



# IVM's international academic Chair in China

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### **ICTs and the Reshuffling of Everyday Activities**

In the past, the use of faster transport modes stimulated the decoupling of activity and travel patterns and the built environment, which reduced the significance of the dwelling and local community as the focus of daily life. The introduction and spread of modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), such as the personal computer and mobile phone and various information and communication services, will further encourage the decoupling of places, activities and times as well. The new information and communication modes based on micro- and nano-electronics together with the spread of innovative transport modes can be expected to transform post-industrial society from a *place-based* to a *person-based society*.

Most studies focused on ICTs and its impact on daily life activities, like working, shopping and social contacts, distinguish substitution, generation, modification and neutral effects. Although these studies resulted in a better understanding of the impact of e-activities in daily life, a comprehensive and integrative framework is lacking. In this presentation the first contours of a conceptual framework for addressing the pressing questions on e-activities will be presented. This conceptual framework is structured along three lines. First, the main components of activities will be discussed. Second, three types of transformation processes which may occur will be discussed: fragmentation, reconfiguration and revaluation. Finally, the meaning of situationality for understanding these transformation processes will be discussed. The conceptual framework draws heavily on the many empirical studies on the impact of ICTs on every day activities which have been carried out at Utrecht University.

### **Revitalizing Geography in Mobility Studies**

Like most other human geographers, transport geographers try to explain behavioural decisions of people by their socio-demographics and urban form characteristics of residential environments. This approach of geographical environments is rather problematic since it lacks a true and comprehensive understanding of the meaning of experiences with geographical environments. I have four arguments for this.

First, geographical environments reach much further than residential environments. Neither our lives stop at the border of our neighbourhoods nor does the impact of geographical

environments. While people are mobile they are exposed to shifting and alternating environments. Second, a geographical environment is not static but highly dynamic in itself. Usually planners and transport geographers take only into account 'fixed' spatial configurations, like density, diversity and design of land uses and infrastructures. The changeable attributes of geographical environments, like the presence of people and mobile objects and the natural conditions, like the state of the weather and day and night stay largely unobserved. Third, exposure to these environments is neither neutral nor only rational. It is an embodied experience in which bodily expressions and senses play a crucial role in absorbing and processing information from the environment. Finally, experiences of geographical environments are not only limited to physical travel but also mixed with virtual and imaginary travel.

In this presentation an enriched and comprehensive perspective on geographical environments will be expounded. Theoretical notions from Time geography, Actor-Network Theory, Post-structural geography and Post-phenomenology will be applied and integrated to reach a better understanding of the meaning of geographical environments for travel behaviour. Implications for mobility studies and planning will be discussed.