Baby Boomers in Queensland: where are they and where are they moving?

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Abstract

By 2011 the first of the generation known as baby boomers in Australia will reach 65 although previous patterns of retirement indicate that almost half may be retired from full-time employment by the age of 60 which they will reach in 2006. There will be great interest in the lifestyle, migrations, demands and needs of baby boomers. There will be demands, or a willingness to accept, products and services for themselves as their lifestyles change as well as products and services they will require for their more elderly parents, or for themselves as carers or advocates for their elderly parents. Plotting the geographical distribution and migration of baby boomers will be of value to a wide range of interested parties including state, federal and local government, property developers, residential and community care providers, and the developers and providers of new and emerging products and services that these social and demographic changes may provide a market for.

Using geographical information system (GIS) technology, the spatial location of baby boomers in Queensland and their migration over time were mapped and analysed based on the census data of 1991 and 2001. Results show that in 2001, baby boomers were well represented in the southeast region of Queensland, including Brisbane, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Logan, and Redland Local Government Areas (LGAs); boomers were also well-represented along the eastern coast of Cairns, Mackay, Townsville and Thuringowa LGAs. The comparative research of the two census data also shows areas of baby boomer gain and loss, which clearly demonstrates the spatial migration of baby boomers over the decade.

The paper also suggest that GIS offers powerful tools for mapping and spatial based demographic analysis. Further research will focus on associating the geographical distribution and migration of baby boomers with the provision of aged care services in Queensland.

Key words: Baby Boomers; Mapping; Migration; Geographic Information System (GIS)

Background

Following the Post-War era of relative peace and prosperity, there was a large increase in the numbers of births from 1946 to 1964. This generation is known in Australia as baby boomers. Statistics show that the total population of baby boomers in Australia was 5.1 million in 2001, which accounted for 27.2% of the total population; 19% of baby boomers live in Queensland. Amongst them, the older cohort of the boomers, with an age ranging from 45 to 55 in 2001, accounted for 54.6% of the total boomers in Australia and 55.1% in Queensland (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001). This is an ageing population; their geographical locations and movement will have a majors impacts for the planning and allocation of services including accommodation, health care and community services.
Baby boomers: where are they?

Based on the census data of 2001 at local government area (LGA) level, the geographical locations of baby boomers in Queensland in 2001 were mapped (Figure 1).

Figure 1 shows that in 2001, baby boomers were well represented in the southeast region of Queensland, including Brisbane, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Logan, Redland, Caboolture, and Maroochy LGAs; some boomers also lived along the eastern coast of Cairns, Mackay, Townsville and Thuringowa LGAs. This distribution is very similar to the distribution of its total population in each of the LGAs. A zoom-in picture of the baby boomers’ distribution in the southeast regions of Queensland is shown in Figure 2.

I suggest we need a succinct statement on what this map shows – how would I explain to my mother what it shows:

Eg “This map shows the areas of concentration of Babyboomers in Queensland...."
By comparing the boomer population with the total population of the LGAs, a very different image was identified (Figure 3) than that in ?????. That is the overall percentage of baby boomers in Queensland’s total population was 26.93% in 2001 which is slightly less than the national average (Yan – this seems strange – most people would presume that Qld would have more Babyboomers and elderly than the rest of Australia). However, more than half of the LGAs had a higher percentage of boomer to total population than the overall percentage (areas displayed in yellow, orange or red colour in Figure 3), with the highest percentage of boomer to total population in the outback LGAs of Millmerran (32.98%), Perry (32.92%), Nebo (32.45%), Bulloo (31.94%), Warroo (31.28%), Kolan (31.16%) and the coastal LGAs of Broadsound (33.85%) and Miriam Vale (32.76%) (areas displayed in red colour in Figure 3). In contrary to those LGAs, the percentage of boomer to total population in Brisbane (26.38%), Gold Coast (26.50%), Ipswich (26.19%), and Caboolture (26.50%) are lower than the average percentage value, with the percentage in Logan (27.56%), Maroochy (27.30%) and Redland (29.42%) slightly higher than the average value; their percentage values are shown in the brackets respectively.
Baby boomers: where are they moving?

Comparative analysis of the boomer population between the 1991 and 2001 censuses shows areas of baby boomer gain and loss, (does it – this map just seems to show the percentage of bb’s in each LGA – it does not show which are increasing etc – it only shows the current picture – doesn’t it – not increases etc) which clearly demonstrates the spatial migration of baby boomers over the decade. Two major categories of LGAs were identified based on the number of baby boomers in the two censuses dates: those with increased number of baby boomers in that decade are classified as boomer gain LGAs, and those with decreased
number of baby boomers in the decade are classified as boomer loss LGAs. Although most of the boomer-gain LGAs are located along the coastal area of southeast Queensland, some of the LGAs in the outback region of Queensland have also had an increased number of boomers over the decade (Figure 4).

By computing the average change rate of baby boomers at each LGA level between 1991 and 2001 and comparing that rate with its total population change rate over the same period of time, a further classification of six categories of baby boomer change patterns were identified (Figure 5). These include:

1. both boomers and total population increased, with boomer population increasing faster than total population;
2. both boomers and total population increased, with boomer population increasing slower than total population;
3. total population decreased, but boomer population increased;
4. both boomers and total population decreased, with boomer population decreasing faster than total population;
5. both boomers and total population decreased, with boomer population decreasing slower than total population;
6. total population increased, but boomer population decreased.

As opposed to the last map – this one shows increases and decreases
Figure 5 A comparison of the change of baby boomers to its total population change between 1991 and 2001 in Queensland
(Data Source: CDATA 2001 and CDATA 1991)

Table 1 Baby Boomer Change Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Pattern</th>
<th>Number of LGAs</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both increased; boomer increased faster</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both increased; boomer increased slower</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population decreased, but boomer increased</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both decreased; boomer decreased faster</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both decreased; boomer decreased slower</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population increased, but boomer decreased</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 displays some statistical results of these six change patterns, including the number of LGAs in each category, and the percentage of LGAs in each category to the total number of LGAs in Queensland (Table 1). It demonstrates that

The six patterns classification, it is obvious that

The Implications

Conclusions
This paper presented results on the mapping of the geographical location of baby boomers in Queensland and their migration using geographical information system (GIS) technology. It demonstrated that GIS provides powerful tools for mapping and spatial based demographic analysis. Further research will focus on obtaining more up-to-date information to analyse the distribution of baby boomers and their spatial migration, and associating their geographical distribution and migration with the provision of aged care services in Queensland.