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Have work, will travel: Production-related temporary mobility in Australia

Elin Charles-Edwards (e.charles-edwards@uq.edu.au)
The University of Queensland

Abstract

Temporary movements are increasingly recognised as a significant component of population mobility in the developed world, and as such have been the subject of a growing volume of scholarly inquiry. Research, however, has tended to focus on the peripatetic wanderings of specific lifestyle and occupational groups with attention only recently being directed to the overall dimensions of the phenomenon. This paper explores temporary moves undertaken for work or production-related purposes in Australia, providing for the first time an overview of the Australian system of production-related temporary mobility and the characteristics of Australian business travellers.

Beginning with a series of summary indicators, capturing the temporal and spatial dimensions of production-related temporary mobility in Australia, the paper moves on to characterise the key actors, i.e. the business traveller, through application of Logistic Regression to data from the 2001 Census CURF and the Australian National University's Negotiating the Life Course Survey. Further exploration of the space-time behaviour of individuals is presented, based on results from a purposive survey undertaken at the Brisbane Domestic Air Terminal in 2004. Results show specific spatial patterning of movements related to the occupation and industry within which individuals work.

This paper concludes with a speculative typology of business travel, situated within the broader spatio-temporal dimensions of production-related temporary mobility in Australia.

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