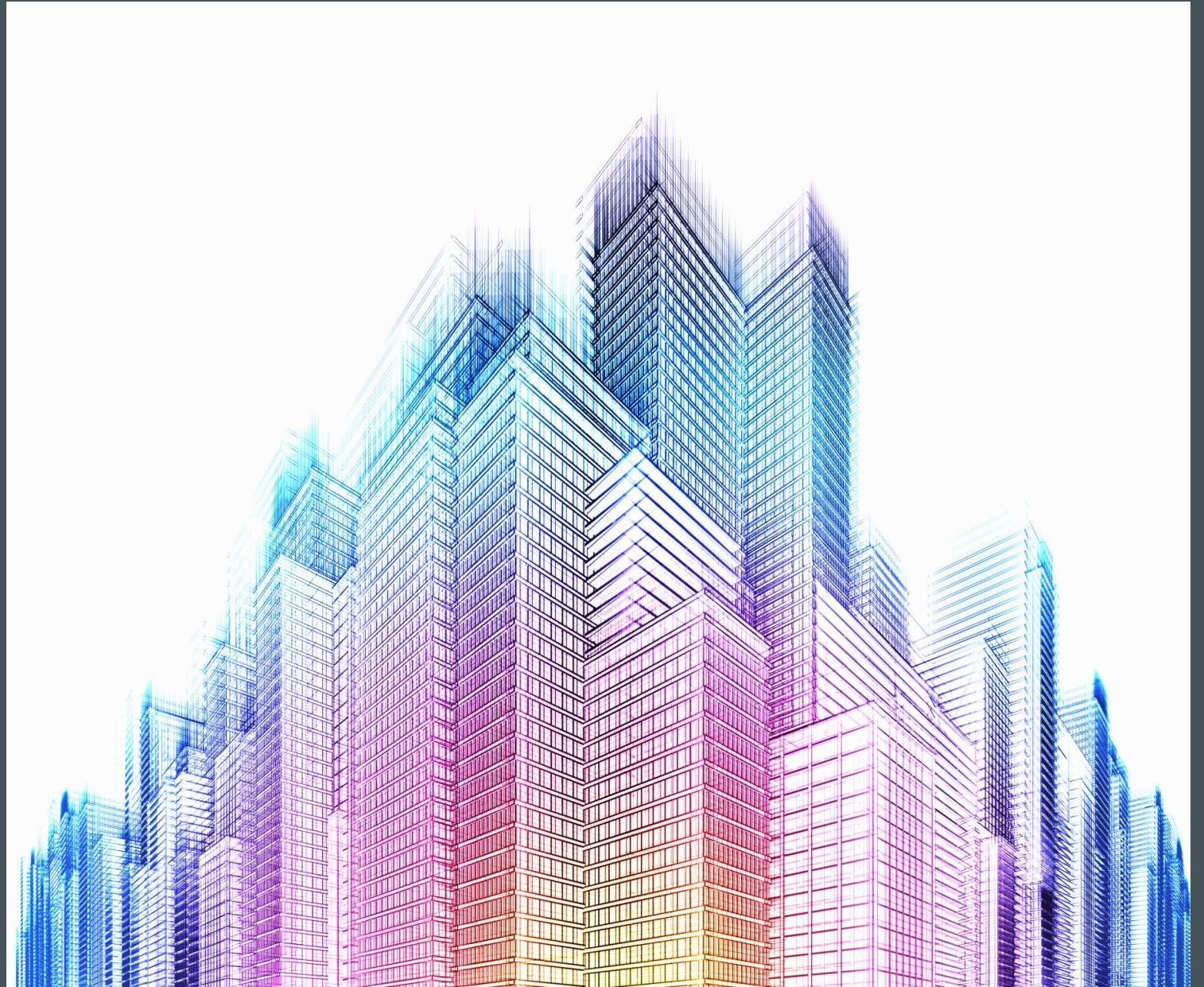



---

# RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN POPULATION GEOGRAPHY



- 
- Since Trewartha made a forceful case of population geography in 1953, the sub-discipline has witnessed enormous growth and diversification during the last seventy odd years.
  - It has now become a multifaceted field of study.
  - The subsequent decade witnessed the emergence of a large number of textbooks on the theme (for instance, by Clarke in 1965; Zelinsky in 1966; Beaujeu-Garnier in 1966; and Trewartha in 1969; Chandana and Sidhu in 1980).
  - Population as an independent sub-discipline was introduced at graduate and post-graduate levels in various universities of the world.

- 
- The development of population geography was, however, not as rapid as one might have expected in the decade from mid-sixties to mid-seventies.
  - No further addition to the existing textbooks on the sub-discipline took place during the period.
  - The research output was also not as focussed or as innovative as in some other aspects of geography partly because the thrust was in areas somewhat peripheral to population geography.
  - Although there were studies on the relationship of population phenomena with social or economic development, much of the works continued to be descriptive in nature.
  - Likewise, though fertility and mortality did attract the attention of population geographers, migration analysis engaged population geographers throughout much of the 1960s and the 1970s.

- 
- Of many works on migration that appeared during the period, a mention may be made of *People on the Move*, which is a collection of 23 papers by Kosinski and Prothero in 1975.
  - A classic work on migration, it covered such wide-ranging topics as theoretical framework and typology of migration, problems of migration data, empirical and comparative studies of internal migration, issues related with different groups of migration etc.
  - Undoubtedly, the aspect of population geography, which developed the most in the early decades, was migration analysis – an issue that never appealed to the demographers in the same way as did fertility, nuptiality and mortality.

- 
- The major thrust on migration analysis by geographers got further impetus in the wake of rapid world urbanization, particularly in the less developed parts of the world.
  - Population redistribution and government policies related to it got increased attention of geographers.
  - One remarkable development in the sub-discipline was a move away from mere population patterns to the study of processes, especially migration.
  - There was a switch over from the macro analytic explanation of social physics towards micro analytic explanation of behaviouralism, though the former was not completely given up.



- 
- The preoccupation of population geographers with distribution and composition – the so-called ‘traditional pattern orientation’ in population geography – attracted severe criticism by some geographers towards the close of 1970s.
  - The publication of two books namely, *Population Analysis in Geography* by Woods in 1979, and *A Population Geography* by Jones in 1981, initiated a discussion on the need to reorder the emphasis in population geography.
  - Woods and Jones emphasized that population should reflect process orientation, in line with the current trends in geography, with emphasis on population dynamics.

- 
- Woods later suggested that the role of population geographers is “not to describe the geography of population by emphasis on its distribution but to employ their spatial perspective in the analysis of demographic structures”.
  - Criticizing the broad definition, which makes population geography identical to human geography, woods suggested that population geographers should redefine the core of the sub-discipline and master the modern techniques.
  - He suggested that spatial variation in mortality, fertility and migration, together with those of population distribution, should form the core areas of the sub-discipline.

- 
- The period that followed witnessed a reordering of emphasis and resultant significant contributions from population geographers in the areas of modelling and estimation, policy-oriented research designed to assess the impact of population programmes and causes of long-term demographic changes.
  - Population geography, thus, became strongly demographic and moved in the direction of being redefined as spatial demography.