

1 **ANALYZING THE RELATION BETWEEN COMMUTING SATISFACTION AND**  
2 **RESIDENTIAL CHOICES USING DISCRETE CHOICE THEORY AND STRUCTURAL**  
3 **EQUATION MODELING**

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24  
25  
26 Word count: 5937 words text + 5 tables/figures x 250 words (each) = 7187 words

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33 Submission Date

34 **1<sup>st</sup> of August 2016**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Commuting is a derived activity performed by hundreds of millions of workers every day. The spatial and temporal concentration of this specific trip is responsible of many negative externalities for both travellers and the environment. Hence, a deep understanding of the elements having an impact on any of the facets related to the home-to-work trip is of tremendous importance. Among other aspects, the concept of positive feelings for travelling is rather recent in the transportation field. Subjective feelings and other personal factors such as mode attitude affect travel decisions (travel path, mode, departure time) as much as other well studied elements (land use characteristics, for instance). Determining how travelling satisfaction affects commuting mode choices is a pivotal issue for practitioners and policy makers aiming to develop any kind of transport measures, e.g. travel demand management strategies. The aim of this paper is twofold: (i) to further analyze the relation between commuting satisfaction and the utility Logsum following some previous studies from the authors; (ii) studying the influence of residential choices on the commuting satisfaction. The case study is based on a staff travel survey that has been implemented at the University of Luxembourg. Our two steps approach using Discrete Choice Theory and a Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) shows that the direct effect of residential preferences on commuting satisfaction is negligible compared to individual's external factors such as trip characteristics. But indirect effects of residential choices on commuting satisfaction have been observed.

*Keywords:* Commuting satisfaction, Travel Behavior, Utility Logsum, Residential self-selection

## 1 INTRODUCTION AND STATE OF THE ART

2  
3 Since the development of transport economics theory (1) travelling is described as a derived  
4 demand permitting individuals to reach activity places. As underlined by (2), when travelling, only  
5 the benefit of performing the activity at destination is assumed to matter, and individuals are  
6 assumed to minimize the total cost (time, monetary resource, stress level, etc.) when choosing how  
7 to perform the trip. However, these intuitive and well-established principles have been challenged  
8 by (3). They concluded that for some individuals the trip in itself could be a source of positive  
9 utility. The concept of travel liking claims that some travelers are not acting as *homo economics*  
10 trying to reduce the travelling cost but are enjoying their trips. Of course this behavior challenges  
11 the development of (heavy) transport infrastructures because travel likers might not be receptive  
12 to measures aiming at, among other things, reducing travelling time. While (4) found that feelings  
13 during the home-to-work trip were mostly positive or neutral, (5) indicate that the work commute  
14 was frequently associated with negative feelings. Rating (positively or not) a commuting pattern  
15 necessarily implies, from the individuals, an aggregation of the feelings experienced while going  
16 to work. Differences in expressed satisfaction levels between commuting, a repetitive trip by  
17 definition, and a single trip such as the last leisure trip (6) may be important.

18  
19 The various elements having an impact on the travelling satisfaction are more and more  
20 investigated. As pointed out by (7), travel utility has three main components: the enjoyment of the  
21 trip itself, the utility of the activity at destination and the utility of the activities performed while  
22 travelling. Controlling the activity at destination is a must and often transport studies dealing with  
23 satisfaction analyze single purpose trips (leisure trip for (6)). Indeed, an identical train trip might  
24 be perceived differently for an individual going to his workplace than for a tourist on vacation. In  
25 this paper, the activity at destination is the same for everyone, i.e. working at the University of  
26 Luxembourg. This suggests a certain control on the activity at destination even if the University  
27 staff members can have both positive and negative feelings regarding their professional activity.

28  
29 In their paper, (8) provided an interesting classification of travelling satisfaction determinants.  
30 Internal and external factors (to the decision makers) are distinguished. The first category refers to  
31 non-mode specific attributes and the latter is related to mode specific attributes such as travelling  
32 time and cost or comfort. Since 2001, and the publication of (3), external factors have been the  
33 most studied (e.g. (9), (10), (11)). The travelling mode, for instance, is probably one of the most  
34 important determinants for the satisfaction rating. Different studies (e.g. (9), (10)) indicate that soft  
35 mode users have the highest satisfaction level while car users have an intermediate satisfaction  
36 level and public transport users were the least satisfied. Additionally, other mode specific  
37 characteristics such as travelling time, comfort, cost are directly impacting the way travelers are  
38 satisfied (or not) with a trip. Interestingly, as recently showed by (12), the travelling time is not  
39 always seen as a cost to be minimized or suppressed. (3) have shown that workers, on average,  
40 would prefer to have a shorter commuting time but very few would like to have a commuting time  
41 of zero minutes. On the other hand, extreme commuters (13), sometimes because of the (very)  
42 high salary obtained, might indicate that they are happy of their travelling conditions despite the  
43 very long distances or times travelled.

44  
45 On the other side, although less studied, but probably as important, the effect of internal factors  
46 related to the decision makers start gaining interest in travel behavior analysis. While the effect of  
47 general socio-demographic status on travelling satisfaction is well reported (see e.g. (10)), authors

1 are now focusing on subtle behavioral elements such as specific mode attitudes or effect of  
2 residential choices. (6) have insisted on the pivotal role of individual's resident neighborhoods  
3 type when rating travelling feelings. Individuals with a negative stance towards travelling (related  
4 to leisure trips in this case) were mainly living in urban neighborhoods. Such finding is in line with  
5 the concept of residential self-selection (see (14) for a review on the self-selection aspects related  
6 to travel behavior) claiming that people select their residential location partly because of the  
7 possibility to perform most of their trips using the preferred mode. This is partly why "travel haters"  
8 and soft modes fans locate themselves in urban neighborhoods where travelling distances are on  
9 average shorter and also why people liking to travel using public transport locate themselves close  
10 to subway or train stations. However, empirical evidences on the importance of residential  
11 preferences upon travelling satisfaction remain scarce.

12  
13 To the author's knowledge only three scientific contributions (i.e. (6), (15) and (16)) have studied  
14 the relation between travel satisfaction and residential choices. Among other findings, these three  
15 scientific contributions confirmed the effect of specific land-use variables or residential attributes  
16 on travel satisfaction feelings. (6) concludes that people who do not like to travel prefer to live in  
17 the urban center, making possible to minimize traveling costs. Complementary to (6), (16) as well  
18 as (15) indicate that suburban dwellers have a more positive perception of their trips compared to  
19 urban dwellers. Interestingly, (15) indicate that, to some extent, people move into residential areas  
20 allowing them to have "happy traveling". Of course, residential choices or land use variables are  
21 only partly explaining differences in travel satisfaction ratings. As already mentioned, external  
22 factors such as travel time, comfort but also travel liking attitudes and mode specific attitudes play  
23 an important role.

24  
25 (6) mention the possibility that residential variables (neighborhood type in their case) might have  
26 a bigger indirect than direct effect on travel satisfaction. Quantify both direct and indirect effect of  
27 residential preferences on travelling satisfaction (commuting trip in this case) is one of the main  
28 research questions of this paper. Indeed, the hypotheses in this paper are twofold: first there is a  
29 correlation between the stated commuting satisfaction and the Logsum utility related to the Home-  
30 to-work trips; second, residential choices have an impact on this correlation because of residential  
31 self-selection process.

## 32 33 **DATA & METHODOLOGY**

### 34 35 **Data**

36 The University of Luxembourg (the only one in the country) has been created in 2003 and welcome  
37 now 6500 students and 1500 staff members (including PhD students). The first travel survey which  
38 has been implemented between May and June 2012 was seen as a way to establish a benchmark  
39 regarding the mobility of the University staff members and to acquire insight into their traveling  
40 preferences. At that date, 1095 employees were working for the University and 397 replies were  
41 collected. After data cleaning, 328 valid surveys were considered for this analysis. The survey  
42 sample is representative of the entire staff member population. Males represent 46% of the  
43 respondents while professors & researchers were 39%, PhD students 22% and administrative or  
44 technical staff 39%.

45 However, a specificity is related to the living place of the respondents. Indeed, only 63.9% of the  
46 respondents live within the country of Luxembourg while the remaining share live in France (10%),  
47 Germany (21.2%) and Belgium (4.8%). This situation is due to the high salary offered in the

1 Grand-Duchy compared to neighbor's countries combined with very high residential cost in the  
2 country. Thus, cross-border commuters prefer benefiting of a high salary and live in their "home"  
3 county but having the drawback of longer commuting distances and traveling times. While the  
4 respondents living in Luxembourg have an average home-to-work distance of 17.7km the cross  
5 border workers have to commute, on average, 45.5 km. In addition, for cross border workers, the  
6 probability to beneficiate of a good public transport connection to work drastically decrease with  
7 distance. Indeed, cross-border would need, on average, 84 minutes to commute using the public  
8 transport system compared to 38 minutes for the people living in Luxembourg. Of course, as  
9 indicated by (10) and more recently by (8) such important difference in the trip characteristics is  
10 assumed to impact the commuting satisfaction.

11  
12 In the travel survey, the question regarding the commuting satisfaction was formulated as follows:

13  
14 *"Are you globally satisfied by your daily work commute? (If you take into account elements such*  
15 *as the cost, the distance and the stress caused by your home-to-work trips)"*

16  
17 Respondent could choose between very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, satisfied and very satisfied. The  
18 questions regarding the residential choices were phrased as presented below:

19  
20 *"Which elements influenced your accommodation choice?"*

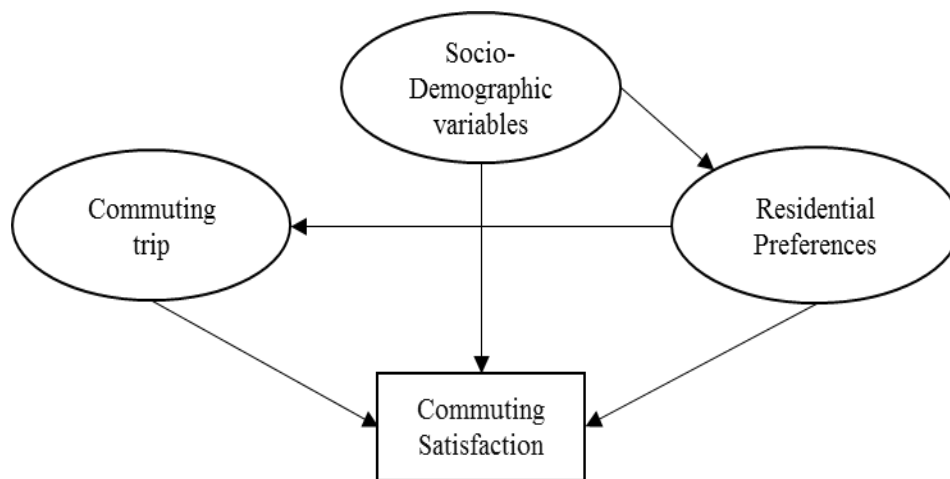
- 21 - *Desire / need to live closer to the university*
- 22 - *The easy access to public transport network*
- 23 - *The large number of shops / services around your accommodation"*

24 And for each of these elements, respondents had to select between 1) very low influence, 2) low  
25 influence, 3) strong influence, 4) very strong influence. While some authors have developed and/  
26 or used specific and targeted methodologies such as the Scale for Travel Satisfaction (STS) (for  
27 instance, see (16) or (17)) to assess specifically all the elements influencing traveling satisfaction,  
28 such tools remain rather experimental, research oriented and it is difficult to implement for an  
29 entire company's workforce.

### 30 31 **Methodology**

32 The aim of this paper is first to quantify the correlation between the commuting satisfaction and  
33 the travelling utility *via* the Logsum function and second to understand how residential choices  
34 affect the commuting satisfaction. In order to verify these hypotheses, we employ both a discrete  
35 choice theory approach and a SEM approach. We will therefore first calibrate a Multinomial Logit  
36 (MNL) model with four different specifications, giving for each of them the degree of correlation  
37 between the stated satisfaction and the resulted logsum, and then we will perform a confirmatory  
38 analysis through SEM (see figure 1 for the conceptual framework).

39  
40



**FIGURE 1 Conceptual model to be tested**

*Random Utility Theory: theoretical framework*

Discrete choice analysis is often employed for modelling user's choice within a particular context, and is based on the assumption that each person aims at maximizing his/her utility (18). Specifically, it is assumed that each individual, in making a choice, considers all the alternatives that constitutes his/her choice set and assigns to them a perceived utility. The decision maker will then choose the alternative with the highest utility. The utility function is commonly made by two terms: a systematic part, which depends on a number of attributes, and a residual term, which captures the uncertainty in the model.

Being  $U_j^i$ ,  $V_j^i$ ,  $\varepsilon_j^i$  the general utility, the systematic part and the residual term respectively for individual  $i$  and alternative  $j$  we can express the utility function as

$$U_j^i = V_j^i + \varepsilon_j^i \quad (1)$$

where

$$V_j^i = \sum_k \beta_k X_{kj}^i \quad (2)$$

In Eq (2)  $\beta_k$  are the weights assigned to the attributes  $X_{kj}^i$ . In literature, different random utility models were proposed. Among them, the most commonly used is the Multinomial Logit which is grounded on the hypothesis that the random residuals are independently and identically Gumbel distributed. Given this assumption, the probability of choosing the alternative  $j$  in the choice set  $m$  is:

$$p[j] = \frac{\exp(V_j)}{\sum_{i=1}^m \exp(V_i)} \quad (3)$$

The logarithm of the denominator in Eq (3) identifies the Logsum ( $LS_{RUM}$ ) which is the aggregated utility given by the different alternatives available to the traveler. It can be expressed as:

$$1 \quad LS_{RUM} = E \left[ \max_{j=1, \dots, J} \{U_j\} \right] = \int \left[ \max_{j=1, \dots, J} \{U_j\} \cdot f(\varepsilon) \right] d\varepsilon = \ln \left[ \sum_{j=1, \dots, J} \exp(V_j) \right] \quad (4)$$

2 In transportation, the Logsum function of utility as shown in Eq (4) is often employed as an  
3 evaluation measure of the consumer surplus under different transportation planning scenarios.

#### 4 *Structural Equation Modelling approach*

5 While discrete choice theory presents many advantages (relative theoretical simplicity, forecasting  
6 power, etc) this methodology also presents drawbacks. The fact that decision makers are supposed  
7 to be fully aware of all the travelling alternatives and their characteristics is a major concern. Such  
8 issues have led researchers to try new methodologies such as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).  
9 SEM approach, which is now becoming popular in travel behaviour analysis (19) is dating from  
10 the 1970's and was initially developed by marketing analysts.

11  
12 As indicated by (20), mathematically, a SEM takes the following form:

$$13 \quad Y = BY + \Gamma X + \varepsilon \quad (5)$$

14  
15  
16 Where: Y is a column vector of endogenous variables

17 B is the matrix of parameters between the endogenous variables

18  $\Gamma$  is the matrix of parameters associated with exogenous variables

19  $\varepsilon$  is a column vector of error terms associated with the endogenous variables

20  
21 Interested readers might also consult (21) for an extensive description of the mathematical  
22 properties of SEM, the hypothesis related to the estimation procedure and so on.

23  
24 Compared to regression analysis, the main advantage of SEM is the quantification of direct /  
25 indirect effect of one factor on another (22). The possibility to develop models allowing the  
26 quantification of both direct and indirect effects was crucial feature for selecting SEM  
27 methodology. In addition, as mentioned by (15) and (6), SEM methodology might be suited to  
28 study both the direct and indirect effect of residential choices on commuting satisfaction.

29  
30 SEM methodology being more a confirmative rather than explorative modelling technique, the  
31 model structure is guided by the existing literature and the research hypotheses to confirm. When  
32 developing a SEM the estimation technique should be selected carefully. In this study, the ADF  
33 (Asymptotically Distribution Free) also called WLS (Weighted Least Square) has been selected  
34 because of the non-normality and the categorical nature (sometimes binary) of the data set ((19),  
35 (22)). However, compared to Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimator ADF estimator requires a  
36 larger sample (23), at least 10 times bigger the number of parameters to be estimated.

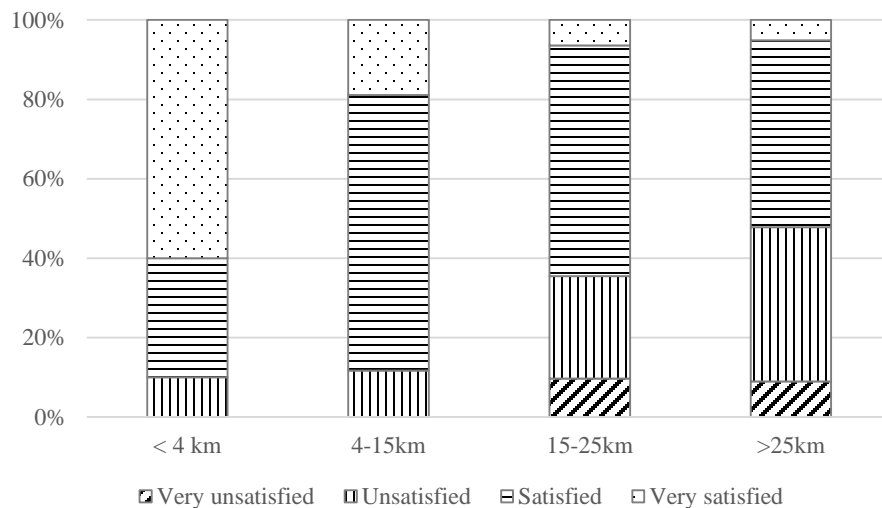
37  
38 SEM's goodness of fit is not always easy to assess because the myriad of existing indicators, which  
39 all measure different aspects of the model (24). In this paper, four common goodness of fit  
40 indicators will be used. The SRMR (The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) evaluates the  
41 overall discrepancy between observed and implied covariance matrices and can thus be considered  
42 as an absolute index. (25) mention that the SRMR value should always be lower than 0.1 but other  
43 publications (e.g. (24)) call for a more constraining threshold such as 0.05. The RMSEA (Root  
44 Mean Square Approximation) is a parsimonious indicator that should be lower than 0.1 (23). TLI

1 (Tucker-Lewis Index) and CFI (Comparative Fit Index) are both called incremental fit measures  
 2 and should attain 0.9 (26).

3  
 4 **Results**

5 *Descriptive analysis*

6 As suggested by figure 2 and figure 3 the commuting distance and the commuting mode choice do  
 7 seem to play an important role in how people rate their trip satisfaction. This supports the  
 8 conclusion of (27) on the positive feelings related to soft mode used, the intermediate satisfaction  
 9 for public transport users and the lower satisfaction for car commuters.



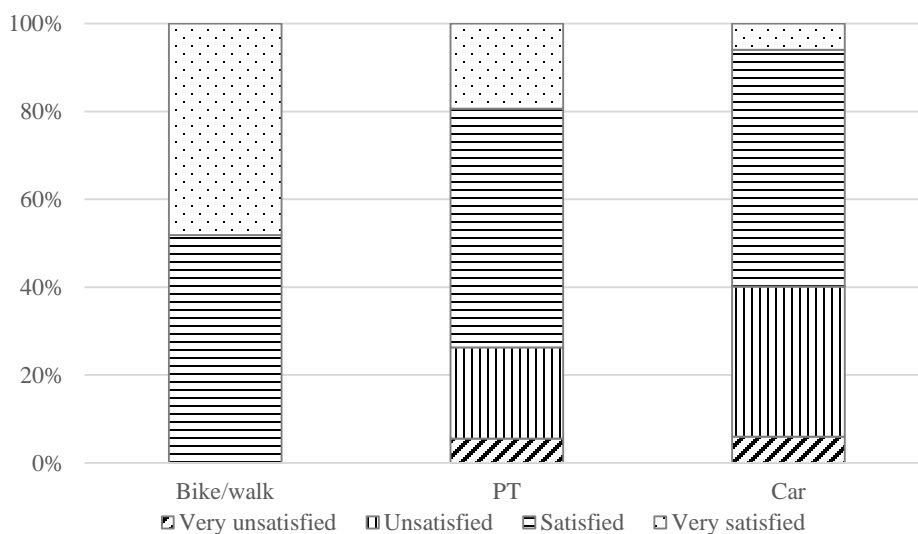
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11 **FIGURE 2 Commuting satisfaction and travelling distances**

12

13 However, by observing these two figures it's not clear how the commuting distance and the  
 14 selected commuting mode interact. Indeed, perhaps commuting distance is only indirectly  
 15 influencing commuting satisfaction by preventing soft and public modes usage.

16



17

18

19 **FIGURE 3 Commuting satisfaction and mode choice**

19



1 Concerning the effect of residential choices, one would expect, for instance, that respondents who  
2 claim “the proximity of the university had a very high influence” live closer to the university than  
3 those who don’t. As expected, the average home-to-work distance for the two categories reaches  
4 respectively 32.9 and 17.5km. Respondents that favored home-workplace proximity have a modal  
5 split of 39% for Car, 42% for PT and 19% for soft modes while the modal split is 57% for car 40%  
6 for PT and 3% for soft modes for university staff members that didn’t choose their residence based  
7 on the home-to-work distance. Thus, intuitively, because short commuting distance can be  
8 performed with soft modes which are associated with more travelling satisfaction, the stated  
9 travelling satisfaction is more important (3.1 versus 2.6 on a 4 scale point) for respondents who  
10 selected their home place location partly based on their home-to-work distance.

11  
12 Following the same line of reasoning, those that favored the proximity to public transport  
13 infrastructure when selecting their residential place tend to use more the public transport system  
14 than those who don’t (64.5% vs. 28%). Such simple but striking modal shift variation is in line  
15 with the conclusions of (6) concerning the self-selection hypothesis. Obviously, people have  
16 selected a residential area that would allow them to commute using the travel alternative that they  
17 prefer. Since in our sample PT use is associated with a higher satisfaction compared to car use, the  
18 respondents that have selected their home location close to public transport infrastructure are, on  
19 average 9% more satisfied of their commuting trip. Among respondents who indicated being very  
20 satisfied of their commuting trip, 74% mention that access to public infrastructure was important  
21 or very important.

22  
23 Even though time consuming, the construction of the database prior to the model estimation might  
24 provide insightful information. For all travel alternatives, thus including the selected one, travel  
25 time, travel cost as well as mode availabilities were computed for all respondents. It has been  
26 previously indicated that, on average, commuting satisfaction was higher for soft modes then  
27 public transport and car. But this holds true mainly for individuals that have access to three  
28 travelling modes, which is not always the case. As discussed by (8) walkers or cyclists may be  
29 “happy commuters” as long as their mode was actually chosen and not constrained. Mode-captivity,  
30 whatever the mode considered, may reduce the positive attitude towards this alternative. While  
31 60% of the car drivers are satisfied or very satisfied, the percentage decreases to 45% for those  
32 having only access to car. Following the same reasoning for public transport, while 74% of PT  
33 users declare to have positive stance regarding their commuting trip the share falls to 61% for  
34 university staff members having only access to public transport. It’s clear now that whatever mode  
35 travelers use if it’s the only accessible mode the stated travelling satisfaction will be probably lower.

### 36 37 *Random Utility Theory: MNL calibration*

38 Clearly, the previous section, devoted to the descriptive analysis, provides insightful information  
39 on the relation between travel mode characteristics, residential choices and commuting satisfaction.  
40 However, so far, no direct or indirect effects of both external (trip characteristics) and internal  
41 (residential preferences) on commuting satisfaction have been presented neither the relation  
42 between trip characteristics, residential variables and socio-demographic variables.

43  
44 The very first step is to develop several MNL models and verify the estimated parameters for some  
45 variables. Then, for each model specification the utility Logsum is computed and a simple  
46 correlation analysis is performed to assess the correlation values. (29) has already used similar  
47 methodology with data from a route choice stated experiment, but hasn’t find important correlation

1 between utility Logsum and stated satisfaction. As indicated earlier, the hypothesis is that a certain  
 2 correlation will be present for all the Logsum values computed as a result of the different MNL  
 3 model specifications and that the correlation will vary with the inclusion of residential choices  
 4 variables.

5  
 6 In our model calibration, we considered three modes of transport: Car, Public Transport (PT) and  
 7 Soft modes (walking and cycling). We then considered the employment status (either “PhD student”  
 8 or “Other”) and two residential attributes: the proximity to work and the proximity to public  
 9 transport. We tested also other information such as gender, income, residential environment, etc.  
 10 but they turned to be not significant in the model estimation.

11  
 12 Summarizing the systematic part of the utility function (Eq.2) has different specifications: the  
 13 “Base model” contains trip characteristics such as travel time and travel cost; the “Socio-  
 14 demographic model” contains, together with the trip characteristics, the employment status; the  
 15 “Residential model” includes attributes such as proximity to work and accessibility to public  
 16 transport.

17  
 18 The models were calibrated through the travel behavior analysis software Biogeme (30) and the  
 19 results are summarized in Table 1. The Alternative Specific Constant (ASC) reflects the mean of  
 20 the difference between the residual terms, that is the difference in the utility of an alternative  $i$  from  
 21  $j$  when all else is equal; PhD is instead a dummy variable that takes value 1 if the user is a PhD  
 22 student and zero otherwise. The proximity to public transport and to work are two dummy variables  
 23 that take value 1 if the users declare to be influenced by these two attributes in his commuting  
 24 choice and zero otherwise.

25  
 26  
 27  
**TABLE 1 Estimation results**

	Model1 (Base)	Model2 (Base+PhD Dummy)	Model3 (Base+ Residential)	Model4 (Full model)
ASC_CAR	0.00 Fixed	0.00 Fixed	0.00 Fixed	0.00 Fixed
ASC_PT	-0.567 (0.270)	-0.746 (0.289)	-1.19 (0.406)	-1.31 (0.418)
ASC_SOFT	-1.12 (0.341)	-1.31 (0.358)	-0.772 (0.398)	-0.934 (0.416)
B_COST	-0.106 (0.0446)	-0.104 (0.0444)	-0.114 (0.0470)	-0.114 (0.0470)
B_TIME	-0.0509 (0.0116)	-0.0488 (0.0116)	-0.0485 (0.0120)	-0.0471 (0.0120)
B_PHD_CAR		-0.749 (0.392)		-0.586 (0.405)
B_PTprox_PT			1.21 (0.328)	1.16 (0.331)
B_Work_CAR			0.563 (0.390)	0.536 (0.394)
Rho-square	0.199	0.202	0.226	0.226
Final loglikelihood	-167.527	-165.733	-159.667	-158.637

1  
2 Given this insight we performed a correlation analysis between the stated satisfaction and the  
3 utility Logsum for each of these four models in order to understand whether residential attributes  
4 could increase the correlation magnitude as we have suggested in (32). In the survey, we asked to  
5 each participant to express, with a Likert scale, the degree of satisfaction with their daily  
6 commuting trips. They had four options: very unsatisfied, unsatisfied, satisfied and very satisfied.  
7

8 Pearson's coefficient (33) is employed to compute the above cited correlation. The Pearson's coefficient for  
9 each model is:

- 10 - Model 1 (Base): 0.3441
- 11 - Model 2 (Base+PhD dummy variable): 0.3326
- 12 - Model 3 (Base+ Residential): 0.3719
- 13 - Model 4 (Full model): 0.3643

14 It can be observed that the models in which both trip characteristics and residential attributes are  
15 included has the higher degree of correlation. However, this value is only marginally higher than  
16 the "Base" model. Therefore, we can again confirm that a correlation between the stated  
17 satisfaction for the commuting trip and the Logsum function of utility exists but this correlation is  
18 mostly influenced by travel time and travel cost. As a consequence, our initial intuition in which  
19 we assumed a potential influence of the residential attributes in the commuting choice is confirmed  
20 but it is lower than expected.

#### 21 *SEM outputs*

22 Figure 4 shows the results of the SEM tested using SPSS Amos' extension (34). Concerning the  
23 latent variables, the related factor loadings are relatively high suggesting that the observed  
24 variables represent well the related factor.  
25

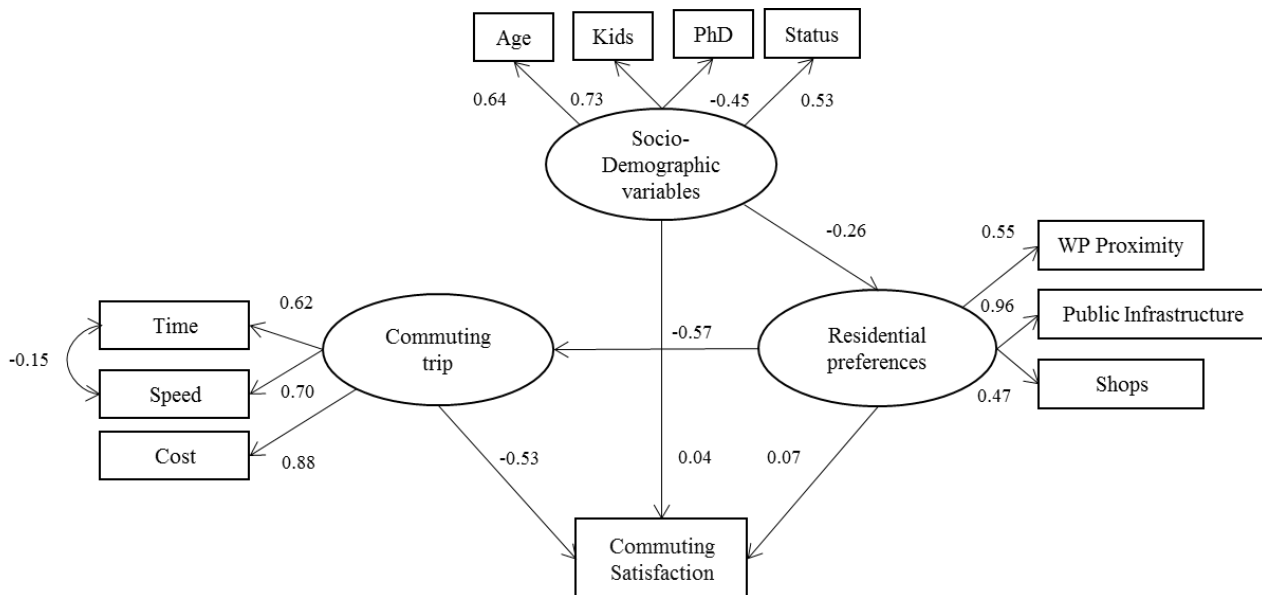
26  
27 The modification indices procedure available in Amos and in most commonly used SEM software  
28 indicates a non-negligible correlation between the commuting time and commuting speed. Thus,  
29 a covariance link has been added in the model specification. Goodness of fit indicators (see the  
30 appendix for a complete overview of the SEM results) indicate that the model fits reasonably well  
31 to the data. While some indicator values are aligned with common thresholds (RMSEA and  
32 SRMR), other indicators do not show expected values (TLI and CFI). Adding a covariance link,  
33 for instance, between "Age" and "PhD", would lead to an increase of the model goodness of fit  
34 but the objective was to stay as close as possible to the original conceptual model (as depicted in  
35 Figure 1).  
36

37 Concerning the impact of the three latent variables namely socio-demographic variables,  
38 commuting trip and residential preferences on the stated overall commuting satisfaction, important  
39 differences are observed. As expected and in line with the literature ((8), (10)) the commuting trip  
40 variables are playing an important role in the commuting satisfaction rating. Indeed, by looking at  
41 the direct effect of the latent variables on commuting satisfaction only commuting trip  
42 characteristics have an important and significant direct effect (see again appendixes for full results).  
43 However, the indirect standardized effect for residential preferences reaches 0.302 ( $-0.57 * 0.53$ )  
44 and the indirect effect of the socio-demographic latent variable reaches -0.078. This result,  
45 answering to one of our hypotheses, suggests that the impact of residential choices is more an  
46 indirect than a direct effect to commuting satisfaction. This result also confirms the original

1 intuition of (6) on the impact of residential self-selection process on travelling satisfaction.

2

3



4

**FIGURE 4 Model results (standardized estimates)**

5

#### 6 *Methodological considerations*

7 While the development of a discrete choice model provides interesting information such as the  
 8 value of time (VoT) or the relative importance of a variable compared to another via the estimated  
 9 parameters, this approach may not be the most suitable approach to analyze both direct and indirect  
 10 effect of (latent) variables on a dependent variable (i.e. the commuting satisfaction). While discrete  
 11 choice models allow the estimation of modal share and permit to forecast modal shift based on  
 12 developed scenarios their relative important data needs (related to the non-chosen alternatives) may  
 13 be a deterrent for travel behaviour analysts for using them.

14

15 On the other side, Structural Equation Modelling approach do not require additional data than the  
 16 one provided by staff travel survey respondents and Modification Indices (MI) information  
 17 significantly reduces the time needed to reach an acceptable model specification. Off-the-shelf  
 18 software such as Amos Spss extension is drastically reducing the technical / coding skills needed  
 19 to run simple and more complex models.

20

21 Regarding the specific research question related to the possible impact of residential preferences  
 22 on the way commuters rate their travel satisfaction, both methodologies provided useful  
 23 information but SEM methodology provided a more straightforward response in fewer steps.

24

25 The question regarding the usefulness of using of both methodologies for addressing a specific  
 26 question remains complex. In this case, SEM has been used as a second approach to corroborate  
 27 unexpected results of the first methodology. Being totally different, the quality of DCT and SEM  
 28 outputs can't be subject to any kind of ranking. However, in this case study, using only SEM would  
 29 have permit to save time in term of data collection and model development.

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## **CONCLUSION**

In this study we investigate the influence of the residential attributes on the correlation between the utility logsum related with the commuting mode of transport and the stated satisfaction in using that particular mode.

One important finding is that, rather intuitively, the commuting satisfaction and the utility logsum are positively and importantly correlated. This shows that despite a growing interest for travel likers, utility theory will remain useful to approximate commuters satisfaction. More precisely, the utility Logsum is an interesting metric allowing travel behavior analysts to approximate the positive or negative feeling associated with a specific trip. In addition to provide a measure of the transport accessibility at one place, it has been showed that its (co)relation with satisfaction is truly valuable.

On the other hand both methodologies (DCA and SEM) used indicated that the direct effect of residential preferences on commuting satisfaction was weak if not inexistant. As discussed previousl, adding of residential attributes increase only marginally the correlation between the logsum and the stated satisfaction. However, SEM (Figure 4) approach shows an indirect effect of these residential attributes on the stated satisfaction. They influence the commuting trip directly and it is then somehow reflected in the coefficient that express the degree of influence of the trip characteristics on the stated satisfaction.

The debate on the commuting satisfaction determinants remains complex and unexplored. This scientific contribution calls for additional research to be done in the field. The limitation of standard employer-based travel survey is certainly reaching its limits in terms of usage. To better understand how people perceived their trips specific surveying method have to be improved and, as shown in this study, the methodology as to be selected carefully.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This research is financially sponsored by the National Research Funding (FNR) through the AFR-PhD Grant STABLE (No. 7951609) and by the Marie-Curie Career Integration Grant InCoMMune (CIG PCIG13-GA-2013-618234). We also thank the University of Luxembourg for providing the tools and the communication channels and permissions for running the travel surveys.

1 **APPENDIX**

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3 **TABLE 3 SEM full results**

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**Regression Weights**

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardized estimates
Latent Residential	<---	Socio Demo	-0.383	0.102	-3.748	***	-0.257
Latent Trip	<---	Residential	-1.63	0.182	-8.963	***	-0.572
Kids	<---	Socio Demo	1				0.73
Status	<---	Socio Demo	0.557	0.089	6.281	***	0.53
PhD	<---	Socio Demo	-0.486	0.078	-6.195	***	-0.454
Age	<---	Socio Demo	13.342	1.492	8.943	***	0.641
Workplace Proximity	<---	Residential	1				0.552
Public transport accessibility	<---	Residential	1.699	0.193	8.783	***	0.964
Shops proximity	<---	Residential	0.801	0.114	7.05	***	0.473
Cost	<---	Trip	1				0.882
Time	<---	Trip	8.315	0.751	11.067	***	0.616
Speed	<---	Trip	4.397	0.364	12.076	***	0.702
Satisfaction	<---	Socio Demo	0.071	0.116	0.609	0.542	0.037
Satisfaction	<---	Residential	0.084	0.085	0.986	0.324	0.066
Satisfaction	<---	Trip	-0.24	0.032	-7.566	***	-0.533

**Covariances**

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardized estimates
Speed	<-->	Time	-17.429	9.33	-1.868	0.062	-0.152

**Standardized Direct Effects**

	SocioDemo	Residential	Trip
Latent Residential	-0.257	0	0
Latent Trip	0	-0.572	0
Satisfaction	0.037	0.066	-0.533
Speed	0	0	0.702
Time	0	0	0.616
Cost	0	0	0.882
Shops proximity	0	0.473	0

Public transport accessibility	0	0.964	0
Workplace Proximity	0	0.552	0
Age	0.641	0	0
PhD	-0.454	0	0
Status	0.53	0	0
Kids	0.73	0	0

### Standardized Indirect Effects

	Socio Demo	Residential	Trip
Latent Residential	0	0	0
Latent Trip	0.147	0	0
Satisfaction	-0.095	0.304	0
Speed	0.103	-0.401	0
Time	0.091	-0.352	0
Cost	0.13	-0.504	0
Shops proximity	-0.122	0	0
Public transport accessibility	-0.248	0	0
Workplace Proximity	-0.142	0	0
Age	0	0	0
PhD	0	0	0
Status	0	0	0
Kids	0	0	0

### Model Fit indicators

SRMR	0.0871
RMSEA	0.88 (Low 90: 0.072; Hi 90: 0.104)
CFI	0.857
TLI	0.798
Degrees of freedom: 39	
Chi-square = 137.226	
Probability level = .000	

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