

found from experience that predictions and forecasts about the future can be wildly out when based on such calculations. The story of the changing forecasts of national population in Britain during the post-1947 period is a salutary lesson for those in the business of forecasting the future and also for those relying on those predictions for plan making. The other major difficulty with the forecast is that it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. For example, the prediction of fast-rising car ownership and usage in the 1960s provided the rationale for Government policies. These policies gave priority to road-building programmes to the detriment of pursuing vigorous investment in public transport. The extra road miles built on the strength of Government policy stimulated demand for the use of those same roads. With that stimulus in demand, came the inevitable increase in car ownership and the use of the car, even for short journeys. The forecast for the growth in car ownership was therefore shown to be true, or to some extent to be a 'self-fulfilling prophecy'. This analysis of the growth in car ownership in Britain over the last forty years may have been overstated, nevertheless there is some truth in the belief that this prediction, particularly about car usage, has some of the characteristics of a circular argument where the forecast reinforces the trend. Trends in the changing patterns of lifestyle are evident, even under the most superficial of examinations. An analysis of these trends may stimulate ideas about the nature of the problem being investigated and also actions which may be necessary to modify a trend leading to an undesirable outcome. The apparent trends in changing lifestyles, however, are no more than an indication of what might happen in the future. And only if the conditions governing these trends remain the same. If trends are viewed in this light, then there is little danger that they may evolve into a forecast leading to an authoritative prediction of future conditions. The only certainty about a prediction is that it is more likely to be misleading than to give an accurate picture of the future.

The ways in which some factors governing everyday activity and current lifestyle are changing may critically affect development, or the designer's view of development, potential in the project area. It may, therefore, be appropriate to analyse such economic, social and cultural factors. For most development projects, forming an understanding of the dynamics of population change is standard procedure. A knowledge of what might happen to the target population is fundamental for many urban design projects. This study may be a simple attempt to gauge the rate of growth or decline of population, or it may aim to discover which sections of the population, in terms of age, sex, race or socio-economic group, are growing or declining and at what rate.

Population studies are the starting point for determining the land requirements and for the allocation of space for competing activities or land uses. A knowledge of present population is necessary in order to make some prediction for the future. The most basic information is the size of the present population. This may not be as straightforward as it sounds. The resident population may be supplemented by tourists and a daily commuting population. For some projects this visiting population may be extremely important. It is often essential to have some knowledge of the breakdown of the population in terms of age, sex, race and socio-economic group. From this information the specific needs of the community for services and facilities can be gauged. It may, if the project area is large enough, be necessary to examine the physical distribution of the various groups which comprise the population. The physical distribution of the population gives some indication of the location of facilities. An assessment of the population can be made by conducting a specially designed survey. This is both expensive and time consuming. It is more usual to use the Registrar General's Census of Population, adjusted to allow for assumed changes between census dates.