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THE SPATIAL DIFFUSION OF EXTRAMURAL STUDIES
WITHIN NEW ZEALAND

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
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of Master of Arts
in Geography at
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ABSTRACT

The diffusion of the Extramural Studies programme within New Zealand is seen to have its genesis in the social space of the occupational structures from which the extramural population is drawn. Statistical analysis of data derived from an Extramural Questionnaire Survey of 2000 students during 1979 investigates the relationships between student standard characteristics, their reasons for study, their geographical locations and their sources of information. While the reason why people choose to study extramurally is clearly linked to non-spatial variables the outcome of their decision, however, is reflected in physical space.

By constructing a series of maps and related graphs at various levels of aggregation the diffusion patterns of total enrolments and selected subject enrolments are recorded at five-yearly intervals over the last two decades. Regression analysis, based on data for 1976, shows that although there is no significant relationship between distance from Palmerston North and total extramural enrolment, there is a positive relationship between population size and total enrolment.

Subject enrolments are tested by means of the Chi-square test at three different levels - between Islands, between regions, between counties and urban areas. These tests indicate that there are significant relationships between some areas and the number of enrolments in various subjects.

Although the study is able to describe both the spatial and non-spatial characteristics of the extramural population and to provide some explanation for the pattern of enrolments it cannot provide a basis for any detailed prediction of future regional enrolments. The degree to which these can be predicted is limited by the nature and size of the potential population of extramural students which in turn is dependent on social and economic trends in society.

At present, it can only be concluded that unless there is a major change in New Zealand's space-economy extramural enrolments will, in general, continue to coincide with the distribution of the national population.

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