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Title:

Estimating Service Populations: Tracking Diurnal Variations in a Campus Population

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Abstract:

Estimation of Service Populations is an emerging field of research in applied demography. Daily, weekly and seasonal variations in population numbers and characteristics have significant implications for services and facilities planning at a range of scales in both the public and private sectors. Conventional estimates of the resident population are poorly suited to inform planning requirements for areas that experience substantial population flux. Despite widespread recognition of the need for robust estimates of the true population requiring services in a variety of spatial settings, the problem of estimating service populations has received comparatively little attention to date, and there is no commonly accepted methodology.

This paper reports on a project to estimate temporal variations in the population of the St Lucia Campus of the University of Queensland. The project combined a range of strategies including field observation, an email survey of staff and students, traffic counts and passenger loadings, together with a Census of residents to generate estimates of the peak population on Campus, the diurnal and day-to-day variation in population numbers, and the relative significance of different modes of transport access.

The paper reviews the complexities in making such estimates in a highly porous locality subject to high population flux, describes the methodology and modes of analysis employed, reports the substantive findings, and identifies lessons to be learned from the process.
