

Attempting to Define and Measure the Accessibility of Impoverishment

Friday, September 19, 2014
3:00pm to 4:30pm

Please join us in ISTB1 room 401



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While equity has been an important consideration for transportation planning agencies in the U.S. following the passage of Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI specifically) and the subsequent Department of Transportation directives, there is little guidance on how to assess the distribution of benefits generated by transport investment programs. As a result, the distribution of these benefits has received relatively little attention in transportation planning, compared to transport-related burdens. Drawing on philosophies of social justice, we present an equity assessment of the distribution of accessibility in order to define the rate of “access poverty” among the population. We then apply this analysis to regional transportation plan scenarios from the San Francisco Bay Area, focusing on measures of differences between public transit and automobile access. The analysis shows that virtually all neighborhoods suffer from substantial gaps between car and public transport-based accessibility, but that the two proposed transportation investment programs reduce access poverty compared to the “no project” scenario. We also investigate how access and access poverty rates vary by demographic groups and map low-income communities within access impoverished areas, which could be the subject of further focused investments.



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