

Background

The goal of this project was to produce the 2nd edition of a textbook on international migration and citizenship intended for an undergraduate audience.

In collaboration with Callie L. Cranfill and Meghan T. Prabhu, under Dr. Niklaus A. Steiner, I sought to bring readers up to date on migration and citizenship trends of the 2010s. Even as data becomes increasingly accessible to the public, we found that it is often difficult to interpret: terms may not be clearly defined, and discrepancies occur between even the most reliable sources.

Key Developments

- Given present trends, the U.S. Census predicts that in the year 2045, we will see a **major shift** in the racial makeup of the United States.
- Though the influx of refugees into Europe sparked much political debate, the greatest growth was seen in **Internally Displaced Persons** -- those who have been forcibly displaced within their own country but have not crossed international borders.
- In the late 2000s, **Subtractions from the undocumented population outpaced Additions** into that same population for the first time. Indeed, Additions peaked in the year 2000.

Challenges

Figure 1: Are projections reliable?

The U.S. Census famously projected the year 2045 as the year "White Only" would become a minority race in the U.S. None of my research uncovered the model used to make this prediction! It turns out that a simple trend line fit to numeric projections for 2030 and 2060 would put the year of intersection at 2045, but this assumes that all else held constant, present patterns will continue. What might change between now and 2045 to alter the timing of this changeover?

Figure 2: Inconsistent Data

The tools created by major suppliers of reliable data, like the UNHCR Data Finder, can tell you how many refugees a country resettled in a given year. However, these numbers are often in conflict with a country's own published reports! For example, the Department of Homeland Security claims 44,404 refugees were resettled in the United States in 2020, but UNHCR says only 34,383 were resettled in the U.S. that year. Which numbers should you trust?

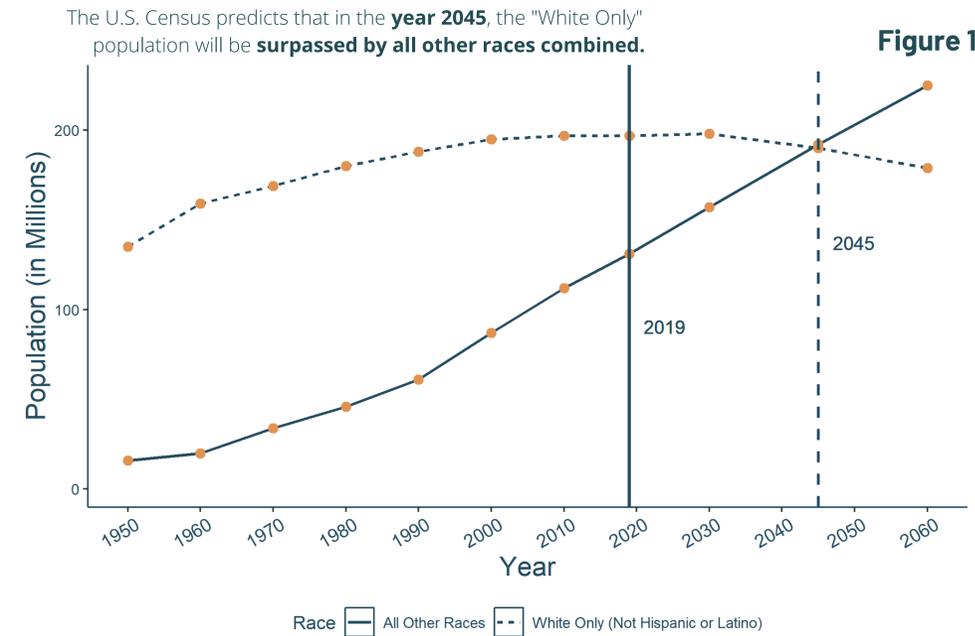
Figure 3: Unclear Terminology

A "Departure" from the undocumented population (what we labeled a "Subtraction" in Figure 3) is not necessarily a departure from the country! Individuals may, in fact, exit this population by obtaining legal permanent residence or as a result of death, and they are still labeled a departure.

International Migration & Citizenship Trends: Key Developments and Challenges of the 2010s

Presented by: Brittany Heikke

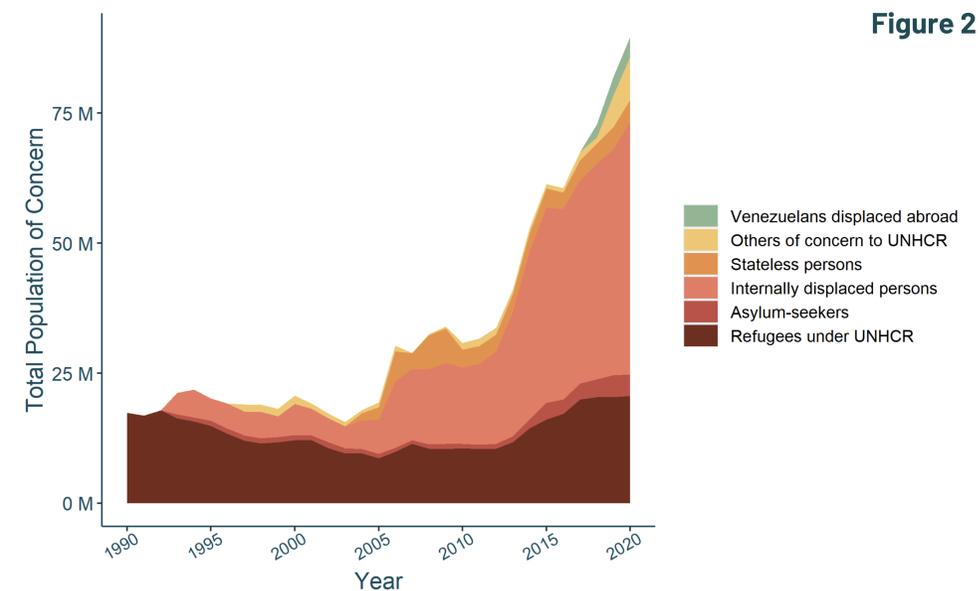
Demographics



The 2020 census showed for the first time since the census began in 1790 a decline in the absolute number of white people (by 5.1 million) to now make up 57.8 percent of the population, down from 75.6 percent in 1990. And the population under 18 already became majority people of color at 52.7 percent. Hispanics were the group that grew the most in the last 30 years, increasing from 9 percent to 18.7 percent of the population.

Refugees & Asylees

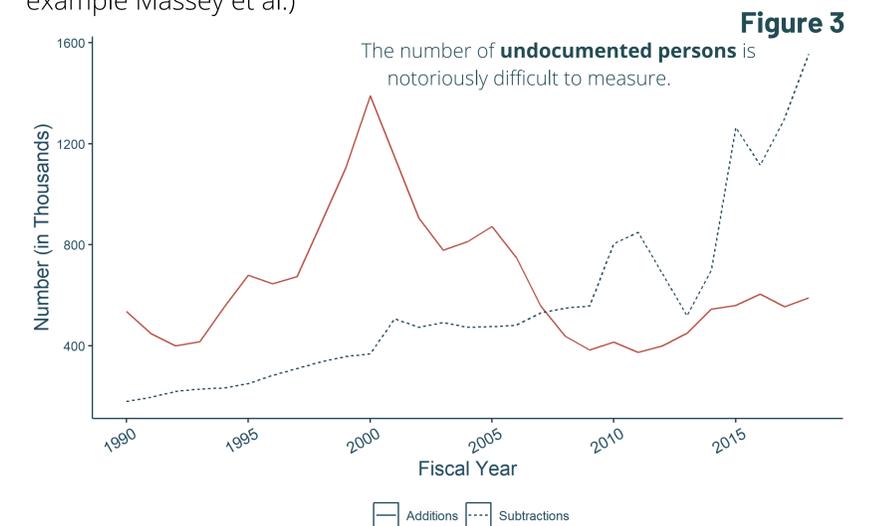
Most of the world's displaced people will never be granted asylum or be chosen for resettlement. Instead they remain uprooted in or near the region from which they've been dislocated, often languishing for years in camps. Even if we could grant asylum or resettle all of these people, the refugee issue would not be solved, because the underlying problems will continue to uproot people.



Migration

The US put considerable effort into controlling the border with Mexico after 1986 and yet unauthorized immigration continued to rise in the subsequent 20 years. How do we explain this paradox? On the one hand, one may argue that the United States needs to allocate even more resources for border control until the flow of unauthorized immigrants is stemmed.

On the other hand, some argue that, counterintuitively, the tightening of the border is in fact the cause for the rise in unauthorized immigration. With the border becoming harder and harder to cross over time, this circular migration of individual workers was replaced by entire families coming once and then settling in the US. This replacement of circular migration with permanent settlement brought the number of unauthorized immigrants in the US to its peak of 12 million by 2007. (See for example Massey et al.)



Citizenship

"The United States is a nation of immigrants. Throughout our history, immigrants have come here seeking a better way of life and have strengthened our nation in the process. For more than 200 years, the United States has remained strong because of our citizens and the common civic values we share."

Of all new U.S. citizens naturalized in 2019, more than **3/4 came from either Asia or the Western Hemisphere.**

