermore, laws pertaining to participation in traffic by tuk tuk drivers were formulated, including restrictions on overtaking, driving under influence, and parking among others.

The price of a ride was fixed at Q5 (€0,60) per person between six in the morning and eleven at night for rides within the town. For rides to nearby towns or places and for rides between eleven at night and six in the morning, Q10 (€1,20) can be charged per person. Additionally, the new laws state that tuk tuks are to be used exclusively for the transportation of people, yet few moments of observation suffice to find out that nowadays tuk tuks transport as much cargo as people.

The new laws served to improve the viability of the tuk tuk sector. According to the secretary of transport, Andrés, there have been hardly any robberies or violence related incidents by the hands of tuk tuk drivers since 2010. Another law that was passed was directed at controlling the amount of traffic on the Panajachel roads. It limited the amount of *lineas* for commercial tuk tuks to 161. This number was based on a geographical study of the town and its roads conducted by the municipality. Vehicles without a valid permit are not allowed to give rides to passengers. Panajachel has a few of these private tuk tuks and they are obliged to be labelled as such.

As Hernando de Soto (1989) states, legal registration of a sector protects its businesses and assets and forms the first step from the informal sector to economic success. We have found this to be true for the tuk tuk drivers in Panajachel, be it to a certain extent. For while the drivers in the relatively protected tuk tuk sector on average

seem to earn more than the official minimum salary (Q100 (€12) and Q65 (€7,60) daily, respectively), other consequences complicate de Soto's argument.

Tuk tuks have become expensive which limits opportunities with respect to expanding businesses or starting new ones. Additionally, the extremely inflated costs of obtaining a tuk tuk with permit in Panajachel attracts people who want to get a piece of the pie while avoiding this barrier. Both Emmanuel and PMT officer Bruno reported that the PMT apprehends drivers breaking the laws regarding vehicle permits on a monthly basis. Vehicles from nearby towns are smuggled into Panajachel and drive the local roads under a fake *linea*. However, most of the officers are familiar with almost all of the tuk tuk drivers in the town, so new faces and vehicles stand out more than the untrained eye would assume. Drivers are aware of this, of course, so they tend to drive at night, when there is no surveillance by the PMT:

"Since I only drive in the evenings, I find it a waste to spend money on a yearly driving permit. I am a pirate!" (Lucas, tuk tuk driver)

So-called *piratas*, like Lucas, are drivers who work in a tuk tuk with a fake *linea*, or who do not have a tuk tuk driver's permit. Trial and error has taught them how to avoid the PMT. Since this inevitably steers them away from the main working areas and hours of regular drivers, most drivers were not bothered by the practice.

While this kind of offense usually leads to confiscation of the vehicle and possibly prosecution of the driver, most other infringements tend to be less severely punished. Carrying too many passengers results in a fine of Q50 (€6), while ignoring a PMT officer's stop sign sets a driver back Q150 (€18). Taking into account the average daily profit of Q100, breaking the law could cost a driver more than their daily revenue. Drivers seem to know where PMT officers are typically situated, so they tend to avoid these spaces when they carry too many passengers or cargo.

Fines are paid at the municipality, preventing that the PMT officers have to handle money. Almost all the PMT officers live in Panajachel and are known members of the community. These two facts seem to be the cause of the extremely low perception among drivers of corruption by PMT officers. Drivers and officials may have different opinions on the PMT and its practice, yet both parties seem to agree on this absence of corruption.

While most drivers acknowledge the importance of traffic regulation in Panajachel, especially during peak hours, they are not all as content with all aspects of municipal

interference in their work. This is illustrated by their behaviour during the nights: drivers know at what time the PMT stow away their yellow cones and call it a day. The instant the PMT leaves the premises, drivers turn on their brightly coloured decorative lights, turn up the music and challenge the speed limit while carrying four or even five passengers. Most of them seem to regard the PMT as an annoyance, especially with respect to their enforcement of rules regarding cargo, speed, the amount of passengers, and standing stationary.

The municipality formed and enforces the rules and regulations with respect to the tuk tuk sector, and many drivers complain about them. However, the legislation went into effect with the drivers' consent. Surely, the drivers used to be organised in a few *asociaciones*, or guilds, whose representatives took part in conversations with the municipality's officials in order to negotiate the new laws. At this point it was in the drivers' own interest to support their association, because they felt that most of the new laws would improve their competitive position in the market with respect to newcomers. When the negotiations ended, and the current laws had been formulated, the associations lost their function and therefore the support they received from drivers. As a consequence, the associations disappeared.

In January 2015 the associations shortly regained their existence when the tuk tuk drivers in Panajachel united to protest against a small rubber-tyred tourist train that had then started to transport visitors around the town. Drivers felt that they could not compete with this type of transport and asked the municipality to ban it. By the end of January, the train owner drew the short straw and the train disappeared again.

This example illustrates the interplay between the local authorities on the one hand and the tuk tuk drivers on the other. While the sector is marked by individualism and independence, there is an unmistakable sense of togetherness that provides the sector with the means to protect and improve its competitive edge by influencing legislation.

In the next chapter we examine how the lives of the people in the tuk tuk sector are influenced by their work.

The Good Life

> *It is 7am on a Wednesday morning in March. The sun has already introduced itself to this new day and with the still water, the Lake glitters like a big mirror. Clouds are rare. At the shore, people in traditional 'traje' are gathering to get into the boats. A humming sound comes around the corner and tuk tuk 25 stops next to a traffic pawn. With the view of the first boats coming from the other side of the Lake, tuk tuk drivers stop at the port full of hope to get the commuters in their vehicle.*

Just like exploring the lake as far as the eye can reach for business opportunities, tuk tuk drivers are mapping aspirations on mental horizons. They are working in the search of the Good Life. In this chapter, we will explicate the meaning of the concept the Good Life in the context of the tuk tuk sector in Panajachel. First, we will explain why tuk tuk drivers can be seen as 'free men,' based on their working conditions. Second, we will explore the livelihoods and uncover short-term consumption patterns held by tuk tuk drivers. The Good Life is influenced by concepts of agency, aspirations and opportunity structures. We will descry how these hold a dialectical relation with norms and values. At length, the larger purposes and moral projects held by tuk tuk drivers will be discussed.

Free men of Panajachel

As we saw in Panajachel, tuk tuk drivers move within the informal economy. With the arrival of tuk tuks in Panajachel, the sector grew enormously and caused a lot of new working opportunities. In the past, bici-taxis were widely used in the village of Panajachel and compared to tuk tuk's, these bikes were slower than tuk tuks. With the introduction of tuk tuks in Panajachel, after the decrease and eventually disappearance of bici-taxis, there was a growth of new job opportunities. Tourism has grown rapidly in the last decades and tuk tuk drivers have the opportunity to benefit from this. It has given them greater chances of pursuing their aspirations.

Many tuk tuk drivers are quite pleased with their occupation. Santino, for example, has been a tuk tuk driver for six years now. He describes his profession as 'free' and

'relaxed.' Before he worked at 'Hotel del Lago,' but he said he did not want to work for a boss anymore. He decided to get a loan at the bank and buy a tuk tuk. Many tuk tuk drivers agree with Santino's point of view. Christian, for example, uses the advantages of the flexible work rhythm to play soccer with his friends and swim in the lake. Even though they have to work many hours a day on most weekdays, their profession is flexible and gives them a feeling of freedom. Enjoying spare time and being able to relax is an aspect of the Good Life. It gives them the opportunity to enjoy time with their families and social networks. A balance between working and breaks is valued by many tuk tuk drivers because they have the freedom to choose when they take their breaks. Tuk tuk drivers can thus be seen as 'free men' on three wheeled taxis, a name we have devised for this thesis. We have derived it from the terminology used by Tax. He saw people in Panajachel working for themselves and their own firms, as 'free entrepreneurs' (Tax, 1953: IX).

If we look at the working conditions of the tuk tuk drivers, we see them working many hours a day. Nonetheless, tuk tuk drivers have the opportunity to catch some small talks with fellow tuk tuk drivers. The 'free men' do not have a boss who tells them to work harder. Most times, they do not have to take care of the maintenance of the vehicle themselves. However, their working conditions represent a set of difficult circumstances which highly depend on the family and social network context. Vicente drives one of the family owned tuk tuks. The whole family works hard for the maintenance of the vehicles. Vicente describes his job as very tiresome and prefers to work in the tourist industry in the future. Miguel, who is 24 years old, has been working as a tuk tuk driver since a couple of months. Before he lived with his father in Guatemala City, but he passed away recently. Currently, Miguel has to take care of his mother and little brothers and has to work seven days a week for many hours a day. Just like Mayan farmers in Fischer's the Good Life, tuk tuk drivers have to work hard for their daily existence. Driving a tuk tuk helps them in the search of finding happiness and *algo más* (something better). For the moment, they say they are satisfied with the job. Their sense of flexibility is accompanied by a feeling of freedom.

Money and the now

As we explained in the previous section, the free men do not work solely for their own existence. Most times, they live with their nuclear and extended family in the same house.

This is in line with the communal impression that small villages give, where everyone knows one another. There are many differences between tuk tuk drivers regarding their livelihood situations. We have met tuk tuk drivers who can work part time and obtain their daily *quota* quite easily. Then, there are also tuk tuk drivers who live in poverty and have to work many hours a day.

When looking at the broader Panajachel picture, there is a lot of poverty to see. Drunk men walking in the streets during the day and young kids shining shoes in the streets. Tuk tuk drivers informed us that they believe these kids are not from Panajachel. In contrast with poverty seen at first glance, we also found there is a lot of hidden poverty in Panajachel. This is shown by the fact that many people walk with smartphones and nice clothes on the streets, but who do not have anything in their homes. Sometimes not even a bathroom. This was confirmed by tuk tuk owner Doña Alejandra, who told us she has lived in poverty before. According to Alex, poverty in Guatemala can be blamed on the large family compositions, which is a common practice. Families with fewer children would be able to afford the education of their children, which opens up new opportunity structures.

Livelihood is also comprised of the income people gain. Often, the profession does not give tuk tuk drivers a stable income. It certainly depends highly on the day-to-day circumstances in the village. As we already saw, most tuk tuk drivers tell us they earn around Q150 (€18) to Q200 (€24) a day. This is a decent amount of money, according to the drivers, who say they cannot complain. Extra income is generated by the annual *Semana Santa* (Holy week). As some tuk tuk drivers make more money than usual during *Semana Santa*, we asked them what they were planning to do with this the week after the events. The reactions we received were mostly in the same, short term category. For example, they would go on a day trip with their family or buy household equipment with the extra money earned. Carlos, for example, told us he earned Q3500 (€410) extra during the week. 'I will buy a really nice, new, two-door fridge with an ice cube dispenser for my wife.' We wanted to check our assumption with other tuk tuk drivers as well. Miguel claimed that he usually spends the extra money from *Semana Santa* on a family trip out of town. We received the same response from Leonardo, who also plans on going on a family trip. Although we did hear tuk tuk drivers say they use the extra earnings to pay off loans on their property or tuk tuk, most of them seem to be attracted to quick and short-

term rewards for their hard work. According to Fischer, consumption is a way through which people express their values and pursue moral projects (Fischer, 2014: 72). Next, the interplay between the two will be explored.

The short-term consumption pattern is not only shown in their spending of the *Semana Santa* bonus. It also became clear when we spoke with different people about the different types of jobs and wage constructions in Panajachel. Doña Alejandra's son, Lucas, was very pleased with his occupation as a tuk tuk driver. He earned a decent living with it. Nevertheless, he quit the profession to start working at a local petrol station where he receives a monthly-wage. Tuk tuk drivers receive their income on a daily basis. Lucas felt it was very difficult to save up or invest money wisely. His mother has a different view on the advantages of a monthly income. She sells food on the street in her *comedor* (food stall). Her daily accessible food stall requires daily trips to the local market for fresh ingredients. In contrast to Lucas, she does not like the idea of a monthly salary. She argues that this requires too much planning with respect to her business investments. In her point of view, the daily cash flow, albeit small amounts, gives her security and flexibility. She underlines her statement by saying *'La gente en Guatemala piensa en el presente'* (The people in Guatemala only think in the present).

This day-to-day living culture is illustrated by the groceries which are done every day and the single-serving packages of shampoo which are sold for one quetzal. As Fischer would put it 'sometimes there are difficult trade-offs between short-term hedonic happiness and long-term wellbeing' (Fischer,2014: 44). To conclude, we can say there is an interesting interplay between the short-term consumption pattern and the opportunity structures they held which will be explained next.

Thinking of the future

Let us now look at the opportunity structures and agency in the light of the visions of wellbeing held by tuk tuk drivers. Although new income opportunities are necessary, in itself they are insufficient to improve the wellbeing of those living in poverty (Fischer, 2014: 148) If tuk tuk drivers want to experience social mobility, we can say they do not require financial growth, but freedom as well. This can be linked to the ideas by Sen and Foster, in which poverty is marked by the absence of acceptable choices in a broad range

of important life decisions. This results in a severe lack of freedom to be or do what one wants (Fischer, 2014: 10).

Regarding the lives of tuk tuk drivers, we can say their agency informs the aspirations held. In Fischer's example of Guatemalan coffee farmers, he sees coffee as a beneficial addition to household economic strategies (Fischer, 2014: 144). When we compare them with the tuk tuk drivers of Panajachel, we see that both groups use different methods and strategies to complete their income. Wellbeing requires agency, opportunity and the capacity to make aspirations to make realising aspirations seem viable (Fischer, 2014: 5). Although the tuk tuk sector in Panajachel is mostly comprised of men, Diana feels strengthened to become a tuk tuk driver just like her older brother Jairo. Based on these findings we can say she sees her own opportunities and choices large enough. This means she does not experience 'frustrated freedom,' as mentioned in our conceptual framework.

Tuk tuk drivers map aspirations on mental horizons. Mario does not know for sure what he wants to achieve in the future, although he is sure he does not want to be a tuk tuk driver. He is dreaming about opening a business, something like a shop, preferably in Guatemala City. A study is what he needs to achieve this, something in the field of business. He is aware of the dangers of living in the big city, but he does not mind. Carlos takes turns with Mario in the same tuk tuk. He wants to study to become a math-teacher, but feels financially restrained from doing this, as he does not see the opportunities. The education he foresees would cost around 10.000 Quetzales (€1171). Carlos says he cannot go to a public school, because they do not offer classes in the evenings and weekends. Enjoying an education would only be possible next to his job as a tuk tuk driver. Jaime is currently enrolled in a high school and drives sporadically. In the future, he sees himself becoming a doctor. Felipe would like to study as well, but thinks it is impossible because he does not have the financial means to pay for it. His wife had to stop with school at a young age as well. According to Felipe, there are many tuk tuk drivers in Panajachel who have a decent education, but have to stay in this job because of the limited job opportunities. An aspiration we heard many times, is to become a tuk tuk owner in the future. Alex for example, thinks it would give him more certainty. People do have aspirations for the Good Life, but these plans are mostly made just for the timespan of a couple of months or years.

With aspirations being an important factor in the concept of The Good Life, we have to look at the opportunity structures in which they are presented (Fischer, 2014: 18). The above mentioned data suggest tuk tuk drivers feel withheld in achieving their aspirations by their opportunity structures. With the limitation of the *lineas*, as mentioned in the chapter on 'Entrepreneurship,' it has become difficult for newcomers in the sector. As Felipe informs us, the 'space of the possible' is small at this moment. He takes whatever work pays best, and at this moment, tuk tuk driving is the best opportunity for him. When Juan struggles to find work as a tuk tuk driver, he has the opportunity to work in construction, although he prefers tuk tuk driving. These examples show that the growth in opportunity structures does not always strengthen one's agency. Individual agency acts on choices. These choices are structured through political-economic processes that go far beyond the individual. Thus, when tuk tuk drivers agency exceeds the available opportunity structures, we find 'frustrated freedom' (Fischer, 2014: 7).

Different structures influence tuk tuk drivers in their decision making patterns. Familiarisation with these structures starts at a young age for the citizens of Panajachel. Maria (12) and Natalia (10) are two kids who sell nuts on the streets of Panajachel, just like their dad. Michel has the ambition to become a teacher in the future, but she does not see the opportunity to fulfil this dream. According to Doña Alejandra, there is a school obligation to a certain age in Guatemala, but there are many parents who do not listen to government officials. We have heard tuk tuk drivers quitting their education for family or financial reasons. For example, the two sons of Christian had to quit school because of financial reasons. Mario had to quit school because his father became ill. As we have seen, opportunity structures play an important role in the chances tuk tuk drivers have to work on their aspirations. In the next paragraph, we will take a closer look at the subjectivity of happiness of tuk tuk drivers, as an important part of their agency. There is a dialectical relationship between the opportunity structures and agency.

A sense of dignity

In this section, we will focus on the subjectivity and dignity of tuk tuk drivers and how this is related to wellbeing. We will examine the different meanings tuk tuk drivers give to their dignity and how this is related to Bourdieu's concept of distinction. The free men perceive driving a tuk tuk as an occupation with a positive connotation. Their profession

is 'cool' and they express themselves through the music they play in their vehicle and the decorations they put on it. Mario likes to play music in his tuk tuk while working. He has a sophisticated music installation in his vehicle and besides this, he also has rain curtains, to keep him and his passengers dry in bad weather circumstances. Many tuk tuk drivers feel the expressions they use help them building a better reputation and trust with passengers (Goffman, 1956: 1-2).

If we link the above mentioned examples to Bourdieu's concept of distinction, we see that the citizens of Panajachel constantly choose tuk tuks based on their taste. Tuk tuk drivers themselves present themselves in a way to distinct them from others. This taste is based on what they perceive as aesthetically pleasing and what they consider as being ugly. This is shown in the way tuk tuk drivers dress up their tuk tuk. Bourdieu argues that the social world we live in functions as a system of power relations and as a symbolic system in which minute distinctions of taste become the basis for social judgement (Bourdieu, 1984: 223). This was already shown in the chapter on entrepreneurship, where we found tuk tuk drivers decorating their tuk tuks based on their personal taste. Through these distinctions their sense of dignity is enhanced.

According to Fischer, dignity is shown in market values, moral projects and working conditions (Fischer, 2014: 109-110). In the field we saw that tuk tuk drivers also express their dignity in their living conditions. To illustrate this, we will use our experience with Felipe. He bought a small piece of land a while ago accompanying a mortgage of three years. When we look at his living situation, we could define his livelihood as poor. His house is made out of corrugated sheets. Outside they have some meters left, where they keep chickens. The eggs laid by the chickens are for the breakfast of the children. The family does not have a toilet or shower. In Guatemala, many rural people do their laundry on a so called *pila*, a concrete washboard which has a multifunctional usage for purposes like dishes, laundry and so on. The absence of this kind of essential hygiene and household supplies have an impact on the sense of dignity experienced by Felipe. Talking about this subject makes him insecure and more silent than usual. Dignity is a subjective feeling, not always expressed directly. Despite his feelings with respect to his living situation, we found that Felipe's sense of dignity is positively affected by his work as a tuk tuk driver. It allows him to make home improvements and working gives him the possibility to work on his larger purposes.

Tuk tuk driving gives a feeling of pride and being seen as a human being. Nicolás feels this sense of pride of his tuk tuk and expresses it by making photos of the vehicle. For example, he took his tuk tuk for a ride around the lake and made some pictures during the sunset with his tuk tuk. Their feeling of pride is not only reflected in the activities they undertake with their vehicle, but also with the act of representing their personal taste through their tuk tuk decorations. As Bourdieu puts it, their cultural taste is not a personal preference as such. It is an expression of the group they feel they belong to (Bourdieu, 1990). Tuk tuk drivers value the appearance of their vehicle highly. Often, they feel as if the tuk tuk represents themselves. A clean tuk tuk would help them getting more customers. During *Semana Santa* there were also many tuk tuks with Easter decorations. By decorating their tuk tuks with these attributes tuk tuk drivers express their religious identity. In the following paragraph we will take a closer look at normative positions and morals.

Driving values

According to Fischer, moral values inform economic behavior (Fischer, 2014: 13). In this section, we will describe how wellbeing is perceived by tuk tuk drivers. Wellbeing is influenced by human agency and opportunity structures. The combination of these two factors shape norms and values.

> *A yellow Camioneta (school bus) is waiting for passengers at the bus stop near the Catholic Church. Tuk tuk 126 is parked right in front of the Camioneta. Three men get into the tuk tuk, however, the bus driver does not seem to think it goes fast enough. He bumps his horn loudly and the tuk tuk drives away. Soon after, the camioneta drives away as well. With the new parking space available, tuk tuk number 29 parks his vehicle. On the backseat is an old lady sitting with her left arm gently holding a big wicker basket. She slides a few coins in the hand of the driver and he jumps out of the tuk tuk. He makes a gesture with his arms to help the lady get out. His muscled arm firmly keeps grip of her wrinkly arm. The driver raises the basket of the backseat and as a matter*

of course, he puts it on the head of the lady. In a rush they salute and he drives away quickly.

Social etiquette represents a set of norms and values held by a certain group. As shown in the vignette above, etiquette is an unspoken language which is often seen as a matter of course. This matter of course can be seen as part of the moral projects held by tuk tuk drivers. Norms and values are present in the way people give meaning to the working life. During our fieldwork, we have seen that the norms and values people hold in the field influence their perception towards wellbeing. Conceptions regarding 'the meaningful life' are culturally specific (Fischer, 2014: 12). In this section, we will not only draw ethnographic evidence for this, but also a path towards common aspirations they hold. To begin, our key informant Nicolás who is a young tuk tuk driver, says he sees it as a normal task to help customers get in and out of the tuk tuk and lifting heavy luggage as well. There are tuk tuk drivers who see helping passengers with small side jobs as part of their work ethos. We have seen that not all tuk tuk drivers value this etiquette and friendliness. Helping others can be seen as the enactment of norms held by tuk tuk drivers. Josefina thinks kindness is the most important personal aspect of a tuk tuk driver. When she is in need for a tuk tuk ride, she looks if she knows the driver. Most times, she uses the tuk tuk number to recognise the driver and his reputation. If not, she makes an indication if he looks trustworthy and not in a bad mood. Tuk tuk drivers think there is a high level of mutual respect between the citizens of Panajachel. Everyone knows one another and respects the different occupations people enjoy.

Getting insights into the complex realities and daily struggles of tuk tuk drivers in Panajachel is not possible without taking religion into consideration. Norms and values are also expressed during *Semana Santa* and the period leading up to it, when tuk tuk owners have the possibility to 'dress-up' their tuk tuk with advertisements on the roof. One of the options is a beer brand and another is for a phone company. These companies pay the tuk tuk owner Q150 (€18) Quetzales a month. Many drivers value these advertisements in a negative way. Promoting alcohol consumption does not fit in their (religious) norms pattern or they believe the 'rich companies' do not pay enough money for it. Religion plays an important role in the daily lives of the citizens of Panajachel. You would find it hard to find a person who is not a member of a church. These memberships

form the cement of the communal sense in the village. Tuk tuk drivers find trust and confidence through their relationship with faith, and God in particular. They perceive a feeling of direct help from God. For example, when Carlos first started working, he did not like the job as a tuk tuk driver at all. At the time, he did not know all the streets of Panajachel or its people. According to him, God helped him and his life got better. Nowadays, he is a tuk tuk driver for four years. His parents live in Sololá and work on the countryside, a future prospect he did not want. This made him decide to work as a tuk tuk driver in Panajachel. Their life decisions and sense of agency is also influenced by their relationship with Jesus and God. Many times, tuk tuk drivers thank God for the things happening in their life. For example, Felipe said *'gracias a dios no tomo más alcohólico'* (Thank God I do not drink alcohol anymore). He stopped drinking when he was eighteen years old.

The religious *Semana Santa* week is an important annual event for Guatemala and especially for Panajachel. Many people from around the country, especially from the capital, come to Panajachel to celebrate with concerts and drinking alcohol in the streets. The normally peaceful community turns into a festival terrain. Alex is Catholic and does not drink alcohol. He likes *Semana Santa*, but solely for its religious purpose. According to Astrid, who is a Spanish teacher, the help given by the church is exclusively for church members. She has a strong opinion on people who go to church but who do not help their community. *'El interés de ellos es solamente de hablar con Jesus'* (Their only interest is to speak with Jesus).

The road to purpose

In this section, we will conclude our thesis by amplifying larger purposes held by tuk tuk drivers. A larger purpose is a vehicle to get more life satisfaction and a subjective meaningful life. Commitment to a larger purpose implies a counter-preferential choice. This means concerning for others, which does not directly correlate with improving one's own welfare. A larger purpose differs from aspirations, as they are not material in their nature. Commitments to a larger purpose are driven by a moral belief about what is the right thing to do (Fischer, 2014: 209). Being a tuk tuk driver contributes to larger moral projects, but as seen in the 'Entrepreneurship' chapter, this is not an exclusive source. Tuk tuk drivers manage different side activities. Pedro, for example, owns a small piece of

land. Usually, he uses this to cultivate fruits and vegetables. He sees this as a long term project. Investing in a house or plot of land is a project held by different tuk tuk drivers. A physical space with a larger purpose in their future life-path.

Commitment to a religious group can also be seen as a larger purpose. Tuk tuk drivers feel that by dedicating their lives to God, He helps them find meaning and direction in their social realities. Another aspect comprising the Good Life concept is the family composition of a tuk tuk driver. Miguel, for example, is the owner of three tuk tuks. He and his son both drive a tuk tuk and they also have a worker. After he stopped working as a bici-taxi driver, he started working in the kitchen of a restaurant. He told us tuk tuks are expensive in maintenance. Way more expensive than taking care of a bici-taxi. Miguel hopes his son will follow his tuk tuk driving career path. These work-related parental hopes are common in Panajachel. Doña Alejandra, for example, worked very hard when her children were young, to cultivate a strong work ethos. She values this highly because she is convinced that she will reap the rewards of this later on because her children will take care of her when she is older. As many citizens of Panajachel, Doña Alejandra is a so called micro-entrepreneur. She started a small food stall on the streets, just like her mother did. When her son wanted to have a tuk tuk, she repeatedly had to tell him she did not have the money to buy one. Eventually, she was able to get a loan from her mother. Alejandra worked very hard to get rid of her loan as quickly as possible. The whole family had to help with this and eventually they were able to pay back the loan in twenty months.

A general tendency within the larger purposes we heard, was the aim of pursuing a better life for their offspring. Valuing children's education is a good example of future aspirations people hold. Desiring a better future for one's offspring is felt difficult to achieve in Guatemala by many tuk tuk drivers. The aspiration to move to the U.S.A. is part of the desire to achieve a better future for one's offspring. Guatemala has the biggest economy in the LAC region but, unfortunately, the highest levels of income inequality (Hernandez et al., 2014). The U.S.A. is Guatemala's most important import and export partner (CIA, 2015). Migration is an important factor for the economy as a whole because of the remittances flowing in from the USA. Migration stories became visible in the context of Panajachel where many tuk tuk drivers hold aspirations to move to the USA. For example, Nicolás, plans to move to the U.S. on a temporary work visa to work there as a gardener for nine months. The perspective of getting a better income in the U.S.

attracts many tuk tuk drivers. The option Nicolás is considering is through one of the legal options. However, this costs a lot of time and effort, which makes people consider illegal pathways. Taking the chance to go north is not without consequences. To migrate illegally to the U.S. costs between Q4000 and Q6000 (€469 and €703, respectively). This American dream lives in the heads of many other tuk tuk drivers in Panajachel, even though they are aware of the dangers accompanying the voyage without a clear end. Alex for example says he really loves the U.S. and that he really would like to go there another time. His wife does not agree with this idea because she is afraid of the risks involved with crossing the border. Alex is convinced he has to go for the money. 'I would flee the border between Mexico and the U.S. illegally at night. My wife does not want me to go another time but I think we need the money if we want a child in the future.'

Another example of a tuk tuk driver who has U.S. future aspirations is Eduardo. He describes his current situation as not sustainable. As a tuk tuk driver he does not earn enough money to take care of his family consisting of his wife and four children. He works seven days a week from eight in the morning until ten in the evening. His friends tell him that he should go to the U.S. to (illegally) work there. He wants his children to have more possibilities and opportunities in life. Going to the U.S. might be a personal sacrifice that he is willing to make so to achieve this goal. Hugo is a big fan of the United States, because many of his friends live there. An example of a tuk tuk driver who has already taken this path is Cristóbal. He worked in the United States to buy the tuk tuk he proudly owns nowadays. He has been working as a tuk tuk driver for 10 years now and he is 29 years old. Examples like these shape the visions people create about the pursuit of happiness that can be achieved in the U.S.

Moving to the U.S. is seen by tuk tuk drivers as a vehicle of change. Something that can give them and their families more chances in the future. Eventually, the Good Life means living the Aristotelian fulfilled life. Humans want to feel like they are contributing to something. Committing to larger purposes in life gives meaning to life through moral projects.

Conclusion

In this chapter we will discuss the empirical outcomes of our research and answer the main question of our thesis: *How does entrepreneurship help tuk tuk drivers in Panajachel, Guatemala achieve the Good Life?*

Tuk tuks have quickly become ubiquitous in Panajachel since the decrease of bici-taxi's. Over the past fifteen years they went from unseen to an essential part of daily life in the town. Now they are the first and foremost means of transportation, not only of people, but also of business wares: food, bicycles, tables, if it fits, it ships. It is no surprise, then, that tuk tuks are often employed to engage in various entrepreneurial activities that are not related to transporting people. This kind of multipurpose entrepreneurship is characteristic, and often necessary, within the informal sector.

The informal sector is, by definition, not regulated. Markets within this sector are consequentially characterised by ease of access, the resulting competitiveness, insecurity and the power consumers have over the prices in the market (Dalglish, 2008). By officially registering the activities in the informal sector, formalising it in a way, the actors in the sector gain protection and security which encourages development (De Soto, 1989). With respect to the tuk tuk sector in Panajachel we can say that they are positioned in the grey area between the formal and the informal sector. While drivers are required to register in order to work, and all legal tuk tuks are registered as well, their income and non-passenger related activities are not.

The tuk tuk sector used to be unregulated. Conversations with drivers showed that in that time the market had many of the aforementioned characteristics described by Dalglish with respect to the informal sector. It was the tuk tuk drivers themselves who saw this as a problem, and they united in order to pass the necessary legislation to (partially) formalise and protect their businesses. Restrictions were imposed on the amount of tuk tuks, what they should look like and on who was allowed to drive them. Prices were fixed and new rules for traffic were enforced by the PMT (*Policia Municipal de Transito*). From that moment, the formerly informal tuk tuk sector was partially formalised.

The following developments within the sector had many things in common with de Soto's (1989) argument regarding the formalisation of the informal sector. Livelihood security, income and safety among others were positively influenced by the new laws. Entrepreneurship, however, depends heavily on opportunities. In contrast with de Soto's argument, we found that the heavily inflated prices of a tuk tuk with a valid permit, as a result of the limitation with respect to the maximum amount of permits, led to nearly unsurmountable barriers to market entry. As far as expanding business through investment goes, then, within the tuk tuk sector, opportunities are virtually non-existent.

This is not to say that tuk tuk drivers have nowhere to turn or that they live in absolute poverty: on the contrary. Like true opportunity seekers they see and latch on to opportunities inside and outside of the sector, and they creatively make use of the tuk tuk they drive for these entrepreneurial, extracurricular, activities. In this way, the tuk tuk becomes a multipurpose vehicle that helps the driver reach for his desired (or often: required) income level. Whether it's transporting wares, striking deals with hotels and tourists, or moving furniture for the locals, drivers employ their tuk tuk in a myriad of ways that illustrate the classic characteristics of micro entrepreneurship. We found the perceived threat of poverty that drives people to this kind of multipurpose income strategy as described by Dalglish (2008) was indeed strongly present among the tuk tuk drivers in Panajachel. Entrepreneurial activities are present to a certain extent in the lives of every tuk tuk driver, which leads us to conclude that not only are they positioned in the grey area between being entrepreneurs in the western sense and laborers in a wage labour-like relationship, but they also move within the grey space between the formal and the informal sector.

Social relations and reputation seem to be the most valuable assets for these people, since those are the resources required to be successful in the informal sector. While Acs et al. (2010) describe the value of social capital in a more formal entrepreneurial setting, we have found this to be true for the informal sector in Panajachel as well. Drivers who put effort into appearing and being serviceable to customers seemed to be a lot more successful in terms of income and satisfaction than those who did not mention service to be of that much importance. Drivers who had many additional jobs next to their driving often worked for friends or family after or during driving hours.

Tax saw micro-entrepreneurs in Panajachel as 'free entrepreneurs' in a capitalist system without credit (Tax, 1953: IX). In our thesis we have devised the term 'free men' from Tax's 'free entrepreneurs' to identify tuk tuk drivers by their shared perceptions of a flexible and free working environment. The success of tuk tuk drivers depends for a great part on their reputation and flexibility.

Tuk tuk drivers have to work many hours a day in the search of *algo más*. Their working conditions are comprised of a set of difficult circumstances depending on their social and family context. Generally speaking, Guatemala is a poor country, which is also the case for Panajachel. The livelihood situation of tuk tuk drivers often represents the daily struggles they experience obtaining a decent wage. The different ways tuk tuk drivers use their income is characterised by a short-term consumption pattern.

Nonetheless, we have seen that tuk tuk drivers utilise their agency to construct visions of their Good Life. Fischer has shown us that increasing incomes alone are insufficient to improve the wellbeing of those living in poverty (Fischer, 2014: 148). Our study suggests that just like the Mayan farmers in Fischer's book, tuk tuk drivers use their agency to utilise different methods and strategies to complete their incomes. Tuk tuk drivers hold different aspirations in their search towards wellbeing. A growth in opportunity structures does not always correlate with strengthening one's agency.

The limitation of the available *lineas* has made it difficult for newcomers in the sector. Furthermore, the lack of credit keeps people poor, because it withholds them from opportunities to grow their business aspirations (Hermens & Lensink, 2007). Agency acts on choices, which are structured through political-economic processes. We found that tuk tuk drivers present themselves by dressing up their tuk tuk. Driving a tuk tuk gives a greater sense of dignity, which is shown in market values, moral projects and working conditions.

Moral values inform economic behaviour. Wellbeing is influenced by agency and opportunity structures. Combined they shape norms and values. These are present in the ways people give meaning to their life. Religion plays an important role in the daily lives of tuk tuk drivers as well. They find trust and meaning in their relationship with God. In their search of the Good Life, tuk tuk drivers commit to larger purposes. This is a vehicle towards more life satisfaction and a meaningful life. Commitments to a religious group can be seen as a larger purpose, as their being non-material. Families are also a larger

purpose tuk tuk drivers are committed to. They work hard to enlarge their offspring opportunity structures by generating means to pay for much needed education. Lastly, we have seen tuk tuk drivers aspire to move to the U.S. illegally. They see this activity as a means to achieving the larger purpose of getting a better life for their children. All in all, many different factors inform people's moral project and the pathway towards the Good Life.

How, then, does entrepreneurship help tuk tuk drivers in Panajachel, Guatemala, achieve the Good Life? Concerning the conceptualisation of the Good Life by entrepreneurial tuk tuk drivers, we can draw interesting parallels between them and the Mayan farmers described by Fischer (2014). The constant threat of poverty forces drivers to find creative ways to exploit opportunities to increase their income. They engage in these entrepreneurial activities to reach for their aspirations. Similar to the aspirations of Mayan farmers, tuk tuk drivers' aspirations are morally driven: to expand possibilities, to provide their children with education, and to attain economic security (Fischer, 2014: 207).

However, the intergenerational dignity that Mayan farmers express, as Fischer describes, is not as present in the lives of tuk tuk drivers. This may be explained by the fact that the age of the tuk tuk sector simply does not span multiple generations yet. We expect that over time, similar intergenerational characteristics of the dignity of Mayan farmers will be present in the lives of tuk tuk drivers as well. Additionally, the opportunity structures that tuk tuk drivers enjoy have been influenced by the growing number of tourists coming to Panajachel; this is similar to the way in which globalisation provides opportunities to coffee farmers in terms of market expansion. On the other hand, the formalisation of the tuk tuk sector has influenced opportunity structures in such a way that it is now almost impossible for new drivers to buy a tuk tuk due to the disproportionately increased price of the vehicle. Consequentially, the equity aspect of owning land as a Mayan farmer is only seen in the tuk tuk sector among owners who bought their tuk tuk long ago. In other words: as most drivers lease their tuk tuk from owners, they do not enjoy the economic security that Maya farmers enjoy as a result of owning land.

This is not to say that tuk tuk drivers feel any less connected to their jobs. They take pride in the appearance of the vehicle they drive, their service, and their creative and entrepreneurial use of the flexibility offered by their occupation. In contrast with farmers, drivers are in direct social connection with their customers. This is expressed in the loaded values attributed to service and reputation in the tuk tuk sector.

The extent to which tuk tuk drivers engage in entrepreneurial activities helps them build a good reputation through increasing their social capital, which in turn results in new opportunities, and a higher sense of dignity. Flexibility and freedom characterise the profession of driving a tuk tuk, which makes this profession ideal for entrepreneurial side activities. In short: with respect to the grey area between entrepreneurship and labor, we argue that those drivers who are situated closer to the entrepreneurial side of this spectrum, are closer to achieving what they see as the Good Life.

Of course, our research is not without its limitations. There are many more factors that influence the relationship between the informal sector and the Good Life. It is beyond the scope of this study to take into consideration religion, for example. Panajachel has a very religious community and religion penetrates all the aspects of life in the town. The same goes for gender. Our population consisted almost exclusively of men, which does not provide a complete representation of the informal sector as a whole. For a holistic understanding of the Good Life in the informal sector, it is therefore important to take these factors into account as well.

Our fieldwork has been a dialectic process of gathering data and linking this to existing theories. As shown in our conceptual framework, Fischer sees wellbeing as a broad package of different aspects comprising the Good Life (Fischer, 2014). He initiates the exploration of the field of positive anthropology. This study aims to make a contribution to this field and to the field of economic anthropology by examining the meanings people give to informality, reputation, and wellbeing.

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Appendix

Research Summary in Spanish

En este estudio buscamos responder la pregunta: ¿Cómo es que los conductores de Tuk Tuk perciben "la buena vida" a través a su medio de vida empresarial? Mediante un enfoque de investigación cualitativa, nos fijamos en los conceptos de "la buena vida", las microempresas y el sector informal. La "teoría de la buena vida" de Fischer, es una teoría central en nuestro trabajo que nos ayuda a responder a la pregunta principal: *¿De qué manera ayuda la iniciativa empresarial a los conductores de Tuk Tuk en Panajachel, Guatemala, a lograr "la buena vida"?*

Con la desaparición de los bici-taxis de Panajachel, Guatemala; el sector de los Tuk Tuk ha crecido rápidamente. Estos vehículos de tres ruedas ahora forman el medio principal de transporte en la ciudad para mercancías y pasajeros. Los conductores de Tuk Tuk participan en diferentes actividades empresariales, lo cual es una característica del sector informal. Nuestro estudio sugiere, al igual que Fischer describió en su libro a los agricultores mayas, que los conductores de Tuk Tuk utilizan diferentes métodos y estrategias para completar sus ingresos.

Actividades empresariales están presentes hasta cierto grado en la vida de todos los conductores de Tuk Tuk. Como verdaderos buscadores de oportunidades, los conductores de Tuk Tuk ven y agarran oportunidades dentro y fuera del sector, y creativamente usan el Tuk Tuk que conducen para estas actividades empresariales. En términos de ingresos y satisfacción, los conductores que se esfuerzan para obtener una buena reputación y apariencia parecen más exitosos que los que no dan tanta importancia a temas de servicio. A estos conductores, conducir un Tuk Tuk les da un mayor sentido de dignidad, que se muestra en sus valores, proyectos morales oportunidades y condiciones de trabajo. El éxito de un conductor depende en gran medida de sus oportunidades. El éxito de los conductores de tuk tuk, por lo tanto, depende en gran parte de la reputación y la flexibilidad del conductor.

En nuestra tesis usamos el concepto de 'hombres libres' para identificar a los conductores de Tuk Tuk por sus percepciones compartidas de un entorno de trabajo flexible y libre. Conductores de tuk tuk tienen que trabajar muchas horas al día en la

búsqueda de algo más. Sus condiciones de trabajo están formadas por un conjunto de circunstancias difíciles en función de sus contextos sociales y familiares. Un crecimiento en estructuras de oportunidades no siempre coincide con el fortalecimiento de la propia agencia. Las situaciones de vida de los conductores de Tuk Tuk representa las luchas diarias que experimentan en intentar obtener un salario.

Su bienestar está influenciado por su agencia y las estructuras de oportunidades presentes a su alrededor. En su búsqueda de "la buena vida", los conductores de Tuk Tuk se comprometen con grandes propósitos. Estos propósitos pueden consistir de metas inmateriales como comprometerse a su familia o un grupo religioso; trabajan duro para ampliar sus oportunidades intergeneracionales, como la educación de sus hijos. Hemos visto que muchos de los conductores de Tuk Tuk aspiran a pasar a los EE.UU., ésta actividad la ven como un medio para lograr el objetivo más amplio de conseguir una vida mejor para sus hijos. Muchos factores diferentes forman los proyectos morales de las personas que quieren alcanzar "la buena vida".

Concluimos nuestra tesis trazando paralelismos entre conductores de Tuk Tuk y los agricultores mayas descritos por Fischer (2014). Similar a las aspiraciones de los agricultores mayas, las aspiraciones de los conductores de Tuk Tuk están moralmente cargadas: para ampliar las posibilidades, para proporcionar a sus hijos con la educación, y para alcanzar la seguridad económica (Fischer 2014: 207). Sin embargo, la dignidad intergeneracional que los agricultores mayas expresan, como describe Fischer, no está tan presente en la vida de los conductores de Tuk Tuk; ésto puede explicarse debido al hecho de que la edad del sector de Tuk Tuk simplemente no se extiende a través de múltiples generaciones.

Las estructuras de oportunidades que los conductores disfrutan han sido influenciadas por el creciente número de turistas que vienen a Panajachel; de una manera similar que la globalización ofrece oportunidades a los productores de café en términos de expansión del mercado. Por otro lado, la formalización del sector Tuk Tuk ha influido las estructuras de oportunidad de tal manera que, ahora es casi imposible para los nuevos conductores comprar un Tuk Tuk, debido al aumento desproporcionado del precio del vehículo. Consecuentemente, el aspecto patrimonial de ser dueño de la tierra, como un agricultor maya, solo se ve en el sector de Tuk Tuk entre los propietarios que compraron su vehículo Tuk Tuk hace mucho tiempo. En otras palabras: debido a que la mayoría de

los conductores renta su Tuk Tuk a un propietario, no gozan de la seguridad económica que los agricultores mayas sí disfrutan como resultado de la propiedad de la tierra.

En contraste con los productores de café mayas, los conductores de Tuk Tuk están en relación social con sus clientes. Esto se expresa en los valores atribuidos al servicio y a la reputación del sector de Tuk Tuk. La medida en que los conductores de Tuk Tuk se involucran en actividades empresariales ayuda a construir una buena reputación a través del aumento de su capital social, que a su vez se traduce en nuevas oportunidades y un mayor sentido de dignidad. La flexibilidad y la libertad caracterizan la profesión de conducir un Tuk Tuk, lo que hace a esta profesión, ideal para actividades empresariales secundarias. En resumen: con respecto a la zona gris entre el espíritu empresarial y el obrero, sostenemos que los conductores que están situados más cerca del lado empresarial de este espectro, están más cerca de lograr lo que ellos mismos ven como “la buena vida”.