Manufacturing Disruption and Constructing Power: Worker and Union Response to Technological Innovation in New York City’s Taxi Industry, 1968-2022

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This paper synthetizes and refines the emergent power resource approach (PRA) to explain labor contestation, applying the case of labor’s response to the rise of the gig economy in New York City’s taxi industry. The study utilizes a matched case comparison of the New York Taxi Workers’ Alliance’s success against the rise of Uber in the 2010s and the Taxi Driver Union’s failure to sustain themselves in the face of their employer-driven technological crisis in the 1970s. The analyses advance the notion that power resource construction and deconstruction projects are a means of articulating and synthesizing the PRA, bringing it into conversation with social movement theory. Adding in power construction solves four problems that have plagued the PRA: the lack of a clear taxonomy; the under theorization of capital and the state’s power resources; poor incorporation of temporality; and the struggle to bridge the micro-macro divide. This study is based on archival research on the two unions and two years of ethnographic research with the contemporary union.

Intro

The construction of labor markets and processes within each industry or firm is dependent on the competing interests of and balances between labor, capital, and the state. Each actor engages in projects either to construct its own power or to deconstruct (that is, diminish) the relative power of the other actors. Workers, for example, can construct their power by organizing unions. The state, meanwhile, can establish regulatory agencies or licensing requirements to build its power over a given industry. This paper evaluates one particular form of capital’s power construction—technological innovation—and evaluates how workers and their unions respond to these changes. Technological innovation reconstructs the labor process in ways that build capital’s relative power and challenges existing employment and regulatory regimes.

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Historically, such innovation has undermined work quality and state capacity in addition to exacerbating inequality.

This paper advances the notion of power construction and deconstruction projects to better articulate models of labor contestation. Following the rise of social movement unionism in the global south (Seidman 1994) and attempts to revitalize the labor movement in the United States since the precipitous decline in union density since the 1970s (Moody 1997; Milkman 2006), there has been a renewed interest among sociologists in articulating theories of labor movement power. This research has recently coalesced around the notion of the power resource approach (PRA) (Schmalz et al. 2018; Rhomberg and Lopez 2021; Arnholz and Refslund 2024), which seeks to understand labor’s points of leverage and ability to mobilize resources to resist its asymmetric relationship with capital. The PRA revives a class analysis approach, first articulated by Korpi (1978), to understanding the distribution of power and labor contestation in industrial democracies. While promising, the PRA has struggled to articulate a clear model. Specifically, it has failed to develop a clear taxonomy, undertheorized the role of capital and the state, insufficiently considered temporality, and neglected to fully explain how power resources operate between the micro and macro levels. This paper argues that these deficiencies stem from a failure to focus on the discursive nature of labor disputes between labor, capital, and the state. Instead, the PRA has attempted to account for relative levels of power without considering how the different actors within the dispute engage in deliberative action to advance their own interests and counteract their opponents’ projects. By also examining the notion of power resource construction projects and clarifying the mediating forces that adjudicate the efficacy of these projects, this paper also makes the power resource approach more temporally dynamic.
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Incorporating power resource construction projects also bridges the divide between studies of the efficacy of the labor movement and that of other social movements. Classic social movement studies have often explicitly excluded labor contestation from their analysis based on the belief that the class-based nature of contestation and the formal institutionalization of union rights render them incomparable (Fantasia & Stephan-Norris 2004; Soule and Earle 2005; Rhomberg and Lopez 2021). Yet, social movement theories such as the political process model (McAdam 1982) contain a temporal dimension to their analysis that is often missing from PRA. In contrast, studies in the PRA tradition are often overly static, viewing a union’s power in each contestation as an exogenously given variable. By focusing on the deliberative and discursive nature of power resource construction projects, however, this paper recasts the relative institutionalization and embeddedness of labor as the outcome of contestations over power resource construction projects. This more dynamic approach brings PRA closer into line with social movement theory.

The story of capital since the 1970s is one of deliberate efforts to construct its own power and minimize that of unions. Of particular importance in evaluating capital’s power construction and de-construction projects is understanding how it uses technological innovation to transform the labor process. Capital uses technological innovation as an ideological justification for political projects that circumvent and destroy the state’s regulatory authority (Wolf 2022). Uber’s app technology, for example, both undermined labor’s structural and associational power and challenged the state’s regulatory power by arguing that it was merely a technology company that should not be required to follow taxi or employment laws. Uber’s might seem like a revolutionary approach, but the historical example of the Taxi Drivers Union (TDU) contextualizes the app’s technological innovations, showing that Uber was just the latest in a long history of capital innovations aimed at gaining power over workers and the state.
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This paper analyzes how power construction and deconstruction projects operate within the PRA through an investigation of the New York City taxi industry. It explores two moments when technological innovation resulted in radical changes to the industry, disrupting the balance and relative power of labor and the state. In the first case, taxi workers, led by the powerful labor leader Harry Van Arsdale Jr., finally organized in 1966 (following decades of failed attempts to do so) and formed the Taxi Drivers Union (TDU), Local 3036. Shortly thereafter, the introduction of dispatch radios radically transformed the labor process by replacing street hails with radio dispatch, undermining the newly formed union’s victories and the City of New York’s regulatory system, which had been in place since the Great Depression. This seemingly simple innovation prompted responses from labor, capital, and the state, but because of the union’s failure to engage in power construction projects to address the new technology, by the end of the 1970s taxi workers had lost their employee status and the union had hemorrhaged membership, essentially existing in name only. Given its leadership’s political connections and the relatively strong federal legal protections in place at the time, the TDU’s collapse was shocking.

In contrast, no one would have been surprised if the introduction of Uber in 2011 were to have destroyed the New York Taxi Workers Alliance (NYTWA). The NYTWA (or “Alliance”) was formed in 1998 by a group of immigrant South Asian taxi drivers to combat what they felt was the growing harassment of immigrant cabbies by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani’s administration. Arising through immigrant community organizing rather than traditional labor channels, the NYTWA became an innovative hybrid of a union and a workers’ center fighting for drivers in both their garages and their communities. The NYTWA, though, had numerous disadvantages relative to the TDU. For one, when the NYTWA was created, taxi workers were no longer covered by labor laws. After the TDU’s collapse, New York cabbies worked on a leasing system,
which made them independent contractors. The NYTWA was also not as politically connected as were TDU and its president Harry Van Arsdale Jr., who ran two unions and the New York City Central Labor Council, in addition to being personally close with both the governor and mayor. The recent immigrants who formed the NYTWA, however, had few connections to the labor movement, let alone the city’s political elite. Despite their weak political and legal standing, the NYTWA engaged in an aggressive campaign of power construction, transforming the city’s regulatory body, the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC), into a de facto tripartite bargaining apparatus and winning a series of important victories around pay, health, and safety in the 2000s. As with the TDU case, though, technological innovation soon challenged the gains the NYTWA had made, with Uber’s app-based technology posing a new existential threat. Just as the dispatch cab companies had done, Uber attempted to use technological innovations to build its relative power by upending the labor process and taxi regulation. By exploring these power construction projects, this paper attempts to understand why the relatively less-resourced NYTWA was better able to respond to technological innovations than the TDU.

This paper is informed by two years of ethnographic research with the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, as well as a review of the archives of the NYTWA, the TDU, and the Taxi Rank & File Coalition, a dissident group within TDU, all located at NYU’s Tamiment Library & Wagner Labor Archives. Archival materials include union leaflets, position papers, bargaining documents, newspapers, and importantly, oral histories from activists within the TDU’s dissident group in the 1970s. While the challenges posed by Uber remain, the NYTWA engaged in projects to build their associational strength, community embeddedness, and political power and have consequently begun to re-stabilize the industry in New York City. They have accomplished
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despite aggressive employer counter-organizing and the inherent divides between traditional
and app-based drivers, which has undermined organizing efforts elsewhere.

**Union Power and Its Temporal Construction**

To understand how the NYTWA responded to Uber, we must first outline the Alliance’s
different sources of power. The power resources approach (PRA) is best suited for this analysis.
An emergent theory designed to explain the outcomes of contestation between labor, capital, and
the state, PRA’s historical origins can be found in macro-level evaluations of the formation of
welfare states (Korpi 1978). More contemporary work has focused on micro analyses of
individual acts of labor contestation (Schmalz et al. 2018; Rhomberg and Lopez 2021; Arnholz
and Refslund 2024). At its core, PRA seeks to understand how organized labor can maintain its
interests through collective action and deploying its leverage. This section will cover the
historical development of PRA and consider four central problems with the theory outlined
earlier. It then advances a power construction model as a synthesis and corrective to the PRA’s
deficiencies. This updated model clarifies the taxonomy of powers at play by distinguishing
between power resources and mediating forces, allowing for the interdependence at play between
factors without losing analytic clarity. Instead of articulating a laundry list of powers (as PRA
has traditionally done) or privileging one power over another (e.g., Rhomberg and Lopez 2021),
the power construction model considers the forces mediating those powers and how relative
power deficiencies or advantages inform deliberative projects over time. The power construction
model’s focus on projects that build one’s own power while diminishing an opponent’s gives
equal agency to all actors. Finally, this model allows for actions to be analyzed at the micro or
macro level depending on strategic decisions and the nature of the deliberative project.
Historical Development of PRA

Power resource theory’s origins can be traced to a movement within sociology in the 1970s to revive class-based analysis. One of the theory’s originators, Korpi (1978), theorized that workers’ labor market position allowed them to organize and mobilize against the stronger structural position of their employers, defining power resources as “the properties of an actor that provide the ability to reward or punish another actor” (35). Workers could counter the imbalance by leveraging their market power (which derived from their labor skills) and their capacity for collective organization. Korpi explored these issues at the macro level, specifically how workers and their unions mobilized their resources to secure the varying degrees of social welfare protections found in postwar industrial economies.

In subsequent years, scholars tended to reduce Korpi’s notion of power resources to instrumental variables measured by the state’s welfare provision and the electoral performance of labor parties. This tendency to instrumentalize obscured much of the nuance in Korpi’s original theorization. The second wave of power resources theorization came from scholars seeking to understand two phenomena: the growth in social movement unionism in the global South (Seidman 1994); and attempts to revitalize the U.S. labor movement through innovative service-sector organizing beginning in the late 1990s (Moody 1997; Milkman 2006). These movements generated a renewed interest in understanding labor power against the backdrop of the precipitous decline of unions following the rise of neoliberalism and economic financialization in the 1970s and 1980s. The newer model’s approach, as synthesized by Schmalz et al. (2018), begins from the Weberian notion of power as the ability of one social actor to carry out their will in the face of resistance from an opposing actor. As such, PRA focused on how labor collectively
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mobilizes its power resources to sustain or sometimes even win in the face of capital’s asymmetric power advantage. As Schmalz et al. (2018) contend, the process has two core implications for theory: first, PRA should be relational, with all sides attempting to mobilize their own resources; and the focus should be on mobilization efficacy rather than relational structure.

Despite the stated desire to focus on mobilization efficacy rather than simply mapping relational structures, the second wave of PRA scholars have tended to center on taxonomies of labor’s power resources. While scholars describe them in different terms, the four central components of power are: structural power, or workers’ ability to disrupt production through strikes (Wright 2000; Silver 2003; Webster et al 2008); associational power, or the degree to which a union is organized toward collective action both at the workplace and in the workers’ communities; institutional or political power, the degree to which labor is incorporated into the state through labor parties, political allies, or legal institutions and protections (Dörre, Holst and Nachtwey, 2009); and symbolic power, or the union’s ability to mobilize civil society, public opinion, and community solidarity (Chun 2009; Fine 2006; Evans 2010; Brooks 2013). While this taxonomy is useful in evaluating individual labor disputes, these notions are often applied statically and without appreciation of the discursive nature of these power resources as they are articulated through labor’s contestation with capital and the state.

Recent scholars have further refined PRA. For example, Rhomberg and Lopez (2021) offer a critical evaluation of Schmalz et al.’s (2018) synthesis by highlighting four issues with their theorization. First, they argue that PRA confuses the concepts of mobilization and leverage. Second, they contend that Schmalz et al.’s taxonomy is overly complicated. Third, they maintain that PRA fails to theorize the terrain of contestation adequately, or as they put it, PRA provides a
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menu, not a map. And fourth, they argue that PRA does not consider the relationships among resources. Moreover, they propose associational power as crucial to activating each arena and type of power resource. By “tracing the developmental paths in the economy, the state, and civil society,” scholars can reveal “how those junctures come together and change over time and across different cases” (p. 49). Rhomberg and Lopez (2021) raise centrally important questions, revive Korpi’s original focus on mobilization and the actions of actors apart from labor, and assert the primacy of associational power.

While their work has made critical advances, I depart from their method of privileging associational power. Rather, I propose synthesizing PRA through a discursive approach of power construction projects. Power construction projects are defined here as attempts by actors (labor, capital, and the state) to build or deconstruct other actors’ relative power resources in a discursive and interactive process of contestation across time. The focus on discursive interaction and time allows us to overcome PRA’s mobilization and taxonomy problems. In evaluating a specific incidence of labor contestation, it is less important to account for labor’s relative levels of associational, structural, political, and symbolic power than to grasp how labor, capital, and the state understand one another’s relative power levels and then seek to increase their own powers while diminishing that of their opponents. In considering a project initiated by capital to undermine labor’s structural power through technological innovation, or a state project that diminishes labor’s political power through regulatory reform, associational power (the core of Rhomberg and Lopez’s model) becomes less important in this instance. Focusing on construction projects not only helps us understand how different power resources relate to each other but how each actor’s relative power resources impact the other actors’ resources. Mobilization thus affects all types of power, not just associational power.
I further seek to clarify the analytical utility of the PRA through the notion of power mediating forces. The efficacy of power resource construction projects is dependent on their embeddedness within society and its unique social and political institutions. While the conversational dynamics of labor, capital, and the state’s competing projects influence outcomes, these projects are mediated by broader forces that Rhomberg and Lopez call “arenas,” or what others have termed distinct power resources of labor. These mediating forces can strengthen or hamper a given construction project and adjudicate the success of different actors’ competing projects.

While there are a multitude of possible mediating factors, the two key ones in the literature are strategic capacity and civil society. Ganz (2000) introduced the notion of strategic capacity to account for why some movement leaders appear to make successful choices at disproportionately high rates:

An organization is more likely to achieve positive outcomes if it develops more effective strategy, and it is more likely to develop more effective strategy if its leaders can access diverse sources of salient information, employ heuristic processes, and demonstrate deep motivation—their strategic capacity. Variation in strategic capacity, again, derives from differences in leaders’ life experience, networks and repertoires, and organizations’ deliberative processes, resource flows, and accountability structures. (2000: 1019)

Strategic capacity is less about whether a union ultimately develops a successful strategy than whether it builds an effective organizational information structure capable of developing successful strategy. Other labor scholars have advanced similar notions of strategic capacity under the notion of organizational efficiency (Behrens, Hurd, and Waddington 2004). It is this
organizational information structure which mediates a union’s power construction projects by impacting the relative level of union power in a given period of contestation.

The second key mediating factor is civil society. A vast literature on recent attempts to revitalize the U.S. labor movement has focused on bringing civil society back into the labor conversation (Evans 2007; Milkman and Voss 2004). In fact, labor historians note that much of U.S. labor law has essentially sought to separate the labor movement and civil society after the volatile community-labor unrest of the 1930s (Guntman 1976; Dubofsky 1994). Rhomberg (2010) goes so far as to consider civil society as a distinct analytical category for understanding labor’s efficacy or power, although he and Lopez (2021) later call it the arena in which symbolic power operates. From a union power standpoint, the role of the community is ambiguous. As these new models argue, the community can be vital in increasing and defining a union’s associational power. But civil society does more than this, playing a mediating role in all forms of union as well as capital and state power. Civil society typically includes neighbors, families, mosques, and communities of workers, but it can also encompass the state’s voters or capital’s customers. This paper considers civil society not as a separate analytical category but as a force that impacts each form of union power. By incorporating mediating factors into our understanding of how power construction projects operate in the PRA, we can examine how labor, capital, and state projects to mobilize power resources are conditioned by the social and political institutions in which they are embedded.

**Incorporating Temporality in PRA**

The introduction of power construction projects to the PRA model incorporates temporality and bridges the divide with social movement theory. Since Korpi’s (1978) original articulation of
power resources, scholars have noted the importance of how relative levels of resources and mobilization efficacy change over time. Within sociology, the class-based nature of labor movement mobilization has often set the study of the labor movement apart from traditional social movement scholarship (Rhomberg and Lopez 2021). For example, many social movement scholars argue that because of the specific institutionalization and organizational form of most unions, they only rarely exhibit the characteristics of a social movement (Trongone 2022; Fantasia & Stephan-Norris 2004; Soule & Earl 2005). Yet, the same concepts in labor and social movement theories are often simply given different names, revealing the arbitrariness of the division. For example, the power resources model parallels resource mobilization theory (McCarthy and Zald 1977); the notion of political and economic power in PRA parallels the political process model (McAdam 1982); and the concept of symbolic power parallels that of movement framing (Snow and Benford 2000). As Rhomberg and Lopez (2021) contend, labor institutionalization affects all social movements that are embedded in social and political structures. Therefore, excluding labor from our concepts of social movement processes ignores the larger project of understanding the development of these structures. By focusing on power construction projects and their inherent discursive nature, however, we can highlight how periods of contestation build on and impact each other, bringing PRA and social movement theories into conversation.

To situate our understanding of union power as a dynamic construction project, it is useful to borrow the insights of social movement theory. Whereas union power theory is often static and focused on singular cases, social movement theory is often obsessively temporal, focusing on why movements happen when they do and not at other times. McAdams’ (1982) seminal study on the Civil Rights Movement is largely concerned with social forces like
urbanization and agricultural mechanization that reoriented the bases of power and political opportunities for a Black popular mobilization that had previously been unavailable to civil rights advocates. He refers to a political opportunity structure, and subsequent social movement theorists have used dynamic temporal models to examine how a social change process—be it political shocks, cultural shifts, or economic environments—upends this opportunity structure. In this model, actors’ opportunities are shaped by their mobilization structures, collective processes (Benford & Snow 2000), and a given culture’s repertories of contention.

A Dynamic and Episodic Model of Labor Power

The power resource approach and the attempts to refine it offer a promising path forward, but its limitations (outlined earlier) become apparent when examining the case of technological innovation and labor contestation in the New York Taxi Industry, specifically how firms have utilized technological innovation to construct their power and diminish the power of labor and the state. This paper puts forward power construction projects as a discursive and temporally dynamic corrective to the PRA to address its conceptual limitations.

These temporal dynamics and the sources of labor power are outlined in Figure 1. In this model, previous power construction projects and episodes of contestation present a priori the current period’s relative forms of union power (associational, structural, political, and symbolic). Unions, capital, and the state then engage in projects that seek to alter these power levels as suits their current interests. Construction projects can be considered successful or unsuccessful (to varying degrees) depending on the actions of the other actors and the mediating influence of strategic capacity and civil society. This results in new relative levels of structural, associational, symbolic, and political power during a given moment of contestation, be it a contract negotiation, legislative battle, or technological crisis. These relative power levels and
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contestation outcomes, in turn, become the basis for the next round. The point is that union power is not static but in dynamic conversation with the three actors and dependent on previous periods of contestation. For example, the Alliance’s relatively weak initial political and structural power was a direct result of the TDU’s failures in the 1970s.

**Figure 1. A Dynamic and Episodic Model of Labor Power**

Incorporating construction projects into PRA also provides a clearer mechanism to account for the discursive nature in which power resources are employed by all actors. The importance of capital and state power has been acknowledged, but undertheorized, in the PRA since Korpi. Schmalz et al. (2018), for example, state: “In reality, of course, labour does not develop its power in isolation from other powerful wielders of power, namely capital and the state. In most cases, successful collective mobilisation of power resources follows a trial-and-error process, and often in opposition to the counter-power of dominant groups” (p. 124). Capital obviously has important resources of its own, such as its structural power over the production process, its associational power through chambers of commerce, and its political power through
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legal protections and lobbying (Van Heuvelen 2020). Accounting for the actions of capital and the state is of vital importance for developing a complete PRA model. For example, labor, capital, and the state all seek to garner civil society and public support among neighbors, customers, and voters by engaging in symbolic power construction projects. Exploring the role of this symbolic power, Isaac et al. (2022) found strong quantitative evidence that unfavorable press coverage negatively impacted the outcomes of labor strikes. My notion of power construction projects accounts for these relative shifts in power.

The PRA model has similarly attempted to articulate action at both the macro and micro levels but has typically offered a menu of analytical options without proposing a mechanism for how power resources operate across levels. This failure is reflected in the macro focus of the first wave of theorization and micro focus of the second wave. For example, in his articulation of associational and structural power, Wright (2000) distinguishes between levels of action: the micro workplace, the meso-level sectoral or regional level, and the macro of political systems, both national and international. Schmalz et al. (2018) offers a menu of means by which power resources are applied differently at various levels but not for how they interact between levels. In their description of symbolic power—they call it “societal power”—they neglect to discuss the unique operationalization of power resources at each level, simply noting that “coalitional and discursive power by their very nature transcend the boundaries between the levels” (119). But as I contend, the level at which an actor employs power resources is itself a strategic choice and therefore must be considered in analyzing a construction project.

The power resource construction project approach, in contrast to traditional PRA, thus recasts the movement between levels as a form of strategy. Otherwise put, the decision to employ political power resources at the city versus state or national level is a deliberate strategic
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choice. For example, it has been noted that the U.S. labor movement’s diminished power nationally has resulted in retrenchment, with unions focusing on building political power at the municipal level, where unions maintain a solid basis, to effect change (Fine and Piore 2021; Schragger 2016; Sachs 2011). As for the NYTWA, it realized it had to grow its political power resources beyond its New York City stronghold and become a greater player at the State House. Given previous periods of contestation, its understanding of Uber’s and regulators’ relative power resources, and an educated assessment of those actors’ construction and deconstruction projects, the NYTWA judged that increasing its power at the state level was the best strategy. This example demonstrates the utility of taking a dynamic, multi-level approach.

As Refslund and Arn Holtz (2022) have argued, power resource theory could have far broader implications for the study of the labor market, comparative political economy, and (I would add) social movement scholarship generally. With the inclusion of temporally informed power construction projects, PRA can provide a class-informed alternative to traditional rational choice or game theoretic models to understand the operation and articulation of power at both the micro and macro levels.

The Taxi Drivers Union

The history of organized labor in the New York City taxi industry is largely one of failure. The quixotic quest to organize the city’s cabbies has drawn some of the biggest names in the history of the American labor movement, including Michael Quill and John L. Lewis. These efforts failed in large part due to taxi drivers’ weak structural power resulting from the 1937 Haas Act. The Haas Act, which established New York City’s medallion system in an attempt to counter the Mafia’s dominance of the industry, required that one-third of medallions be owned by individual drivers and two-thirds by fleets. Whenever the fleet drivers attempted to organize
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and strike, the owner-drivers kept driving, damaging solidarity. The Haas Act exacerbated drivers’ already weak associational power by segregating workers into two classes of drivers (medallion owner drivers and fleet drivers) with divergent interests.

As a result, taxi drivers remained one of the largest segments of working-class New Yorkers not in a union. In the early 1960s, a group of fleet drivers formed the Taxi Driver Alliance (TDA) and searched for a labor leader to take on their fight. On June 29, 1964, they met with Van Arsdale Jr., the powerful president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 3 and a political powerbroker in the state. Van Arsdale was impressed with their organizing and eventually agreed to take on their cause. Using his influence and position at the City’s Central Labor Council, Van Arsdale brought the whole power of New York’s political and labor establishment to bear against the employers and organized 28,000 drivers at 82 garages. Subsequently, Van Arsdale was elected president of the driver’s union.

Van Arsdale’s tenure, however, was plagued by problems, which started almost immediately. In the inaugural elections, many drivers questioned electing a non-cabbie president of their union. Moreover, the first contract, despite having secured solid gains, was not as worker friendly as those won in similar industries, such as the contract for the mass transit’s Transport Workers Union (TWU). As a result, Van Arsdale promised to get drivers on even terms with the TWU in its second contract in 1970. This pledge would haunt Van Arsdale over the next five years as he struggled to fulfill it. The situation was made more difficult because of the TWU itself. In 1966 subway and bus workers went on strike, paralyzing the city. To compensate for the lack of transit options, many New Yorkers turned to a new and growing form of transportation, that of radio dispatch cabs—colloquially known at gypsy cabs.2 This was

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2 These cabs were rarely referred to as “dispatch cabs” during the 1960s and 1970s. However, given the negative connotations of the term “gypsy cabs,” and its use as a racial slur against Romani people, I avoid using the term,
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particularly the case in minority neighborhoods outside of Central Manhattan, where due to a combination of economics, fear, and racism, yellow cabs were unlikely to be found. Dispatch cabs had long existed, and unlike yellow medallion cabs, which largely picked up passengers through street hails, they could pick up passengers who called into a garage and ordered or scheduled a ride. The introduction of radios in the cabs made them faster and easier to dispatch. While dispatch cabs were not legally allowed to cruise for fares or have meters, in practice, many did.

The growing competitive threat posed by dispatch cabs cast a pall over the 1970’s contract negotiations, with the fleets arguing to fund the contract with a fare increase set by the city government. With negotiations stalled, Van Arsdale led the union on a 15-day strike that started on December 4, 1970, during the holiday season, a lucrative time for drivers. The new Republican mayor, John Lindsay, was reluctant to fund the contract without imposing greater municipal oversight by creating a new agency, the Taxi Commission, to monitor the industry. Van Arsdale charged that the commission was a “charade to legalize gypsy cabs” (Ruffini, 2002: 187), and there was some truth in this, as Lindsay did hope that the Taxi Commission could bring order to the growing dispatch sector. Politically speaking, Lindsay, a pro-civil rights Republican looking for support from Black and Latino communities which traditionally supported Democrats, viewed regularizing dispatch cabs as a winning civil rights issue that would help him build support in those communities.

The strike was not successful in bringing taxi drivers on par with subway workers. The fleets got their fare increase and Lindsay got his Taxi Commission, but drivers made only small gains in wages. The union agreed to a two-tiered wage structure, where new drivers would get a

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opting instead for “dispatch cabs.” The exception is when I am quoting directly from archival sources. Dispatch cabs are also sometimes referred to as “livery cabs” and may appear as such in archival material.
mere 42% commission on the fare, while experienced drivers would still receive the old rate of 49%. The union did secure dues check-off\(^3\) and an automatic dime payment taken off the top of each ride to pay for the union’s benefit funds. While this new source of money stabilized the funds, it was still a concession, as previously, the benefit funds were fully covered by the fleets. Faced with a tough negotiation, Van Arsdale settled for a dues and benefits payment structure that he hoped would promote stability and leave the union well-placed to win gains in the future. Unfortunately, he also needed to get the drivers to sign off on the deal. The conflict came to a head on April 14, 1971, at the general meeting in the Manhattan Center that ended in an all-out brawl among union members that required police intervention.

The next night, a group of young drivers and some older activists who had opposed Van Arsdale in the past met and formed the Taxi Rank & File Coalition. The group coalesced around stopping the “sellout” contract supported by Van Arsdale and fighting for a more democratic union; shortly thereafter, they opposed the Van Arsdale slate in the executive elections. Over the next six years, the Rank & File Coalition challenged the union, the fleets, the city, and at times, other drivers. Their campaign to stop the 1970’s contract from being ratified was initially successful. With the violent April 14 meeting and the rise of Rank & File, Van Arsdale knew he could not secure a contract ratification vote. He therefore stalled, then resorted to technical bureaucratic maneuvering to muscle through the contract. While Rank & File was eventually able to get a court to throw out the contract based on Van Arsdale’s actions, it took three years to do so. However, their inability to stop the contract by other means, and the lengthy legal case, took the wind out of their sails, weakening union opposition.

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\(^3\) Dues check-off or deduction is when the union secures a provision in their contract with management that allows for automatic deduction of membership dues during the payroll process which streamlines the funding of the union and helps institutionalize it in the workplace.
The fight over the 1970’s contract was in many ways about dispatch cabs. Like Uber would many years later, dispatch cabs posed a challenge to the industry by introducing new technologies. Dispatch cabs not only created political problems for yellow cabs, as their connection to minority communities made their legalization appealing to politicians like Lindsey, but their leasing business model also represented a major threat to the union contract. Dispatch drivers were considered independent contractors and paid an up-front fee to lease a cab by the day or week. As independent contractors, dispatch cabs were exempt from federal wage and hour, health and safety, and union laws. Leasing, or what is called “horse-hiring” in the New York City taxi industry, was made illegal for medallion drivers under the Haas Act. Fleets got around this regulation by arguing that since the dispatch cabs used a leasing system, they, too, should be allowed to use horse-hiring.

Faced with this growing challenge, the union vilified dispatch cabs. As Van Arsdale explained in 1969, “The greatest threat to the owner-drivers and taxi drivers’ future is the widespread failure of the mayor to enforce laws and regulations pertaining to the illegal taxi racket, which is victimizing bona-fide men and women in our industry and the citizens” (quoted in Dyer 2018: 215). Dispatch cabs represented a particular threat to medallion owner drivers, whom the TDU had wisely included in the union to avoid past failures to build solidarity across sectors. However, despite knowing the value of solidarity, Van Arsdale never publicly considered applying the same logic to dispatch cabs and bringing them into the union. Instead of fighting for all drivers in the city, the TDU drove a wedge between yellow cab and dispatch cabs. Because the difference in sectors was racialized with dispatch cabs serving more minority populations, this created discord in the union, which had a growing Black and Puerto Rican membership, not to mention an influx of young drivers supportive of the Civil Rights Movement.
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The fight over dispatch cabs turned violent in the fall of 1972. To appease the growing fleet and union anger, the Taxi and Limousine Commission announced a campaign to stop dispatch cabs from using meters. In response, dispatch drivers and companies organized a massive protest of 7,000 drivers and community members in the South Bronx to march from 143rd Street to Longwood Avenue (Hot Seat, “An Interview with a Gypsy.” April 1973 – Num 21). They were met with a massive police presence, and the situation turned tense when a yellow cab drove by the protest and was attacked, after which a riot ensued. Many were injured and two were killed, including one dispatch driver, Jorge Gallardo, whom police allegedly threw off a five-story building. The riot fueled anger among dispatch drivers and the community at large. The dispatch drivers formed their own organization, the Association of Non-Medallion Drivers, and were planning more demonstrations when TLC Commissioner Michel Lazar backed down from the proposed meter crackdown.

The dispatch riot in the Bronx was a turning point for the dissident Rank & File Coalition, with the group opting to denounce the union’s and management’s racism. Yet it was not until 1974 that Rank & File endorsed the full inclusion of dispatch cabs in the union. By the time Rank & File called for unity across classes of drivers, the drivers’ associational power had been so diminished by infighting among racial and ethnic groups that it was impossible to achieve, and Rank & File itself was foundering. In the 1974 TDU executive elections, the Rank & File made their final bid to take over the union but only garnered 1,400 of 7,500 votes. By the end of the decade, Rank & File had formally folded.

The following years would bring more industry changes. The combination of unionization, technological innovation, and the 1975 financial crisis pushed employers to drastically alter their business models. While a few yellow cab garages, such as Scull’s Angels
and Medallion, did (with limited success) attempt to copy the dispatch model and install radios for dispatching, most did not (Hot Seat, “Drivers Proposed Ending Cruising” April 1973 – Num 21). Instead, following the typical American corporate strategy in the 1970s, the taxi fleets pursued a policy of financialization transforming from taxi companies into medallion brokers and launched an assault on labor protections. Two particularly important phenomena in this process were the sale of medallions to mini-fleets and the introduction of leasing. Mini-fleets, which were legalized in a 1972 court case, allowed garages to “sell” their medallions to individual drivers on usurious payment plans, giving them massive returns without losing legal control of the medallion (Hot Seat, “Union Waters Mini Seeds” December 1975 – Num 37). Financialization of the fleets allowed the garages to avoid a traditional employment relationship with drivers and prevent their unionization, essentially transforming their businesses into brokerage firms. Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier, dispatch cabs had reintroduced “horse-hiring,” which constituted a major assault on employment rights.

The demand for the introduction of a leasing system in the traditional industry given its uses in the new dispatch sector resulted in multiple rounds of concession bargaining by the TDU in the late 1970s. In 1979, leasing was formally legalized by the TLC, and the TDU accepted leasing in their contract. In exchange, the union accepted an automatic deduction of dues from each lease payment. The union benefit funds quickly disappeared, and the union was eventually absorbed by the Mafia-connected Service Employees International Union local. By the mid-1980s, the union had become less a robust organizing body than a line-item deduction on the workers’ lease receipts. When the NYTWA began organizing in the 1990s, drivers jokingly referred to Local 3036 as the “$3 Union” in reference to the fee added to their lease (Mathew 2008). What began as a mighty union led by New York City’s most powerful labor leader was
now a mere joke, a superannuated structure whose value was unclear, especially to New York City’s new immigrant drivers.

**Power Non-Construction Projects of the TDU**

The failure of the TDU to respond effectively to the rise of radio dispatch cabs and their technological innovations ultimately led to its demise. Utilizing the temporal power construction and deconstruction model, one can understand how the TDU, as opposed to the NYTWA in its fight against Uber, failed to meet this challenge and how capital’s and the state’s own projects decreased TDU’s chances of success. A comparison of the TDU’s and NYTWA’s relative strength and weaknesses, as well as labor’s power construction projects and capital’s projects to deconstruct labor’s power, are presented in Table 1. Each type of union power—structural, associational, political, and symbolic—was impacted by the rise of dispatch cabs, and TDU did little to build effective construction projects. Instead, the TDU attempted to rely on its relatively strong political power institutionalized through the NLRA and Van Arsdale’s connections to the New York political elite. Below, I outline how each type of power impacted both the TDU’s and Rank & File’s attempt to build resistance.
### Table 1. Unions’ Strong Versus Weak Powers and Labor’s and Capital’s Construction/Deconstruction Projects in Each Period

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<th>TDU</th>
<th>The NY Taxi Workers Alliance</th>
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<td>Strong Power or</td>
<td>Political Power</td>
<td>Associational Power &amp; Strategic Capacity</td>
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<td>Mediating Force</td>
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<td>Weak Power or</td>
<td>Strategic Capacity &amp; Symbolic</td>
<td>Structural, Symbolic, &amp; Political</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mediating Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>Union Construction</td>
<td>None (NLRA Dependent)</td>
<td>Structural, Symbolic, &amp; Political</td>
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<td>Projects</td>
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<td>Company Deconstruction</td>
<td>Structural &amp; Associational (Dispatch),</td>
<td>Structural (App), Associational (Company Union),</td>
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<td>Projects</td>
<td>Political (TLC), &amp; Symbolic (Race)</td>
<td>&amp; Political</td>
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**Structural Power**

The taxi industry in New York City has always had a complicated relationship with structural power. Driving a taxi is not inherently a high-skill occupation and has deskilled over time with the introduction of automatic transmissions and GPS technology. Taxi service is also easily replaceable by other forms of transit, such as the subway, buses, or walking. As the famous New York labor arbitrator Theodore Kheel summarized, “It was difficult to organize the drivers because (1) almost half of the taxis in the industry were driven by driver-owners, (2) strong anti-union employers, who opposed elections adamantly and also had considerable influence in the city, and (3) it was difficult to reach drivers since they had no central location” (quoted in Ruffini 2002: 179). The introduction of dispatch cabs exacerbated these challenges, as it introduced a new class of drivers with a less labor-friendly labor process.
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The traditional payment structure in the industry further undermined labor’s structural power. Both leasing practices and the commission system forced workers to compete for fares, making work stoppages particularly costly for them. Unlike strategically blocking one section of an assembly line, bringing the whole operation to a halt, when one cabbie stops working, they have minimal ability to force others to stop working as well. Already suffering from a weak structural position and faced with the threat of leasing presented by dispatch cabs, the TDU only made matters worse. By allowing a two-tiered commissions structure in the 1970’s contract, the union undermined associational power by pitting new drivers against older drivers. Drivers even began referring to themselves by their commission rates, as “42%-ers” or “49%-ers,” each blaming the other group for all its problems. The wage structure, which already undermined drivers’ structural power, only became less advantageous for drivers over the 1970s, as the adoption of the dispatch leasing system insulated the bosses’ profits from the worst impacts of work stoppages.

The TDU’s refusal to fight the financialization of the industry, driven by the rise in mini-fleets, further undermined the union’s structural power and whittled away their membership. Mini-fleets were dubbed the greatest threat to the union by Rank & File, and later by the Watchdog Committee. Rank & File was constantly urging TDU (in vain) to do something about the mini-fleets, which apart from other issues, meant that fewer rides were subject to the ten-cent fee stipulated by the union contract to go toward benefits funds. Indeed, Rank & File argued that the health funds losses for 1975 could entirely be explained by fares lost to mini-fleet conversion (Hot Seat. “Health Plan Gets Sicker.” December 1975 – Num 37). Unsurprisingly, within the weakening TDU, garages in the city’s minority neighborhoods, which faced the most direct
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competition from dispatch cabs, most aggressively turned to mini-fleet financialization during this period.

Associational Power

As already discussed at length, the dispatch cabs created massive divisions between drivers, drastically diminishing their associational power. New York City in the 1970s was a racial tinder box, and the dispatch vs. yellow cab debate fanned these flames. Beyond stoking these racial tensions among drivers, the dispatch cabs and their leasing business model also forced the TDU to make contract concessions, including their two-tiered commission structure that further undermined driver solidarity. Finally, the financialization of the taxi fleets—and their transformation into mini-fleet brokers—worsened a decades-old industry problem of competition between medallion owner and lease drivers created by the Haas Act, with owner-drivers consistently undermined fleet drivers’ strikes and labor organizations. The TDU, which had successfully circumvented the owner-driver and fleet-driver divide so skillfully in the 1965 organizing drive, let the problem fester in the 1970s. The TDU often used owner-driver fear as a cudgel to block Rank & File activism within the union. Once Van Arsdale determined that the owner-driver division and the pensioners were his strongest supporters in the union, he attempted to allow only these groups into union general meetings and illegally permitted them to vote on the fleet-drivers’ contract.

Furthermore, throughout the 1970s, the fleet bosses became extremely skilled at exploiting race, gender, age, and cultural divides between workers to undermine their associational power. The main tool for sowing these divisions was the “shape-up” system: when workers reported to a garage, they would get in a queue to receive their cabs for the shift. Workers were expected to return the cab for the next shift, meaning that the longer they waited,
the fewer hours they got to work, and the less money they made. The TDU contract allowed for productivity concerns to be considered in this “shape-up” process through which drivers were allotted vehicles. For example, a “more productive driver” might be selected and given a car earlier. This productivity allowance, however, allowed the boss to play favorites, and racism, sexism, and bribery were rife. When Rank & File formed following the acceptance of the 1970’s contract, the bosses and the union utilized the shape-up system to discourage dissent. The bosses had the power to send Rank & File activists out last, and with the worst cabs, to dissuade the other drivers from joining their ranks. When Rank & File attempted to file grievances over this practice, the union publicly refused to help, further discouraging drivers from joining its cause.

The two-tiered wage structure agreed to by the union only made matters worse. Bosses tended to prefer hiring new drivers at lower rates, and often gave them first dibs in the shape-up queue. The new workers were often younger, typically had longer hairied hippies who held more radical political beliefs than older, close-cropped drivers, widening the divide within the union.

The divide between the younger, long-haired part timers and the older, short-haired full timers deeply undercut the union in the same way racial divisions did. Despite its best efforts, the Rank & File failed to bring the two groups together. Rank & File would make accusations, and other members would vehemently push back. For example, one driver angry at an article Rank & File published from a young driver about racism responded, “Suggestion: stick to the nitty-gritty (i.e., union corruption, harassment of drivers, starvation wages) and leave out the college-boy bullshit” (Hot Seat. “Letters: Stick to the Nitty-Gritty.” Sept 1973 – Num 24). Meanwhile, the Rank & File, despite being made up of young radical activists, had a hard time getting other young workers to join their ranks and busy themselves in union politics.

*Political Power*
Surprisingly given these challenges, the TDU’s and Van Arsdale’s political power did not actually wane during this period. Indeed, Van Arsdale was appointed to the Emergency Financial Protection Bureau during the city’s 1975 fiscal crisis, indicating that if anything, he had grown more powerful and more connected to the city’s political elite. The issue for the TDU was that it was entirely dependent on this political power. As with many business unions during the 1970s, it depended on the power afforded by the NLRA, despite capital’s assault on worker protections and politicians’ increasing indifference to maintaining the employer-worker balance in the labor system. Generally, we can state that during this period, the taxi fleets and the city engaged in power construction projects while the TDU did nothing to shore up its power.

The creation of the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) under Mayor Lindsay is emblematic of these shifting forces. Lindsay, unlike Robert F. Wagner Jr. before him, was less dependent on organized labor and traditional political operators like Van Arsdale. As noted earlier, Lindsay jumped at the political opportunity to build support in Black and Puerto Rican communities by legitimizing the dispatch cabs. Additionally, Lindsay and the council generally opposed covering the costs of the 1970 contract by passing a fare increase. Therefore, he looked to the TLC as a way of insulating himself from voter backlash when unpopular decisions had to be made (Hodges 2007). While the TLC helped the union secure some of its demands, it also allowed the council and the mayor to distance themselves from industrial disputes in the taxi industry. By insulating the politicians from responsibility for the tough decisions of setting taxi fares it strengthens the state’s relative power while weakening the union’s ability to mobilize symbolic power against the mayor and council.

Meanwhile, the TLC offered the fleets and their association, the Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade (MTBOT), an opportunity to build their relative political power. Given that
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MTBOT had years of experience in the industry, while Van Arsdale’s union had only existed for five years, the TLC’s commission positions were filled with business insiders more sympathetic to the garages. The TLC immediately went on a campaign to “clean up” the industry, fining drivers for not dressing neatly and letting the customers choose the radio station. To the TLC, the drivers were standing in the way of rational business practices. Additionally, MTBOT strategically engaged in a series of lawsuits around mini-fleets and leasing, which further strengthened its position. As for the TDU, unlike the NYTWA years later, it failed to get the TLC to take drivers concerns seriously. In sum, as the post-Great Society politics ended and the fleets were affected by the financial crisis, the city engaged in political power construction projects, while the TDU clung to a faltering NLRA system and could not respond effectively when a mayor less sympathetic to their cause was elected.

Symbolic Power

The TDU had rather low symbolic power in the 1970s. The public, and especially citizens of color, did not have many nice things to say about New York cabbies at the time. Joan Rivers summed up the public’s opinion on The Tonight Show, complaining to Johnny Carson that “New York Cab drivers act like they are doing you a favor” (Hot Seat. July-Aug 1976 – Num 40). New York cabs, like the subway and the South Bronx, were another symbol of the city’s decline. The TLC was created in part to clean up the taxi's (and by extension the city’s) image. Its commissioner, Michael J. Lazar, thought cabbies deserved much of the blame and joked before the press, “The era of the sweaty undershirt is over” (Hot Seat. “New $25 fines.” Jan 1973 – Num 20). Lazar announced that drivers, not their garages, would be fined $25 for each violation of the TLC’s new driver decorum rules. The Daily News explained, “New York’s harried cab drivers have been told to smile more, dress better, talk nicer and maybe even keep the ashtrays
cleaner, in a campaign to button up the image of the industry” (Hot Seat. “New $25 fines.” Jan 1973 – Num 20). Fleet bosses joined this campaign, with Robert Scull, the eccentric taxi owner and patron of the famous painters Mark Rothko and Andy Warhol, even required that his drivers attend an etiquette lesson taught by the socialite Amy Vanderbilt at the Waldorf Astoria hotel (Hot Seat. “Hell’s Angel: R&F Pickets Scull Art Sale.” Nov 1973 – Num 25). The Daily News reveled in the absurdity of the event while mocking the uncouth drivers in attendance.

Not only were drivers generally unsympathetic figures in New York at the time, but they failed to connect to the broader social movements of the times. While the Rank & File filled its Hot Seat newsletter with article after article about the Vietnam War, tenant rights struggles, the Civil Rights Movement, and the austerity movement, the letters to the editor were largely filled with admonishments to stop talking about these “college boy” problems. Meanwhile the TDU’s Taxi Driver Voice publication rarely encouraged drivers to engage in wider social struggles. In the 1970s, therefore, taxi drivers were seen not as struggling, sympathetic workers but rather as crazed figures like Travis Bickle or reactionary New Yorkers who refused to provide services in the city’s redlined ghettos. The TDU contributed to these narratives, while the Rank & File failed to engage in a symbolic power construction project that effectively countered them.

Strategic Capacity

The TDU had relatively weak strategic capacity, weakened further by Van Arsdale’s response to its electoral challengers. Immediately following the TDU’s formation and inaugural elections, Van Arsdale closed ranks, surprised by an initial challenge from drivers who questioned whether a non-driver like him should lead their union. He included few of the original organizers in his leadership team and immediately worked to change internal union rules to lengthen the tenure of executive office. He also made running for office more difficult. The
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resulting leadership imposed on the drivers from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) comprised only a handful of former taxi drivers, who were either openly corrupt or increasingly distant from the changing demographics of the membership.

Strategic capacity was further weakened by the TDU’s reaction to the Rank & File rebellion, which only highlighted the organization’s detachment from many drivers. First, Van Arsdale increasingly relied on the union’s owner-driver division and the pensioners to rubber-stamp his policies at and control the debates during union general meetings. Consequently, the union focused on owner-drivers, whose demands around fare increases and mini-fleets were more aligned with fleet bosses than the garage workers. Additionally, this focus meant that the union became less and less connected to the day-to-day reality of the garages.

The TDU’s securing of automatic dues checkoff in the 1970 contract, while providing the union with stability, meant that union representatives no longer needed to spend time in the garages to gain support. While Van Arsdale survived Rank & File’s leadership challenge, his cancelation of the 1972 elections ensured there were no shop stewards active in the garages who could provide leadership with real information about the membership or the employers. As Van Arsdale’s chosen men became entrenched in the union, they became extensions of the garage. In some garages, Rank & File found that TDU chairmen were often on the boss’s pay, and in certain cases were even tasked with running payroll. In an anecdote that sums up this situation, when M&S garage chairman Jerry DiMaso was asked by a driver to help him file a grievance, DiMaso responded with alarm, “I can’t file a grievance against the boss!” (Hot Seat. “Boro Reports: Brooklyn.” June 1973 – Num 23).
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The New York Taxi Workers Alliance

Following the reimposition of leasing, the taxi industry entered a period of steep decline. Leasing transformed taxi driving into a low-wage service job, and workers who could left the industry. The workforce subsequently shifted radically, as immigrants from South Asia, West Africa, and the Caribbean moved into the industry, and taxi driving came to dominate male employment in these communities. These immigrant workers quickly became fed up with the industry conditions and harassment, and in 1992, a group of drivers formed the Lease Driver Coalition to centralize the drivers’ sporadic activism. This group partnered with the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence (CAAAV), an immigrant rights group organizing the New York City’s South Asian community. CAAAV became interested in improving conditions in the taxi industry because so many South Asian immigrants in New York City worked in this sector, and thus any improvements would greatly benefit their community as a whole. In 1998, following internal disputes, the drivers broke off from CAAAV and formed the New York Taxi Workers Alliance. Teaming up with the remaining activists from the Rank & File days, such as Leo Lazarus, the Alliance worked to build broad movement comprising all yellow cab drivers.

The NYTWA’s first major public action was a massive citywide strike to protest what they perceived as Mayor Rudy Giuliani’s harassment of drivers. Specifically, Giuliani and the TLC had announced that they would be increasing fines 300% on drivers who violated TLC rules to promote “safety.” Some penalties would be as high as $1,000. Drivers thought this campaign was nothing more than an attempt to harass and extract more money from immigrant workers. At the time, the TLC was the second-highest revenue generator for the city, behind only the Parking Violation Bureau (Mathew 2008: 19). Immigrant drivers believed that they were being targeted because the city thought they would not fight back. NYTWA had been organizing the strike for
weeks, but with only 500 members in May 1998, they were unsure how successful they would be. On May 13, however, over 24,000 drivers went on strike. The NYTWA followed up this strong showing with strikes on May 21 and July 1, including a 400-driver march over the Queensboro Bridge. Giuliani and the TLC panicked and aggressively attempted to quell the NYTWA, painting the strikers as agents of disorder. As Freeman (2000) argues, “Rather than a labor dispute, the conflict was widely characterized as a struggle between the forces of order and those of chaos and lawlessness, the latter sometimes identified, by implication, with the third worldization of New York” (327). In one glaring example, the city’s police commissioner played into xenophobic stereotypes of the Muslim drivers by referring to them as terrorists. However, in the end, the strike was successful, and Giuliani backed down. The NYTWA had established themselves with the drivers, the city, the press, and the public as a powerful voice for immigrant drivers.

Following the strike, the NYTWA’s membership steadily grew, and would continue to grow after each victory. In 2003, NYTWA ran a living wage campaign, demanding that the TLC ensure the latest fare increase go to drivers and insisting that it lower the lease fee cap. They recognized that while the TLC had the authority to set industry’s rules (e.g., fares, leases, number of taxis on the road), it was ultimately beholden to the city and the public, both of which were more likely to be sympathetic to the immigrant drivers than to the business-friendly TLC. In another strategic tactic, the NYTWA utilized New York City’s rule making process to push their demands by petitioning the TLC. Under New York City’s Administrative Procedure Act, Chapter 45, all rule-making bodies must allow an opportunity for public comments when issuing new rules. This petition process became a powerful tool for the Alliance, enabling it to secure economic and other material gains from the city and fleets despite not having formal bargaining
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	rights, which were denied to yellow lease drivers as independent contractors (Gaus 2014; Johnston 2018). Through petitions and campaigns to garner public and political support for its cause, the Alliance over time got city councilmembers and the mayor to pressure the TLC to take the union’s concerns seriously. The nature of the rule-making process, wherein both the Alliance and the industry could present their formal proposals before the TLC, essentially established regular tripartite bargaining through the TLC. Their 2003 campaign ultimately proved successful when in 2004 the TLC earmarked 70% of the passed fare increase for drivers.

As Uber was preparing to launch in New York City, the NYTWA was flying high, the model of what a successful immigrant workers’ center could be (Fine 2006). In the years before Uber’s low-cost service UberX launched in 2014 in NYC, the Alliance convinced the TLC to agree to a fare fee for a health fund which the Alliance would administer (Gaus 2014), restoring a benefit the TDU had lost 40 years earlier. Fighting for immigrant drivers in both their workplaces and their communities, the Alliance had not only reawakened taxi activism but helped spur a rise in South Asian political activism in Queens and Brooklyn. Strategic alliances followed. Ed Ott, the president of the Central Labor Council (CLC), formerly run by Van Arsdale, offered the NYTWA membership; in October 2011, the AFL-CIO gave the Alliance a formal charter; and in 2013, union president Bhairavi Desai was given a seat on its executive board. She was the first representative of an alt-labor workers’ center to be included. Much like Van Arsdale’s TDU had in 1966 after its initial success, the Alliance was celebrating its victories, its membership was united and active, and it had the city’s institutional support. And much like in 1966, an existential threat brought on by technological innovations was looming.

The New York City Taxi Industry in the Age of Uber
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Uber entered New York City illegally in 2014, operating at first as a high-end black car service. This tactic follows a similar pattern to the company’s rollout in San Francisco. Uber was initially intended to be a high-end limo service for the rich and famous. In 2015, the company pivoted, introducing their UberX service, which was to operate much like a traditional yellow cab. For taxi drivers, this meant more competition and downward pressure on wages. By the end of 2015, Uber had about 20,000 unique vehicles operating daily on New York City streets, about equal to the number of yellow cabs on the road. By 2019, Uber had exploded in New York City, with 85,000 unique vehicles per month. During this period, though, Uber drivers, who had been lured by deceptive and illegal promises of financial windfalls (Kristof 2018), saw their wages fall 53% from 2013 to 2017 (Farell et al. 2018). As one NYTWA member explained, “I switched from a yellow cab to Uber because I thought the medallion owners were taking advantage of us. Uber said I’d have my own car and flexibility. After a year, they cut prices and there were too many drivers. Suddenly, I was making less money but now with all the car debt.”

It is indisputable that no one in New York City has seen their livelihoods changed more by the introduction of Uber than the city’s traditional medallion owner taxi drivers. In the 2000s, the city sold these medallions through an auction system, and critics accused the city of using this system to artificially inflate their value (Rosenthal 2019). The influx of competition from Uber, and the city’s initial reluctance to regulate Uber, resulted in the collapse of the medallions’ value and drivers’ earnings more generally. Those who own these medallions today have seen their investment plummet by hundreds of thousands of dollars, leaving the drivers underwater, as they still owe the banks the original medallion purchase price. These financial troubles have had grave, sometimes extreme, effects on the lives of drivers: Faced with massive medallion debts
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and declining fares due to the flood of Uber cars on the road, nine drivers have taken their own lives (Roberts & Woods 2019).

Faced with these crises, the NYTWA undertook an aggressive organizing campaign and urged the city to enforce their taxi laws and bring Uber under regulation. Their resistance was expected, but more surprising was the NYTWA’s inclusive approach. Instead of closing ranks with their base of yellow cab drivers, the union decided to organize and include Uber drivers in the union. By contrast, on the international scene, the powerful taxi drivers’ union in London did not welcome Uber drivers. Similarly, in the 1970s, Van Arsdale’s TDU did not welcome dispatch drivers into the organizing fold. Why, then, did the NYTWA adopt this strategy? For the NYTWA’s leadership, the decision was not a hard one, because its membership drew heavily from the immigrant communities most dependent on the taxi industry—be it yellow cabs or rideshares. While Uber has brought some new driver populations into the industry, the company largely draws from the dominant ethnic groups that have dominated the taxi industry since the 1990s: South Asian, Caribbean, West African, and Chinese. As a West African yellow cab driver member explained to me, “Who are Uber drivers? They are our kids who can’t afford medallions. What kind of father doesn’t fight for his kids?” Additionally, as the NYTWA quickly found out, Uber drivers were often already union members. In fact, when the NYTWA held their first press conference challenging Uber’s illegal entry, the union was shocked when a hundred of its members showed up. They had only expected a few dozen to come. Desai, the union president, approached one longtime taxi member to thank him for coming to support Uber drivers, and he responded, “Of course I’m here. I’m an Uber driver now.” She had similar conversations with member after member. By the end of the rally, the union realized that a large
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part of their membership had started driving for Uber, meaning that the union had already effectively organized hundreds of Uber drivers.

After establishing this unity platform, the NYTWA was able to present a coherent set of policy proposals that benefitted both yellow cab and Uber drivers. Its efforts culminated in August 2018, when the NYTWA got the city to adopt a cap on the number of For-Hire Vehicles (FHV), which is how the city categorizes app-based taxi companies, as well as a guaranteed minimum wage for drivers. In August of 2019, the cap was made permanent and extended. This cap has stabilized the industry and prevented further decline, but fights continue over raising pay standards and Uber’s misclassification of drivers as independent contractors. Therefore, despite its weaker political power and legal institutionalization, the NYTWA, unlike the TDU, has, so far, survived its technological crisis.

The NYTWA’s Union Power Construction Projects

Uber’s employee-free business model is an attempt to deconstruct unions’ power and undermine the state’s legal authority. We now turn to how the NYTWA attempted to respond to Uber’s challenge to the labor process in the taxi industry and compare its approach to past union attempts to respond to their own critical challenges (Table 1). Ultimately, while in each period the unions faced technological, regulatory, and broader cultural changes, the NYTWA’s community-based associational power, as well as its structural and symbolic power construction projects, helped it weather its crisis better than previous taxi unions, which were overly reliant on political power and failed to invest in associational or symbolic power construction projects.

Associational Power
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As noted, the NYTWA began as a South Asian immigrant rights organization but morphed into a union when the group’s early organizers realized the importance of improving conditions in the taxi industry for drivers hailing from New York City’s South Asian community. This community approach brought drivers together through their religious and civic institutions as a way of building associational power among urban service workers. While the press often discusses the atomized Uber driver working as his or her own boss, the reality is that drivers live in tight ethnic and religious communities where driving is a major source of employment.

Despite often belonging to the same ethnic communities, the divisions between yellow cab and Uber drivers are real and had to be bridged. One NYTWA organizer described the process of bringing Uber drivers into the union as a “two-year family therapy session.” At one late-night membership meeting, I witnessed a yellow cab medallion owner member stand up and start yelling at an Uber driver who had just made a suggestion about the union’s demands to the city council. The medallion owner asked why the union should consider the Uber driver’s needs when his entry into the industry destroyed the value of his medallion. In a classic illustration of the NYTWA’s unifying approach, Desai calmed members: “In our whole history, we know the only way drivers make money is if we control the fare, the costs, and the number [of vehicles]. It was true of yellow; it is true of Uber. Our individual situations might be slightly different, but we all face the same logic and have a common solution.” This articulation is indicative of how associational power is leveraged toward a union construction project.

Aware of the NYTWA’s associational strength, Uber formed its own company union, giving funds to the Machinists Union to start the Independent Drivers Guild (IDG). While the terms of this deal were not made public, it is believed that Uber’s purpose was to prevent its drivers from striking and to deflect any criticism of the company’s employment practices.
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(Scheiber 2017). The IDG has publicly stated that it does receive funding from Uber to support its operations (Bredderman 2018), and it declined to participate in the global Wall Street Initial Public Offering strike against Uber, citing this funding agreement (Barone 2019). At public TLC meetings, the IDG often takes Uber’s position, such as opposing the driver cap. It also attempts to redirect certain industry debates, such as when, at an August 2019 TLC meeting, the IDG was criticized by the TLC for commenting on lease costs instead of the driver cap, which was the issue under discussion. The Alliance believes episodes like this highlight how the IDG seeks to muddy issues and undermine drivers’ associational power. Even if, as the IDG contends, it is creating positive benefits for workers, two groups representing the same group of workers has ultimately divided, not united, drivers. At a TLC hearing in August 2019, I overheard an IDG staffer respond to a driver who had inquired about the NYTWA by stating that the NYTWA was the yellow cab drivers’ union, and that they only looked out for yellow cab, not Uber, drivers. Apart from deceptive messaging, the IDG has not always proved effective at aiding its members. Most drivers I have spoken to, or those who responded to one of my worker surveys, claim that the IDG had failed to help them resolve their complaints with Uber and became upset upon learning that the IDG received money from Uber.

Structural Power

The structural power of taxi workers in the post-lease-system era has been diminished. As discussed earlier, the Haas Act, which created the division between fleet and owner-drivers, has long served to undermine both structural and associational power. Still, in the pre-Uber environment, unions could stage effective strikes against physical employers like garages. As for Uber, it has decreased the workers’ structural power by altering the labor process, as discussed above. On the one hand, the app has further deskilled driving work, lowered the barriers to entry,
and diminished worker control through algorithmic management. On the other, Uber and the other FHV companies have consolidated the industry, and algorithmic management’s constant direction to drivers makes the companies more susceptible to labor regulation. This is because this direction and control is far greater than existed under the yellow leasing system indicating the reintroduction of employment in this industry. If the NYTWA can successful argue FHV drivers are employees, this could potentially increasing workers’ structural power by combating legal employment fissuring.

In considering the NYTWA’s response to Uber, we should first outline the component parts of structural power: the labor process, industry technology, work regulations, and institutionalization. This last component is critical to the NYTWA’s structural power project, specifically its push to institutionalize their standing before the TLC regulatory system. The NYTWA’s 1998 strike against Giuliani highlighted the fact that the city was ultimately responsible for establishing rules and regulations. In a conscious, successful effort throughout the 2000s, the union pushed for the TLC to take responsibility for the wellbeing of drivers (Gaus 2014; Johnston 2018). As a result, by the early 2010s, just before Uber’s arrival, the TLC had essentially become a system of tripartite bargaining more commonly found in Germany or France than in the United States. At TLC hearings, the NYTWA would present their demands, then the fleets would present their demands, and finally the TLC would act as arbitrator and reach a compromise. Uber attempted to exempt itself from this system. While Uber succeeded in establishing FHVs as a new sector, completely undermining the medallion system, Uber was ultimately unable to avoid being subject to TLC regulations, and it now must abide by a vehicle cap, a cruising cap, and a minimum wage. In sum, the NYTWA utilized its associational,
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political, and symbolic power to vastly increase the union’s structural power by forcing the TLC to take responsibility for drivers and provide them legal protections.

*Political Power*

Labor regulation plays a role both in constructing NYTWA’s structural power and its political power. Here, I borrow from McAdams’s (1982) political process model to consider how marginalized groups can successfully make demands from the polity. McAdams lists four key factors: system openness, system stability, access to elite allies, and the state’s or capital’s willingness and capacity to repress labor. As Hodges (2007) argues, the TLC was created in part to insulate the mayor and city council from the politics of the taxi industry. In this sense, the current system is more closed to drivers than it had been in the Van Arsdale era, when Mayor Wagner Jr. was very receptive and dependent on labor’s votes. The NYTWA has attempted to open up the system by engaging in a power construction project that turned the TLC into essentially a European-style tripartite bargaining structure. Similarly, the NYTWA acted as a community union, drawing its support from large immigrant populations that by the 2010s were significant voting blocks in the city’s outer boroughs, particularly Queens. Politicians thus viewed helping the NYTWA as helping these communities and their voters. Consequently, the union secured greater access to elite allies over time. Furthermore, the Alliance worked to build connections to the broader labor movement, and the powerful SEIU 32BJ in particular, helping the union win Mayor Bill de Blasio’s support for regulating Uber.

The union’s political power construction project was not an immediate success. When the NYTWA first attempted to get the city to regulate Uber, the company engaged in a massive lobbying campaign to undermine the Alliance’s support at City Hall. As Uber’s own lobbyist explained, it launched a campaign to mimic the city’s progressive municipal politics to “co-opt
everyone who normally sided with [Mayor Bill de Blasio,] because they didn’t want to be seen as illiberal” (Tusk 2018: 119). Uber recast its employee-free business model as a civil rights issue and argued that the color-blind nature of their e-hail system fixed the racism that Black customers faced in trying to hail a cab. This “mimicking” of the city’s progressive politics aimed to undermine the progressive coalition the Alliance relied on. Uber’s arguments echoed those utilized by dispatch cabs in the 1970s, who similarly contended that their technological innovation would solve industry racism and justified their legalization and pro-management legal reforms. Unlike the TDU, which fell into the trap of putting itself on the wrong side of civil rights claims, the NYTWA worked to take control of the civil rights narrative by redirecting the discussion to driver pay and wellbeing. While Uber’s initial campaign prevented an attempt to impose regulations in 2015, the NYTWA’s continued political power construction project helped it prevail in bringing Uber under TLC regulations in 2018. The stability of the TLC system was certainly challenged by Uber, as the company attempted to do an end-run around the system and refused to operate under its rules, but both labor and the city worked to reaffirm the TLC and the city’s regulatory authority.

Cognizant of the union’s city-based political power, Uber attempted to preempt city action in New York City and across the country. As of January 2020, Uber had convinced thirty states to preempt local regulation of FHVs, of which only four carved out exemptions for big cities in their states (Wolf 2022). Ultimately, however, Uber failed to preempt regulatory action in New York City, as New York was one of the states where the state preemption bill carved out most of the largest cities. This fight did result in the increased involvement of the state in the industry, and this increased state involvement poses a threat to the union’s political power, which is largely centered in the city. To compensate, the union is spending more time in Albany and
has teamed up with other unions affected by the gig economy. They have also partnered with the National Employment Law Project to push for a California AB5-style law extending employee status to gig workers.

While the NYTWA has certainly wielded political power in its fight against Uber, it has comparatively less than did the TDU. The TDU was formed in part because Mayor Wagner Jr. asked Van Arsdale to organize the chaotic industry. But as we have seen, the TDU often relied on political support to the detriment of building associational or symbolic power, so dependent on access to elite allies that it failed to deeply connect to its workers or communities. As a result, once friendly mayors left office, the unions could not mobilize workers or public support to fight industry changes. Political power is thus clearly necessary, but not sufficient, for union success.

Symbolic Power

Labor’s symbolic and communication power is dependent on the union’s ability to articulate its message and win civil society and media support. The symbolic power arena is where discursive ideological battles are waged. Civil society impacts all three groups simultaneously, serving as a community for workers, a customer base for capital, and a source of voters for government leaders. I break down symbolic power up into the following three sources: strategic framing (Benford & Snow 2000), media, and civil society. When Uber launched, the union’s symbolic power was initially severely curtailed. Uber’s introduction of its app made getting a taxi in New York City easier, winning initial support from the public. Additionally, backed by millions in venture capital, the rides were subsidized at first, making them extremely cheap. When the city first tried to regulate Uber in 2015, the company weaponized customers, who had grown accustomed to low prices, to oppose the bill. Uber ran an aggressive campaign against de Blasio, viewing his veto as its best hope of preventing regulation. When customers
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logged onto the app, they were presented with an image of “de Blasio’s Uber,” which showed the standard city map usually found on its app but with no available Ubers to be found. Passengers were then prompted to email the mayor, telling him not to regulate Uber. This campaign worked, as the city did not regulate Uber until 2018.

Over this three-year period between regulatory battles, the Alliance campaigned to win public support. Importantly, it framed the Uber debate as a fight for immigrant rights. Following the city’s refusal to regulate Uber in 2015, the company slashed its base pay rates for Uber drivers multiple times and quadrupled the number of drivers on the road. The result was that everyone—from yellow to black cabs to FHV—were making less money. It also resulted in the bursting of the medallion bubble, while at the same time, Uber drivers who had taken out subprime loans to buy expensive SUVs found themselves underwater as well. Stories highlighted the plight of immigrants who came to America and invested in capital to “be their own boss” and achieve the American dream, only to become despondent, overworked, and saddled with debt. Details of the medallion and leasing system also began to emerge in the press, providing a clear picture of how Wall Street exploited immigrants.

The NYTWA’s ability to amplify these immigrant stories brought it support among the community and customers, increasing its symbolic power. The union further constructed its symbolic power by tying Uber to President Donald Trump, who was incredibly unpopular in New York City, especially for his immigration policies. There were two crucial moments in which Uber became embroiled in politics. First, Uber’s CEO Travis Kalanick, who was famously captured lashing out at an Uber driver in a dash camera video after the driver had asked him why he slashed driver pay rates, joined Trump’s economic advisory council. While he ultimately resigned the council after facing public pressure, his participation undermined the public’s
support for Uber and helped color the company as anti-immigrant. Second, when Trump announced Executive Order 13769, the “Muslim travel ban,” and people across the country stormed the nation’s airports to protest, the NYTWA called for a spontaneous sympathy strike, utilizing the union’s vast network of WhatsApp groups to largely shut down taxis service at the city’s airports. This strike, which a traditional union might have viewed as exceedingly risky, epitomized the NYTWA’s community unionism approach. The NYTWA’s membership is predominantly Muslim, and their communities were under attack. As the union saw itself as not only representing workers, but also their communities; for them, not responding was not an option. The strike was surprisingly effective. In response, Uber began offering massive surge bonuses to drivers in hopes of breaking the strike. When this became public knowledge, the union launched a social media campaign, #DeleteUber, which trended on Twitter and resulted in thousands of people deleting the app. By framing its fight against Uber as a struggle for immigrant rights, and successfully tying Uber to Trump, the NYTWA was able to gain media and civil society support helping them to secure some regulatory reforms.

In contrast, the TDU never succeeded in gaining civil society support. Due to its reliance on the business unionism of the 1960s, the TDU never really attempted to engage with the community or wider movements. When younger drivers pushed the union to take on civil rights causes or protest the Vietnam War, they were sidelined, creating deep rifts within the membership that ultimately diminished the associational power they vitally needed once less friendly political administrations took over.

Strategic Capacity

Compared to the TDU, the NYTWA has vastly higher levels of strategic capacity. This is due to the NYTWA’s deep associational power and its community unionism. Apart from the
NYTWA’s president, the union’s lawyer (a former driver), and a few older staffers (also former drivers), all the union’s staff still drive either taxis or FHV’s, at least part time. Additionally, the union’s leadership are members of the same communities and religious institutions as the drivers. These connections to rank-and-file workers increase the union’s strategic capacity. Process-wise, the union’s elected board meets and makes proposals for union campaigns and demands from the city and TLC. These demands are then presented at general membership meetings, where lively debates and suggestions are made to amend the board’s proposals. The meetings are more freewheeling and open than one typically finds, as the union’s deep embeddedness in the community ensures an open and productive flow of information and strategy making. In contrast, the TDU president Van Arsdale Jr. had never been a cabbie, had three other full-time jobs while at the help, and typically distrusted his driver members.

Conclusion
As the city emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic, the New York City taxi industry has been vastly diminished. While drivers fight for survival following the pandemic’s devastating financial impacts, the NYTWA’s organizing and advocacy have stabilized the industry in the face of many changes brought by the introduction of Uber. The NYTWA, the taxi companies, and the state have consistently battled over proposed legislation to classify Uber drivers in New York State as either independent contractors or employees. The union is currently proposing a law similar to the AB5 law passed in California, which would grant all drivers full employee status. Meanwhile, Uber itself is pressing New York State to ensure that drivers will not receive full employee protections, proposing a new category halfway between worker and independent contractor. This classification was put forward in early 2021 through a bill that, while it enjoyed the support of some unions, was quickly defeated by the NYTWA and its allies. The future
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remains uncertain, but while the NYTWA might have bent, it did not break. In fact, the NYTWA has pushed the city and the TLC to adopt the strictest regulations on Uber in the county. This paper utilized insights from labor process, union power, and political process theories to illustrate how the NYTWA was able to respond effectively to Uber and weather its industry crisis more successfully than the previous taxi unions in New York City history.

Investigating the case of the NYTWA and Uber illustrates how the notion of power resource construction and deconstruction projects corrects the issues which have hampered the analytically clarity of the power resource approach. By recasting the PRA as a discursive contestation of deliberate power resource construction projects of labor, capital, and the state that are filtered through mediating forces, we solve a series of problems that have plagued the articulation of PRA. First, power construction clarifies PRA’s taxonomy problem by distinguishing among the four central power resources—associational, structural, political, and symbolic—and factors such as strategic capacity and civil society that mediate projects’ efficacy. Additionally, by shifting focus from measuring relative levels of power resources to tracking strategy and mobilization through construction projects, we avoid the need to privilege associational power. Second, by analyzing construction projects, we can measure the discursive nature of power resources and explore which projects labor, capital, and the state are undertaking in a given moment. My conception of construction projects identifies the missing mechanism that fully incorporates the actions of capital and the state in PRA. Third, construction projects better incorporate the temporality of social movement theory into the PRA, as these projects respond to past contestations and reflect the various actors’ assessments of previous events and the relative power resources of other actors. Fourth, construction projects help bridge the micro-
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macro divide insofar as labor, capital, and the state choose the level of contestation based on their assessments of the relative power resources and opportunities at each level.

More generally, incorporating power construction into PRA provides a useful bridge between the study of the labor movement and social movements. Rather than arguing that the unique embeddedness and institutionalization of the labor movement make it incomparable to other social movements, this paper highlights how different construction projects by labor and other social movements over various rounds of contestation resulted in different social and political outcomes, that in turn influence future rounds of contestation. By bringing these two literatures into conversation, we can better understand how labor, capital, and state power change over time through their interactions with one another. In the case of the NYTWA, the union formed out of a South Asian immigrants’ rights organization and focused on improving the dominant industry in their community. When the union formed in 1998, workers had low structural power, low political power (facing a hostile Giuliani administration), and weak symbolic power. What they did have was a strong associational power and strategic capacity due to their deep embeddedness in the drivers’ immigrant communities, which developed effective information structures that supported a well-informed and effective strategy. Over the early 2000s, the union engaged in a power construction project. It built its structural power by institutionalizing tripartism at the TLC, its political power through engagement with the politicians who represented the drivers’ community, and symbolic power by framing its campaign as helping immigrants to achieve the American dream.

Against this backdrop, broad social and technological changes led to the rise of Uber. Uber engaged in a project of deconstructing union power. It attempted to undermine workers’ structural power through technological advances, reconfigure the labor process through
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algorithmic management, and avoid regulation. Uber sought to weaken the union’s associational power by atomizing workers and forming a company union. It tried to undermine the union’s political power by preempting New York City’s local taxi authority at the state level and circumventing TLC regulation altogether. Finally, the company attempted to undermine the union’s symbolic power through million-dollar public relations campaigns and appeals to customers. Here, the state’s actions were mixed: the state initially failed to respond, allowing the creation of a new sector in the industry, of FHVs, which essentially destroyed the medallion system and flooded the city with an additional 84,000 taxis. But ultimately, the city did act, bolstering the union’s structural and political power after being swayed by its symbolic power. This altered power structure will now determine future rounds of contestation, where social change processes will again drive action.

The power resource construction model reveals that the NYTWA’s strength lies in its associational power, its strategic capacity, and its ability to successfully build up its symbolic and political power. This combination of forces was ultimately able to improve the drivers’ rather weak structural power as well, as the NYTWA forced the TLC to take responsibility for the drivers’ wellbeing. This model also highlights why the Van Arsdale-led TDU could not weather its crisis. The TDU had weak strategic capacity due to an outside leadership that was overly dependent on the political power of a sympathetic mayor. The union failed to invest in its associational power, specifically by echoing the bosses’ racist rhetoric against dispatch drivers and failed to fight for the interests of part-timers and younger workers. The TDU also never engaged civil society, especially when it failed to support elements fighting for civil rights or protesting the Vietnam War. Instead, its fight against the dispatch cabs turned these potential community allies against it. As drivers’ connection to the NLRA system crumbled in the late
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1970s and early 1980s, the union did not have the associational power to combat this loss. In short, the NYTWA, despite having less structural and political power than earlier unions in the industry, was better able to respond to its era’s crisis due to its associational power, symbolic power, and a strategic capacity that the older unions lacked. While the future of the NYTWA and Uber is uncertain, the Alliance has, so far, persevered.

References


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