Conceptualizing and measuring the positive utility of travel

Patrick A. Singleton
Portland State University

ACSP 56th Annual Conference, Portland, OR
Session 14.32, Saturday 5 November 2016
Outline

• Background

• What is the positive utility of travel (PUT)?

• How is PUT measured?

• Why should we study PUT?
Background

- What is PUT?
- How is PUT measured?
- Why study PUT?
Background

Activity demand → Travel demand

- Travel as a disutility

Economics:
weight associated with outcome of preference-satisficing decision

Psychology:
pleasure, happiness, fulfillment, and subjective well-being

Motivations
Extrinsic (instrumental) vs. intrinsic (autotelic)
Hedonic (affective) vs. eudaimonic (symbolic)
The positive utility of travel (PUT) includes...

any benefits accrued to the traveler through the act of traveling.

Mokhtarian & Salomon’s (2001) “affinity for travel”

1. The activities conducted at the destination.
2. The activities that can be conducted while traveling.
3. The activity of traveling itself.
Destination activities

“The activities conducted at the destination.” (MS, 2001)

Definition: Benefits from reaching a destination with activity potential.

Travel as… A means to a productive end: going somewhere.

Motivations: Extrinsic, instrumental.

Examples:

https://www.flickr.com/photos/scottdavies/5671889074/
https://www.flickr.com/photos/krawcowicz/4279213591/
Travel activities

“The activities that can be conducted while traveling.” (MS, 2001)

Definition: Benefits from activity participation during travel.

Travel as... The setting for other activities.

Motivations: Extrinsic, instrumental.

Examples:

https://www.flickr.com/photos/giuseppemilo/15734343208/
https://www.flickr.com/photos/ai-dealer/4616142327/
Travel experiences

“The activity of traveling itself.” (MS, 2001)

**Definition:**
- **Affective enjoyment of the travel experience.**
- **Symbolic expression or fulfillment from the travel experience.**
- **Travel as the activity.**

**Travel as...**
- The setting for experiences.
- A means to a fulfilling end.
- An end in and of itself.

**Motivations:**
- **Intrinsic, autotelic.**
- **Hedonic, affective.**
- **Eudaimonic, symbolic.**

**Examples:**

[Images of a snowflake, a car, and a person hiking.](https://www.flickr.com/photos/divinedecay/5225460351/)

[Images of a person walking.](https://www.flickr.com/photos/aerialcamera/10238940444/)
Evidence of PUT

Background – What is PUT? – How is PUT measured? – Why study PUT?

- Desired travel amounts
- Excess travel indicators
- Travel-based multitasking
- Non-instrumental reasons
- Affective responses to travel
- Subjective well-being (travel)
- Satisfaction with travel
- Usefulness of travel
- Travel liking

Specificity

- General
  - Non-shortest path route choice
  - Telecommuting
  - ICTs and travel
  - Coping with congestion
  - Travel time budgets
  - Excess commuting
  - Value of travel time savings

Convincingness

- Less
- More
PUT in general

Excess travel indicators


Desired travel amounts


Do you ever make a trip for any of the following reasons?

• By a longer but more scenic route than normal
• With no particular destination in mind
• Just to get out of the house

What would be your ideal one-way commute travel time?

Would you like to walk, bike, drive, and ride transit less, the same, or more than you currently do?

Suppose you could snap your fingers and be instantly transported or “teleported” between home and work. Would you teleport, or would you prefer to spend some time commuting? Why?

Teleportation test


Background – What is PUT? – How is PUT measured? – Why study PUT?
Travel activities

While commuting, what did you do?
- Talk face-to-face
- Talk on the phone
- Read print or electronic
- Write or edit documents
- Listen to music, radio
- Eat; drink
- Care for others
- Exercise
- View scenery
- Rest; sleep

Activity participation

While commuting, what percentage of your travel time did you spend doing these things?

Activity duration


Overall usefulness


Activity quality


SEE NEXT PRESENTATION

On a scale from wasted to useful, how would you rate your commute?


Background – What is PUT? – How is PUT measured? – Why study PUT?
Travel experiences

Travel affect, satisfaction

Did you feel any of the following while commuting?

- Excited
- Strong
- Proud
- Calm
- Energized
- Happy
- Bold
- Content
- Relaxed

Subjective well-being

Did commuting allow you to fulfill your desire, express, or improve ___?

- Variety
- Adventure
- Privacy
- Independence
- Social status
- Self-identity
- Self-confidence
- Mental health
- Physical health

How much did you like this trip?

Travel liking


Background – What is PUT? – How is PUT measured? – Why study PUT?
Applications

Value of travel time savings → Cost-benefit analysis

Mode Choice

Activity

Experience

Background – What is PUT? – How is PUT measured? – Why study PUT?
Results (in progress)

Commute trip mode shares (N = 372)

- Car: 49%
- Transit: 30%
- Bike: 16%
- Walk: 4%

Background – What is PUT? – How is PUT measured? – Why study PUT?
Questions?

Patrick A. Singleton  patrick.singleton@pdx.edu

Background – What is PUT? – How is PUT measured? – Why study PUT?