

Special Transportation Center Seminar.....Brown Bag Luncheon

## **“The impact of activities while traveling on the subjective valuation of travel time”**

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Environmental Engineering  
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**Thursday–April 23, 2015**

**Noon – 1:00 pm**

**(Brown Bag Luncheon - You are  
welcome to bring your lunch.)**

**Location**

**McCormick School of Engineering  
Tech. - Room L150  
2145 Sheridan Road  
Evanston, IL 60208**

**Abstract**

A growing body of analysis is supporting the contention that travel is not purely a disutility. One stream of research focuses on the intrinsic benefits that travel itself has to offer, while another investigates the potential utility of activities conducted while traveling. Both of these aspects can influence a summary judgment of the usefulness or value of the travel time spent on a trip. The present study takes such a summary judgment as the dependent variable of interest, specifically the response to the question, “In terms of its value to you, how would you rate the time you spent on this recent commute?” with the answers recorded using a five-point ordinal variable ranging from “Mostly wasted time” to “Mostly useful time”. Using a sample of about 2,800 Northern California commuters, we estimate ordered probit models of the response to this question, with explanatory variables including primary mode chosen, attitudes, sociodemographic traits, and the engagement in a variety of activities while commuting. We distinguish between “passive-attention” modes (transit, commuter rail, and ridesharing) and “active-attention” modes, requiring hands-on operation and more focused attention (driving, biking, and walking). Among other results, we find that productivity-oriented activities while traveling improve the subjective valuation of one's travel time for passengers on passive-attention modes, while they have no significant impact on the valuation for those using active-attention modes. Although this may not be surprising, it was not a foregone conclusion, and it points to ways in which transportation planners and transit operators can promote more sustainable travel and improve the passenger experience.

**Bio:**

Dr. Mokhtarian has specialized in describing and modeling travel-related attitudes and behavior for more than 35 years -- beginning with her research as an MS and PhD student at Northwestern, advised by Frank Koppelman. Key interests include the impact of telecommunications technology on travel behavior, travel multitasking, the impacts of land use on travel behavior (particularly involving residential location and residential self-selection issues), attitudes toward mobility, and commuters' responses to congestion or to system disruptions. She joined the Civil and Environmental Engineering faculty at the Georgia Institute of Technology in 2013, after serving 23 years on the CEE faculty at the University of California, Davis. Mokhtarian is vice-chair/chair-elect of the International Association for Travel Behaviour Research, and an active member of several TRB committees. She is a North American editor of *Transportation*, and serves on the editorial boards of six other transportation journals. Her Google Scholar profile can be viewed at <http://scholar.google.com/citations?user=84jTPKEAAAJ>.