

LIMEN

Journal of the International Network for Immigration Research

7–8 (2023/1–2)



mrⁱ

MIGRATION
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE

LIMEN

Journal of the International Network
for Immigration Research
published by the Hungarian Migration Research Institute

7–8 (2023/1–2)



MIGRATION
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE

LIMEN

Limen is a semiannual International Journal of the International Network for Immigration Research (INIR) published by the Hungarian Migration Research Institute. Articles published in the journal reflect the views of their authors and do not represent the official positions of INIR or the Migration Research Institute.



Editorial Board:

Tamás DEZSŐ, Dominika GYÖRGYI, Sára KMECZKÓ, Viktor MARSAL,
Balázs ORBÁN, Árpád PÁRDU CZ, Omar SAYFO, Meszár TÁRIK,
Márk VARGHA

International Advisory Board:

Maxime AYMAR (Observatoire de l'immigration et de la démographie),
Nicolas POUVREAU-MONTI (Observatoire de l'immigration et de la
démographie), Mark KRİKORIAN (CIS), Jim ROBB (Numbers USA),
Eric RUARK (Numbers USA), Nayla RUSH (CIS)

Publisher:

Tamás DEZSŐ (Director General, Migration Research Institute)

P. O. Box 155, H-1518 Budapest, Hungary
info@migraciokutato.hu

©Migration Research Institute

Frontispiece:

Warning sign near the US-Mexico border, Arizona. Photo: shutterstock.com

ISSN: 2732-0200

Table of Contents

Lectori Salutem!	4
Mark KRİKORIAN The End of Asylum	5
Jim ROBB America's Enormous Hispanic Population Is Shifting to the Right Politically with Vast Consequences for the United States	20
Eric A. RUARK Immigration, Population Growth, and the "Environment"	50
Nicolas POUVREAU-MONTI Integration and demographic challenges in France: an overview	72
Sára KMECZKÓ The Gateway or the Bastion? Tunisia's role in stemming the flow of Europe-bound migration	86
Róbert GÖNCZI The Instrumentalization of Migration in the Arctic Circle: The Re-emergence of the Northern Migration Route and its Significance in the Russian Hybrid Military Toolbox	102
Book recommendation by Sára KMECZKÓ Omar Sayfo – Viktor Marsai – Kristóf György Veres: <i>Whose Space Is It?</i> Parallel Societies and Urban Enclaves in Western Europe. MCC Press, Budapest 2024.	117
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	122

Lectori Salutem!

When we launched Limen as the journal of the Migration Research Institute (MRI) in 2020, our main goal was to increase the number of our English-language publications to support the internationalization of the institute. In the past four years, we met and collaborated with numerous leading scholars of immigration studies and its related disciplines. Their contributions not only increased the relevance and academic merit of Limen, but also helped us to build a network which can give a new impetus to our activities.

In November 2023, MRI and four other research centers established the International Network for Immigration Research (INIR). The members of INIR consider immigration a topic that should be assessed with a multifaceted approach that takes into account both the benefits and the challenges. The members of the network share the principle that host countries are sovereign nation states with the right to pursue and enforce their chosen immigration policies that reflect the perspectives of their societies. Instead of merely making normative declarations based on an ideologically driven approach dominated by a strong humanitarian agenda, member organizations address the political, social, economic, and security considerations of immigration in order to develop realistic, long-lasting and responsible policy on this crucial issue.

To further their aims, the members of INIR decided to form an international advisory board for Limen that will serve as a publishing platform for multidisciplinary research and scholarship on migration and its related phenomena. In this double issue, the experts of INIR are elaborating on topics that were raised at the first joint workshop held by the network in Budapest in 2023. The timely issues covered include a rethinking of the international asylum system, the instrumentalization of migration, the shifts in the political preferences of the Hispanic population of the United States, and the challenges posed by immigration and integration in France.

Budapest, 28. 06. 2024

Viktor MARSÁI PhD
Executive Director
Migration Research Institute

Immigration, Population Growth, and the “Environment”

Eric A. Ruark

Abstract

Net migration has been the main driver of U.S. population growth for several decades, resulting in direct and lasting ecological effects. Calls for population stabilization were at the forefront of the U.S. environmental movement from the 1970s until the late 1990s. Multiple bipartisan federal commissions recommended that the U.S. government pursue population stabilization as a policy objective and recognized immigration as the main driver of future U.S. population growth. By the year 2000, the Sierra Club and the other major U.S. environmental groups had reversed their position and now lobby against any effective immigration restrictions. While the European Union is facing a much different demographic situation than the United States, both of their futures will be determined in large part by immigration policies.

Keywords: Immigration, U.S. Immigration History, Population Stabilization, Environmentalism, Sustainability

Introduction

There is a phrase that inevitably enters into any discussion about immigration to the United States: “America is a nation of immigrants.” That is true, but the conversation can’t begin and end there. The “nation of immigrants” tautology is very often used as a stratagem to brush aside any discussion of the actual history of immigration to the United States and, more consequentially, to avoid a critical examination of present policies. This is especially the case when it comes to the ecological effects of immigration-driven population growth.

The United States was not founded by immigrants. It was colonized and settled by Europeans. The British gained supremacy in North America following the Seven Years War (1756–1763), known to American schoolchildren as the French and Indian War. In 1776, thirteen colonies in British America declared their independence. In 1783, the Treaty of Paris brought the Revolutionary War to an end with Great Britain formally recognizing the United States of America as a sovereign, independent nation.

In its early years, United States grew its population almost exclusively from natural increase.¹ Large numbers of immigrants relative to previous decades began to come to the United States after the Irish Potato Famine (ca. 1850). Following the American Civil War came the Great Wave of immigration from Europe that provided “factory fodder” during America’s Industrial Revolution.

The importation of enslaved Africans to America, an essential part of the nation’s history, is *not* part of the history of immigration. Further, immigration from Europe after the Civil War was crucial to the system of *de jure* racial segregation that persisted in American for a century after emancipation. Mass immigration also enabled rapid western expansion, and the displacement and decimation of the Native American population and the near extinction of the American bison. To the original European settlers, America was unspoiled, untamed, and untapped, a continent full of endless opportunities and unlimited resources. This mindset persisted well into the 20th Century and persists still in the idea of “American Exceptionalism.”²



Figure 1. Little Italy, New York City ca. 1900.

¹ U.S. CENSUS BUREAU 1975.

² Some historians credit Alexis de Tocqueville with originating that concept to describe Americans’ view of themselves and their nation. It is Frederick Jackson Turner who developed it as an historic analysis in his “frontier thesis.” Turner sees this epitomized in America’s embrace of Manifest Destiny and the settling of the western territories. The historiographical importance of Turner’s thesis on American scholars is comparable to Max Weber’s “Protestant work ethic.”

There has long been an effort to romanticize and even mythologize America's immigration history. More recently this invented past has been weaponized against those who put forward the self-evident truth that America is more than an abstract idea, exempt from the lessons of history and the laws of physics.

The Second Great Wave: Immigration to America post-1965

Edward Kennedy, Democratic Senator from Massachusetts, and younger brother of President John Kennedy, said in support of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Hart-Celler Act):

First, our cities will not be flooded with a million immigrants annually. Under the proposed bill, the present level of immigration remains substantially the same ... Secondly, the ethnic mix of this country will not be upset ... Contrary to the charges in some quarters, [the bill] will not inundate America with immigrants from any one country or area, or the most populated and deprived nations of Africa and Asia ... In the final analysis, the ethnic pattern of immigration under the proposed measure is not expected to change as sharply as the critics seem to think.³

Senator Kennedy probably believed what he said at the time, but the 1965 amendment to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 law did fundamentally alter immigration numbers and resulted in the demographic transformation of the United States. What's perhaps most widely known is that the law got rid of the national origin quotas that limited immigration to mostly Europeans. The most far-reaching consequence, however, was the prioritization of family-based immigration. Whereas prior law had set immigration quotas based on the demographic composition of the United States in 1920, the 1965 law put in place a system where new immigrants were able to determine future immigration by sponsoring family members, creating unending "chain migration" and an ever-growing demand for increases in annual admissions. The now system operates on autopilot, so to speak, without little regard to economic conditions or the national interest – certainly it is not in line with the political will of the majority of American voters.⁴

³ "The Legacy of the 1965 Immigration Act: Three Decades of Mass Immigration," Center for Immigration Studies. September 1, 1995.

⁴ GALLUP 2024. Recent polling on the issue has concentrated on public reaction to the unprecedented surge of illegal immigration across the U.S. southern border and found widespread opposition to the Biden Administration's policies. There does exist extensive polling on legal immigration and guest worker admissions that shows American voters want a reduction in annual

Senator Kennedy was correct in that the Hart-Celler Act did not cause immigration to the United States to reach one million a year, though it did more than double annual immigration in the twenty years after it became law compared to the twenty years that preceded it. Immigration began to average one million annually starting in 1990, when Congress raised the ceiling on admissions by 150 percent. This came on the heels of an amnesty for three million people, mostly from Mexico, signed into law in 1986 by President Ronald Reagan. The promise of a “one-time amnesty” was made in exchange for border security and interior enforcement that never materialized. As of March 2024, the illegal alien population in the United States is approximately 13-15 million.⁵

Table 1 shows annual average immigration to the United States by decade since it was first recorded in 1820. *Table 2* shows percentage of the foreign-born population in select years.

admissions and more protections for American workers included in immigration law. Gallup has a long running series of polls on American’s satisfaction with “the level of immigration.” However, Gallup’s sample for these polls is not confined to voters, U.S. citizens, or even legal U.S. residents.

RASMUSSEN REPORTS 2024. NumbersUSA sponsors a monthly Rasmussen poll of likely voters and asks them specific questions about their support for annual immigration levels, as well as questions on border security and protections for U.S. workers.

HARVARD CAPS/HARRIS POLL 2024. Harvard-Harris polls have found similar support for immigration reduction among U.S. likely voters, in particular, see HARVARD CAPS/HARRIS POLL 2018.

Attempts by Congress to increase immigration has met with widespread public resistance. The most striking example was in 2013 when the so-called Gang of Eight bill that would have granted amnesty to at least 12 million illegal aliens in the U.S. and doubled both annual legal immigration and guest worker admissions ran into fierce grass roots opposition. See THE ATLANTIC 2013. The bill did pass the Senate in June 2013 but was stalled and eventually died after Majority Leader Eric Cantor, second in command of the House of Representative at the time, suffered a shocking loss in the Republican primary in June 2014, which was seen largely as a referendum in his district on the Senate bill, which Cantor sought to help pass through the House.

⁵ U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY 2019; PEW RESEARCH CENTER 2023; CENTER FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES 2022; THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION 2019.

Prior to President Biden taking office, the estimates of the illegal alien population in the United States ranged from 10-12 million. From what has been widely reported and confirmed by public statements by Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, well over 5 million inadmissible aliens have either been released into the United States or are known to have gotten into the country by evading Border Patrol agents. That total number may be as high as 8-10 million by March 2024.

Year	Avg/Year	Total/Decade
1820s	12,850	128,502
1830s	53,838	538,381
1840s	142,734	1,427,337
1850s	281,455	1,427,337
1860s	208,126	2,081,261
1870s	274,214	2,742,137
1880s	524,857	5,248,568
1890s	369,429	3,694,294
1900s	820,239	8,202,388
1910s	634,738	6,347,380
1920s	429,551	4,295,540
1930s	69,938	699,375
1940s	85,661	856,608
1950s	249,927	2,499,268
1960s	321,375	3,213,749
1970s	424,820	4,248,203
1980s	624,438	6,244,379
1990s	977,540	9,775,398
2000s	1,029,943	10,299,430
2010s	1,063,345	10,633,446

Table 1. Annual Immigration to U.S. by decade⁶

Year	Total Population	Population %
1910	13.5 million	14.7%
1940	11.6 million	8.8%
1970	3.9 million	4.7%
2000	31.1 million	11.1%
2023	49.5 million	15.0%

Table 2. Size and Percentage of U.S. Foreign-born Population⁷

Immigration (technically net international migration) has been the main driver of U.S. population growth since the waning of the Baby Boom (1946 to 1964). Immigration's contribution to total U.S. population growth depends on when one starts to measure. For example, a 2015 report by the Pew Research Center estimated that immigration had accounted for 55 percent of total U.S. population growth between 1965 and 2015, 72 million out of a total growth of 131 million. In that

⁶ U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY 2022.

⁷ U.S. CENSUS BUREAU 2006; CENTER FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES 2023b.

same report, Pew projected that immigration would account for 88 percent (103 million) of total U.S. population growth between 2015 to 2065.⁸ A 2019 report by the Center for Immigration Studies projected that immigration would account for 95 percent of total U.S. population growth between 2017 and 2060.⁹

A couple things to note. The first is that the numbers of immigrants in *Table 1* refer to individuals who were admitted to the U.S. as legal permanent residents according to the laws in place at the time. Today, most Americans view an “immigrant” as someone who has received a “green card,” the common name for a permanent resident card. Immigrant admissions do not include those who entered the United States illegally, or those who entered on temporary visas, including guest workers. Our purpose here is to examine the contribution of net migration on the size of the U.S. population, so there is no need to make careful distinctions about how an individual came to the United States or their legal status therein – which is very important in other discussions.

Table 2 shows all foreign-born individuals who were present and counted in the United States at the time. A snapshot of the U.S. foreign-born population gives an understated representation of immigration’s effect on U.S. population growth because the United States has birthright citizenship, so children born to immigrants don’t retain the immigrant status of their parent as in many other countries.

Growthism Emerges Triumphant

During the 1960s, the U.S. environmental movement became a powerful cultural and political force, which was on full display at the first Earth Day commemorated on April 22, 1970. One of the main themes then was U.S. population stabilization.¹⁰ Talk of population stabilization was common at large demonstrations that took place on college campuses and in high schools across the nation, but this was very much a “mainstream” affair. Republican President Nixon and his wife, Pat, planted a tree at the White House to commemorate the inaugural Earth Day. Nixon had signed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a law requiring federal agencies to consider the environmental impacts of policy implementations, four

⁸ PEW RESEARCH CENTER 2015.

⁹ CENTER FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES 2023a.

¹⁰ THE WASHINGTON TIMES 2021.

months earlier, and he signed legislation creating the Environmental Protection Agency three months after Earth Day.

This all came on the heels of President Nixon creating a commission on population growth headed by John D. Rockefeller III, whose brother was Governor of New York at the time and who later served as Vice-President under Gerald Ford. The Rockefeller commission ultimately concluded, “In the long run, no substantial benefits will result from further growth of the nation’s population,” while underlining immigration’s specific role in contributing to that growth (relatively minor at that time) and cautioning against allowing illegal immigration to continue.¹¹

A decade later, a commission headed by a Catholic priest, Theodore Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame, discussed immigration’s contribution to U.S. population growth with the implication that stabilizing the U.S. population was a desired policy outcome.¹²

In 1993, President Clinton established the President’s Council on Sustainable Development which recommended in its task force report that Congress better regulate immigration because:

*The size of our population and the scale of our consumption are essential determinants of whether or not the United States will be able to achieve sustainability... This is a sensitive issue, but reducing immigration is a necessary part of population stabilization and the drive toward sustainably.*¹³

A second bipartisan commission, this one fittingly mandated by the Immigration Act of 1990, was tasked with examining and evaluating U.S. immigration policy, and providing recommendations for its improvement. Civil Rights icon and former U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Jordan was chosen to chair the committee which has since taken her name. The Jordan Commission, in very clear terms in 1997, called for an end to chain migration and a substantial reduction in immigration admissions which would have brought annual admissions to effectively half of their then current level. The commission also recommended vigorous measures to combat illegal immigration and rejected amnesty for foreign nationals present in the U.S. without legal status. While not a point of emphasis, the commission

¹¹ COMMISSION ON POPULATION GROWTH AND THE AMERICAN FUTURE 1972.

¹² SELECT COMMISSION 1981.

¹³ PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, TASK FORCE REPORT 1996.

did recognize the widespread and, at the time, uncontroversial concern that “our future wellbeing depends upon both conservation, and stabilizing population.”¹⁴

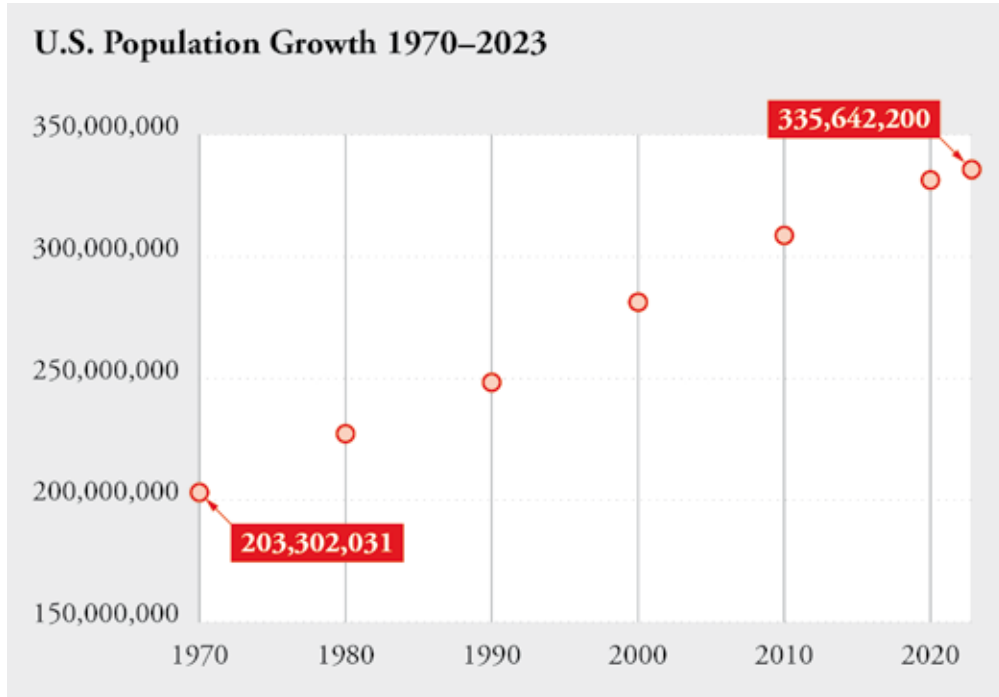


Figure 2. US Population Growth, 1970–2020.

The U.S. population did not begin to stabilize after the first Earth Day in 1970 (Figure 2). Nor has Congress heeded any of the recommendation of the various bipartisan commissions that recommended substantial cuts in immigration flows or responded to public demand for immigration reduction. As of 2023, the U.S. population had increased by 132.3 million since 1970, by 87 million since 1990. Between the 2010 and 2020 Censuses, the U.S. added 22 million additional residents, something many in the American media portrayed as indicative of a looming demographic collapse.

When and why advocacy for population stabilization ceased to be a potent force in American politics are perplexing questions. Those who once held mainstream opinions, ones rooted in the scientific consensus of the day, were banished from polite society, seemingly overnight. The only in-depth scholarly examination of this abrupt turnabout pinpoints 1998 as the year environmental groups “retreated” from support of population stabilization and began to openly attack those who

¹⁴ U.S. COMMISSION ON IMMIGRATION REFORM 1997.

still held to this position. That was the year the Sierra Club, one of the oldest and most influential environmental group in the United States, purged old guard population stalwarts from leadership position.

In 1998, the national Sierra Club leadership defeated those who tried to return their organization to its earlier pro-stabilization policy, which advocated both lower fertility and immigration. It remains to be seen whether this failed attempt represented the last gasp of the 1970-era environmental-population movement or if it was in fact the opening skirmish in a resurgent struggle. One indication that the latter might be true is that below national boards and staffs there were large numbers of members and activists who never dropped their commitment to population stabilization; in the 1998 Sierra Club national membership referendum, 40% of voters chose to overturn their national board of directors on the population issue, in spite of a concerted board effort to marginalize and stigmatize stabilization advocates.¹⁵

The mainstream environmental movement in the United States has since completely moved away from any discussion about population and instead concerned itself with Global Climate Change, and more recently, “Environmental Justice.”¹⁶ The Sierra Club, which once advocated for population stabilization and recognized the need to bring immigration levels in-line with that objective, were being pressured by activist donors to back off. Famously, a donor gave \$101.5 million to the organization in 2001 with the caveat that the Sierra Club drop any discussion of immigration reduction, which in turn forced it to remain silent on immigration-driven population growth.¹⁷ The Sierra Club’s about-face on the issue eventually led David Brower, the first executive director of the Sierra Club, to resign from its board of directors in disgust. “Overpopulation is perhaps the biggest problem facing us, and immigration is part of the problem. It has to be addressed,” said Brower.¹⁸

Those who point out the history behind the establishment of Earth Day, or who maintain a position that was once one of the pillars of the U.S. environmental movement, are now accused of “eco-fascism” by the well-funded environmental groups, whose position on immigration and economic growth have converged with

¹⁵ BECK – KOLANCKIEWICZ 2000.

¹⁶ BECK – KOLANCKIEWICZ 2000; KAMMER 2018.

¹⁷ THE NEW YORK TIMES 2023. David Gelbaum, who made his fortune “from the rarified world of Wall Street hedge funds,” told Sierra Club executive director Carl Pope that, “if they ever came out anti-immigration, they would never get a dollar from me.” By “anti-immigration,” Pope meant support for more restrictive immigration policies.

¹⁸ THE SEATTLE TIMES 2000.

the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Wall Street financiers.¹⁹ This convergence is part of a broader shift in American politics that has seen Democratic leaders aligning the party with the objectives of multinational corporations, while at the same time framing its agenda in the language of a global progressive platform.

The best things for workers in America, so their argument goes, is to expand the U.S. labor market through open immigration so that all the world's workers can come to United States and enjoy high wages, access to healthcare, childcare, and other benefits, and protections from unscrupulous employers provided via a strict system of federal regulation. Any concerns about the impacts of adding hundreds of millions more people to the population via immigration are dismissed with the default accusation of racism, while derivative markers are set up to trade carbon credits.

The mainstream environmental movement's abandonment of population stabilization was a bitter pill to swallow for those who had worked for many years to elevate it to the forefront of national political discourse and had received support at the highest institutional levels for the implementation of policies directed toward that end. Former Wisconsin Governor and U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson, the man considered the founder of Earth Day, wrote in his 2002 autobiography:

[W]e won't stabilize our population as long as immigrants to the United States continue to add 1.3 million people to the population each year – 300,000 of them entering the country illegally.... Never has an issue with such major consequences for this country been so ignored. Never before has there been such a significant failure by the president, Congress, and the political infrastructure to address such an important problem. We are faced with the most important challenge of our time – the challenge of sustainability – and we refuse to confront it.

Immigration and U.S. Population Growth: What Lies Ahead?

The second most common phrase in any discussion about immigration is that it “grows the economy.” This is true in that adding tens of millions of people to the population makes the U.S. economy larger than it would have been otherwise as

¹⁹ Any search for “Eco-facism and Immigration” will bring up countless opinion articles and academic works accusing immigration restrictionists of xenophobia, racism, “climate change denialism,” etc. For a measured discussion of how thoroughly multinational corporations have infiltrated the U.S. environmental movement and are determining the agenda of its largest, most well-funded groups, see MACDONALD 2008.

measured in the size of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It is also true that the benefits of the growth from immigration accrues to immigrants and those who employ immigrants. Per capita GDP for U.S. workers shrinks.²⁰ What concerns us here isn't so much the economics of immigration as much as the economic argument that immigration is necessary to *perpetuate* growth.

The axiom that immigration is necessary to grow the U.S. economy assumes that this growth must continue indefinitely. This conflicts with another axiom that nothing, including the U.S. economy, can grow forever. So, what is the compromise? Usually those who favor continuing mass immigration make the argument that America is relatively “empty” and can grow its population exponentially, adding tens of millions if not billions more people before any difficulties arise – difficulties future generations will somehow solve with “technology.”

When someone says that the United States is “empty,” what they mean is that it's not full of people. And so, they propose more immigration to fill it up with people and houses and schools and shopping centers and farm-to-table-restaurants and solar farms and landfills and wastewater treatment plants and so on. The error in their logic is that they forget the simple adage that conservationists know well: It's not how many the land can contain but how many it can sustain.

In 2017, the U.S. Census Bureau projected that the population would reach 404 million in 2060, an increase of almost 70 million people from its 2023 level. A new Census Bureau projection was released in 2023 that put the number well below that at 364 million in 2060. The more recent Census Bureau population projections, however, do not reflect current immigration numbers. As Steven Camarota, Director of Research at the Center for Immigration Studies, noted at the time, the Census Bureau ignored its own current net migration numbers and its estimation of the U.S. foreign-born population.²¹ Two other projections done at about the same time, one by the Congressional Budget Office and one by the Social Security Administration, which better accounted for current immigration numbers projected the United States to grow considerably more. Whichever number one accepts, all projections show the U.S. population continuing to increase over the next half century mainly driven by immigration.

²⁰ BORJAS 2016; NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES 2017; CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE 2013.

²¹ CENTER FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES 2023a.

	Census Bureau Main Series	Census Bureau “High Immigration”	Congressional Budget Office	Social Security Administration
2030	345,074	351,303	354,498	354,034
2060	364,287	396,954	387,619*	406,027
2100	365,558	435,346	N/A	481,459

* The CBO projection ends in 2054. 2060 number was projected by author by extending previous CBO trendline.

Table 3. U.S. Total Population Projections²²

Long-standing frustration with the pace of immigration helped propel Donald Trump to victory over Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election. While Trump’s effort to enact permanent legislative reforms was anemic, he did put in place executive policies that, along with the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly decreased illegal border crossings and slowed overall immigration. Upon his inauguration in January 2021, President Biden immediately rescinded his predecessor’s border policies and eventually created what he calls “new lawful pathways” for aliens that Congress has deemed inadmissible, violating both existing law and the constitution’s separation of powers. The result has been an unprecedented surge in illegal immigration that has now surpassed legal admissions. When President Biden’s first term ends in January 2025, the number of foreign nationals added to the U.S. population may well have grown by 12 to 15 million in just four years.²³

²² U.S. CENSUS BUREAU 2023a; U.S. CENSUS BUREAU 2023b; CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE 2024; SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION 2023.

²³ THE NEW YORK TIMES 2021; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY 2024; CBS NEWS 2024; NEW YORK POST 2024; WASHINGTON EXAMINER 2023.

The U.S. had admitted over one million legal immigrants per year since 1990. The Biden Administration announced in 2021 a new plan to, as reported in *The New York Times*, “significantly expand the legal immigration system.” This entails faster processing but also circumventing or ignoring existing caps. From January 2021 to January 2024, there were 8.9 million total border encounters of inadmissible aliens, 6.5 million of those were Border Patrol encounters at the U.S. southwest border. The Biden Administration has not been forthcoming with numbers on how many have been released into the United States. It is a safe assumption given DHS data that at least half of illegal border crossers have been released, though DHS secretary Mayorkas said in January 2024 that “over 85%” of illegal border crossers were being released. This after crossings had exceeded 300,000 in just December 2023. DHS had also released over one million inadmissible aliens on “humanitarian parole.” Added to this is the number of “gotaways” that evade Border Patrol. The number of known gotaways has exceeded two million. The number of unknown gotaways can only be a matter of speculation.

The volume of border crossers under President Biden has created a situation which many have referred to as “unsustainable.” This raises the obvious question about what immigration policies are sustainable. Americans can be forgiven for not having a ready answer, as that term has acquired nebulous connotations. “Sustainable” has become a marketing catchphrase, meaning everything and nothing all at once. What is clear to Americans is that any credible immigration system must have clearly defined limits, and those limits must be vigorously enforced. In the words of Barbara Jordan:

Credibility in immigration policy can be summed up in one sentence: those who should get in, get in; those who should be kept out, are kept out; and those who should not be here will be required to leave.²⁴

So, who gets in, and how many? Tens of millions of people around the world would move to the United States right now because they want to experience the “American Dream,” which entails conspicuous consumption and just as conspicuous production of waste.²⁵ No one moves to the United State in order to reduce their carbon footprint. Urban sprawl and the loss of open space is the inevitable byproduct of America’s continuing growth. Smart growth strategies based on high density development and access to public transportation only, at best, delays that inevitability.

NumbersUSA has done a series of studies since 2000 measuring urban sprawl based on government data starting in 1982 that measures newly developed land. In our 2022 national study, we found that between 1982 and 2014 the United States lost 69,000 square miles (179,000 sq. km) of open space – an area larger than the state of Florida.²⁶ Seventy-one percent of that loss was due to population growth. Over that same period, 56 percent of U.S. population growth was due to immigration.

When they are asked, Americans express a strong desire for a future different than the one they are being offered. In each study, state residents have been asked about growth and development. A majority, each time, have expressed a desire to slow or put an end to further growth. Even in a state like Idaho that has relatively low population density, it’s the rate of growth that concerns residents, and how rapid growth is transforming communities.²⁷ These same respondents are concerned about farmland loss, a decline in air and water quality, and water shortages – a major issue

²⁴ TESTIMONY OF BARBARA JORDAN 1994.

²⁵ GALLUP 2023.

²⁶ NUMBERSUSA 2022.

²⁷ NUMBERSUSA 2023.

in the American West. Respondents are also intent on maintaining their “quality of life,” something much different than “standard of living.” Many Americans have an attachment to a particular place and want to preserve the unique character of *their* community, including preserving its unique landscape.

Immigration and population in perspective

Given their age structure and fertility trends, Western democracies face a clear choice: Either continue to accept large numbers of immigrants or deal with declining populations. According to projections, the United States will experience substantial growth because of high levels of immigration for the next 75 years. For European Union member states, even with immigration at its current pace, the future looks very different. The total population of the European Union is projected to decline beginning in 2026, decreasing by 11 million in 2054 by 33 million by 2100 (*Figure 3*). A lot can happen between now and 2100, but 2026 is close at hand and 2054 is, as the saying goes, just up the road. How are European Union leaders planning for this demographic reality, especially given the political opposition to current immigration schemes?²⁸

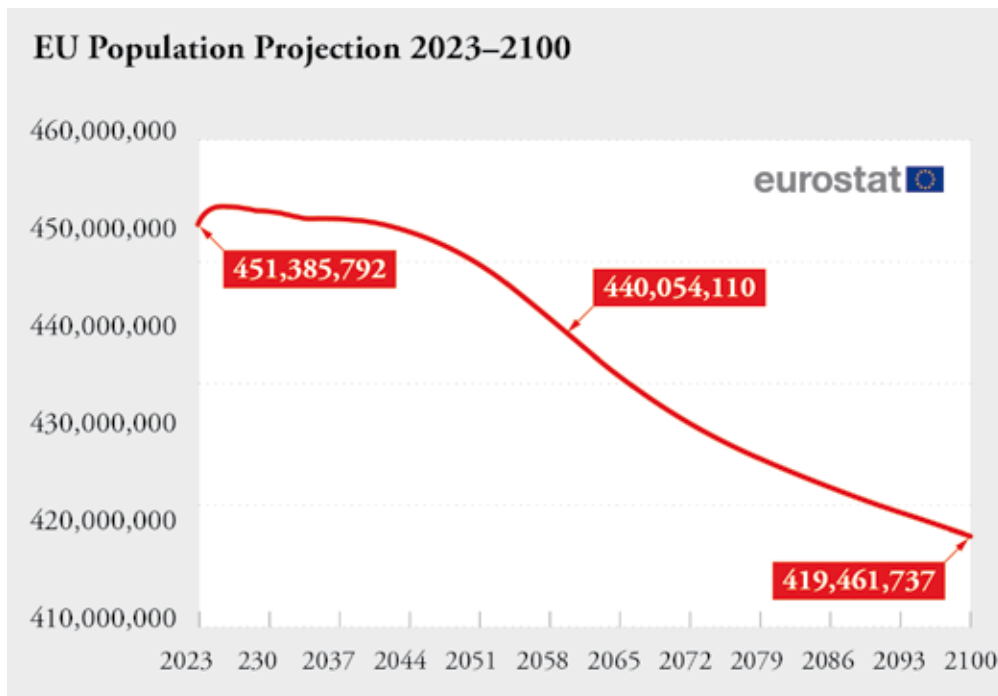


Figure 3. EU Population Projection, 2023–2100.

²⁸ EUROSTAT 2024a. See also CAFARO – DÉRER 2019.

An interesting example within the European Union, both demographically and politically, is Hungary. Eurostat put Hungary’s population at 9.7 million in 2023 (Figure 4). It projects the country’s population to decline by 540,000 by 2060, and by 2100 a decrease of 630,000 from its 2023 level – a relative drop-off that is not so dramatic and may be mitigated by the government’s current pro-natal policies, which may account for Eurostat’s projection that there will be an upswing in population numbers around 2080. Hungary’s government has taken significant actions to prevent illegal immigration, at times defying Brussels, and to combat fraudulent asylum seekers. Hungary’s population very well could stabilize in the long-term, a very favorable position to be in if one thinks stabilization in the long-term is a worthwhile goal. That is an interesting question for Hungary – and for all of the Western world. A crucial question all nations must eventually face.

The situation is complex, much more than whether voters support or oppose immigration. Likewise, total population doesn’t tell the whole story. Internal migration will also greatly shape the future demographic makeup of the European Union as long as the Schengen Agreement remains in effect. There are many variables that affect population in the long-term, and one always has to preface any prediction with “if current trends persist.”²⁹

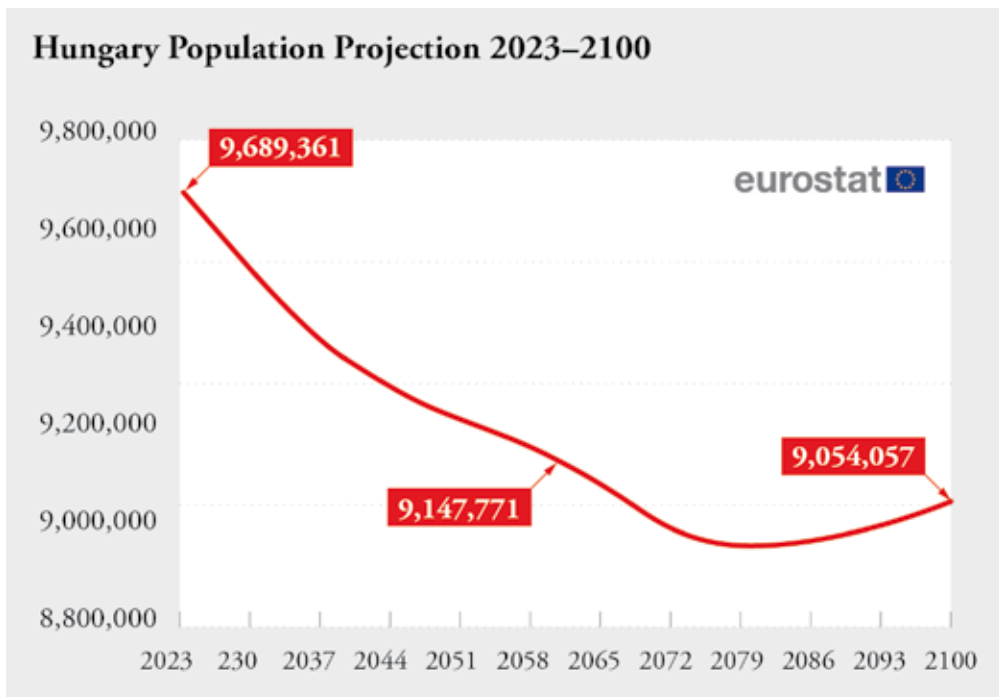


Figure 4. Hungary Population Projection, 2023–2100.

²⁹ EUROSTAT 2024b.

It's not melodramatic to say that Europe is facing an existential crisis here, on a level that the United States is not, at least not yet. This is due to a variety of factors, the most important being that the United States has been able to absorb and assimilate higher numbers of immigrants more successfully than most European nations. This is a tangible result of America being a nation of immigrants. It is also because American is a union of states, with some pronounced regional differences that amount to little more than friendly rivalries. The European Union is a collection of nation-states, with long and complex histories that includes frequent armed conflicts between them. The success of the European Union is extraordinary *because* of this history, and it is Panglossian to dismiss World War II and the Cold War as ancient history, especially given the tense relation between NATO and Russia over the war in Ukraine.

Moving forward, will citizens of European Union countries increasingly see themselves as residents of an economic bloc united in their pursuit of continual GDP growth and a constant worker-to-retiree ratio? Or will they reevaluate immigration and population policies based on other national considerations?

This isn't to argue that competent national leaders who share a vision of the common good with the citizens they are elected to represent cannot navigate the challenges facing Europe. It is to suggest that this description doesn't seem to fit the situation in many European nations, particularly in Western Europe. What citizens demand, what politicians promise, and what governments deliver are quite often very different things.³⁰

Conclusion

Mass immigration has many consequences. Far-reaching ones. Of course, immigration has brought benefits to America; very few Americans would contest that. Support for continued but better regulated immigration is what Americans are asking for. Implementing and enforcing policies that effectively limit immigration remains difficult because the U.S. environmental movement, one of the most influential political forces in 20th Century American politics, abandoned its commitment to population stabilization.

The old mantra of the American environmental movement, “Think globally, act locally,” no longer applies. Mainstream environmentalism now has little to do

³⁰ FINANCIAL TIMES 2023.

with the conservation of natural resources or protecting open spaces from further development beyond the designation of state or national parkland that become overcrowded attractions for tourists desperate to experience the natural world. The United States can continue to grow its population indefinitely the “experts” tell us, as long as we somehow offset our expanding carbon footprint. But planting trees in the Amazon won’t stop runoff into the Chesapeake Bay or keep the Ogallala Aquifer from running dry. Those who have tasked themselves with solving change, at least those who control the levers of power, take the position that the best solution is to allow unfettered migration to the developed world. Those who live in the receiving countries have no say in the matter. This does not seem like a sustainable solution.

Bibliography

- BECK, Roy – KOLANCKIEWICZ, Leon (2000): *The Environmental Movement's Retreat From Advocating U.S. Population Stabilization (1970–1998): A First Draft of History*. Source: <https://www.agoregon.org/files/RetreatfromStabilization.pdf>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- BORJAS, George (2016): *We Wanted Workers: Unraveling the Immigration Narrative*. Source: New York: W.W. Norton.
- CAFARO, Philip – DÉRER, Patrícia (2019): *Policy-based Population Projections for the European Union: A Complementary Approach*. 28 Oct. 2019. Source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347240536_Policy-based_Population_Projections_for_the_European_Union_A_Complementary_Approach. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- CBS NEWS (2024): *Biden administration has admitted more than 1 million migrants into U.S. under parole policy Congress is considering restricting*. 22 Jan. 2024. Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/immigration-parole-biden-administration-1-million-migrants/>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- CENTER FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES (2019): *Projecting the Impact of Immigration on the U.S. Population A look at size and age structure through 2060*. 4 Feb. 2019. Source: <https://cis.org/Report/Projecting-Impact-Immigration-US-Population>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- CENTER FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES (2022): *Estimating the Illegal Immigrant Population Using the Current Population Survey*. 29 March 2022. Source: <https://cis.org/Report/Estimating-Illegal-Immigrant-Population-Using-Current-Population-Survey>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- CENTER FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES (2023a): *New Census Bureau Projections Show Immigration Drives Population Growth*. 9 Nov. 2023. Source: <https://cis.org/Report/New-Census-Bureau-Projections-Show-Immigration-Drives-Population-Growth>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- CENTER FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES (2023b): *In October 2023, the Foreign-Born Share Was the Highest in History*. 30 Nov. 2023. Source: <https://cis.org/Report/October-2023-ForeignBorn-Share-Was-Highest-History>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- COMMISSION ON POPULATION GROWTH AND THE AMERICAN FUTURE (1972): *Population and the American Future*. 27 March 1972. Source: https://population-security.org/rockefeller/001_population_growth_and_the_american_future.htm#Letter%20of%20Transmittal. Accessed on 20 March 2024.

- CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE (2013): *S. 744: Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act*. 18 June 2013. Source: <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/44346>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE (2024): *The Demographic Outlook: 2024 to 2054*. 18 Jan. 2024. Source: <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/59697>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- EUROSTAT (2024a): *Population Projections*. Source: [hhttps://www.cbo.gov/publication/59697](https://www.cbo.gov/publication/59697). Accessed on 20. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- EUROSTAT (2023b): *Population projections at national level (2022-2100): Population on 1st January by age, sex and type of projection*. Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-demography/population-projections/database>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- FINANCIAL TIMES (2023): *UK net migration has more than doubled from pre-Brexit levels, figures set to show*. 21 May 2023. Source: <https://www.ft.com/content/d06d83e6-15db-4f47-a080-a8d4d2c2e6e8>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- GALLUP (2023): *Nearly 900 Million Worldwide Wanted to Migrate in 2021*. 24 Jan. 2023. Source: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/468218/nearly-900-million-worldwide-wanted-migrate-2021.aspx>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- GALLUP (2024): *Gallup Poll Social Series: Mood of the Nation*. Feb. 2024. Source: <https://news.gallup.com/file/poll/611138/240226MIPEcon.pdf>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- HARVARD CAPS/HARRIS POLL (2018): *Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll*. Source: https://harvardharrispoll.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/January-Report_full_MJP.pdf. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- HARVARD CAPS/HARRIS POLL (2024): *Immigration*. Source: <https://harvardharrispoll.com/tag/immigration/>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- KAMMER, Jerry (2018): *A Brief Chronology of the Sierra Club's Retreat from the Immigration- Population Connection*. 14 Aug. 2018. Source: <https://cis.org/Immigration-Studies/Brief-Chronology-Sierra-Clubs-Retreat-ImmigrationPopulation-Connection-Updated>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- MACDONALD, Christine (2008): *Green, Inc.: An Environmental Insider Reveals How a Good Cause Has Gone Bad*. Source: Lanham, Maryland: Lyons Press.
- MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE (2019): *Unauthorized Immigrant Population Profiles*. Jan. 2021. Source: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/us-immigration-policy-program-data-hub/unauthorized-immigrant-population-profiles>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.

- NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES (2017): *The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration*. Source: <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/23550/the-economic-and-fiscal-consequences-of-immigration>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- NEW YORK POST (2024): *DHS secretary admits over 85% of migrants are being allowed into US: report*. 9 Jan. 2024. Source: <https://nypost.com/2024/01/09/news/dhs-secretary-admits-over-85-of-migrants-being-allowed-into-us-report/>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- NUMBERSUSA (2022): *From Sea to Sprawling Sea: Quantifying the Loss of Open Space in America*. March 2022. Source: <https://sprawlusa.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/NatlSprawl.pdf>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- NUMBERSUSA (2023): *Californicating Idaho: Population and Sprawl Come to the Northern Rockies*. Dec. 2023. Source: https://idahospawl.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023_Idaho_Sprawl.pdf. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- PEW RESEARCH CENTER (2015): *Modern Immigration Wave Brings 59 Million to U.S., Driving Population Growth and Change Through 2065: Views of Immigration’s Impact on U.S. Society Mixed*. 28 Sept. 2015. Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2015/09/28/modern-immigration-wave-brings-59-million-to-u-s-driving-population-growth-and-change-through-2065/>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- PEW RESEARCH CENTER (2023): *What we know about unauthorized immigrants living in the U.S.* 16 Nov. 2023. Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/11/16/what-we-know-about-unauthorized-immigrants-living-in-the-us/>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, TASK FORCE REPORT (1996): *Task Force Report, “Population and Consumption,” Executive Summary*. Source: https://clintonwhitehouse3.archives.gov/PCSD/Publications/TF_Reports/pop-exec.html. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- RASMUSSEN REPORTS (2024): *Rasmussen Report: Immigration Index*. 23 Feb. 2024. Source: https://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/immigration_index/immigration_index_feb23. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- SELECT COMMISSION (1981): *Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy*. Source: <https://archive.org/details/finalreportofsel1981unit/page/n11/mode/2up>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (2023): *The 2023 Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds*. 31 March 2023. Source:

- <https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/TR/2023/tr2023.pdf>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- TESTIMONY OF BARBARA JORDAN (1994): *Testimony of Barbara Jordan before the House Judiciary Committee*. 29 Sept. 1994. Source: <https://www.numbersusa.com/testimony-of-barbara-jordan-before-the-house-judiciary-committee-august-3-1994-2/>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- THE ATLANTIC (2013): *The Little Group Behind the Big Fight to Stop Immigration Reform*. 1 Aug. 2013. Source: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/08/the-little-group-behind-the-big-fight-to-stop-immigration-reform/278252/>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION (2019): *How many undocumented immigrants are in the United States and who are they*. 12 Nov. 2019. Source: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-many-undocumented-immigrants-are-in-the-united-states-and-who-are-they/>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- THE NEW YORK TIMES (2021): *Biden Aims to Rebuild and Expand Legal Immigration*. 31 May 2021. Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/31/us/politics/biden-immigration.html>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- THE NEW YORK TIMES (2023): *After Racial Reckoning, Sierra Club Looks Ahead with New Leadership*. 24 Jan. 2023. Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/24/climate/ben-jealous-sierra-club.html>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- THE SEATTLE TIMES (2000): *Immigration's Direct Effect on Environment*. 15 June 2000. Source: <https://archive.seattletimes.com/archive/?date=20000615&slug=4026721>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- THE WASHINGTON TIMES (2021): *Overpopulation is Biggest Environmental Threat*. 28 Feb. 2021. Source: <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/feb/28/leon-kolankiewicz-overpopulation-biggest-environment/>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- TOCQUEVILLE, Alexis De (1835): *Democracy in America*.
- TURNER, Frederick Jackson (1893): *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*.
- U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (1975): *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*. Sept. 1975. Source: https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1975/compendia/hist_stats_colonial-1970.html. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (2006): *Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850 to 2000*. 1 Feb. 2006. Source: <https://www.census.gov/library/working-papers/2006/demo/POP-twps0081.html>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.

- U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (2023a): *2023 National Population Projections Tables: Main Series, Projections of population size: Table 1: Projected Population and Components of Change*. Source: <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/popproj/tables/2023/2023-summary-tables/np2023-t1.xlsx>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (2023b): *2023 National Population Projections Tables: High Immigration Scenario: Table 1: Projected Population and Components of Change*. Source: <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2023/demo/popproj/2023-alternative-summary-tables.html>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- U.S. COMMISSION ON IMMIGRATION REFORM (1997): *Becoming an American: Immigration and Immigrant Policy*. Source: <https://www.hsdl.org/c/view?docid=437705>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (2019): *Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2015–January 2018*. Jan. 2019. Source: https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/Pop_Estimate/UnauthImmigrant/unauthorized_immigrant_population_estimates_2015_-_2018.pdf. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (2022): *2022 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*. Source: https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/2023_0818_plcy_yearbook_immigration_statistics_fy2022.pdf. Accessed on 20 March 2024.
- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (2024): *Nationwide Encounters*. Source: <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/nationwide-encounters>. Accessed on 20. March 2024.
- WASHINGTON EXAMINER (2023): *The Border Report: Nearly 1.6 million ‘gotaways’ in U.S. since January 2021*. 28 Aug. 2023. Source: <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/immigration/2580643/the-border-report-nearly-1-6-million-gotaways-in-u-s-since-january-2021/>. Accessed on 20 March 2024.

