

Editorial

Populations at the End of Its First Full Year: Reflections, Trajectories, and the Road Ahead

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As *Populations* completes its inaugural volume, we pause to reflect on what has been achieved during the journal's formative year and anticipate the intellectual directions that will shape its next phase. When the inaugural editorial introduced *Populations* as a new platform for demographic and population science, the ambition was clear: to create an open, interdisciplinary space capable of engaging with the complexity of population dynamics as they unfold across social, economic, political, environmental, and health systems.

One year on, the journal's early trajectory suggests that this vision resonates with a growing and diverse community of scholars.

1. Looking Back: The First Year of *Populations*

During its inaugural year, *Populations* published 28 contributions, including research articles, reviews, and editorials, drawn from 67 submissions and reflecting an acceptance rate under 40%. The contributions spanned submissions from North America, Europe, Asia, and the Pacific, underscoring the journal's early international reach and its commitment to global population science.

The breadth of topics published in 2025 range from population aging and social welfare systems to migration politics, family structure, health inequalities, population and environment dynamics, and the demographic dimensions of COVID-19 diffusion. They mirror the journal's intentionally broad scope, and its diverse themes and methods. Several papers achieved substantial early readership; multiple articles surpassed 2000 views within months of publication, and the journal accrued its first citations in its inaugural volume.

The strengthening of the editorial infrastructure has been equally important. New Editorial Board members from multiple regions and disciplinary backgrounds joined, expanding topical coverage and reinforcing the journal's interdisciplinary mission. Outreach at major academic meetings and growing engagement through professional networks and social media further contributed to the journal's visibility during its first year.

2. Emerging Currents in Population Research

The manuscripts published thus far reflect broader shifts in demographic research. Contemporary population science is increasingly characterized by integration—rather than isolation—of data sources, methods, scales, topics, and theoretical traditions.

Several intersecting trends stand out. First, population research is becoming more explicitly multi-scalar, linking individual- and household-level processes to regional, national, and global dynamics. Second, there is growing emphasis on human–environment interactions, with population dynamics framed both as drivers and consequences of environmental change. Third, methodological innovation continues to reshape the field,



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particularly through spatial analysis, mixed methods, and new data sources. Finally, population research is increasingly policy-engaged, emphasizing translation of demographic insight into actionable frameworks.

3. Looking Ahead: *Populations* in 2026

As *Populations* enters its second full year, the journal's priorities will be shaped both by its early successes and these broader disciplinary shifts. Building on the foundation established in 2025, the journal aims to modestly expand publication volume while maintaining rigorous peer review and editorial standards.

Substantively, *Populations* will continue to encourage work that crosses boundaries between disciplines, regions, methods, and scales. Particular attention will be paid to research that foregrounds inequality, resilience, and adaptation in the face of demographic and environmental change.

4. Closing Reflections

The completion of the first volume marks a transition from establishment to consolidation and from launch to long-term vision. 2026 marks the second year of *Populations*; its continued effectiveness dependent on the intellectual curiosity, critical engagement, and collaborative spirit of the population science community, the very conditions which propelled its inaugural success in 2025.

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