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2020 Census: Who's At Risk of Being Miscounted?

Community Indicators Consortium Presentation

Diana Elliott

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Presenter



Diana Elliott
Senior Research Associate
Urban Institute

A Fair and Accurate Census Matters



The decennial census is critical to our democracy:

- It is used to determine apportionment and the number of US Representatives allocated to each state
- Many federal funding allocations are based upon Census numbers

- If the Census counts are wrong, groups and communities could miss out on their fair share of representation and funding for the next decade

Risks to the 2020 Census

The 2020 Census faces unprecedented challenges and threats to its accuracy:

- Unstable Federal funding for the census over the past decade means important operational changes were made, but not fully tested
- A lack of thorough testing of newly introduced operations means that 2020 Census accuracy could be compromised
- Citizenship question controversy and a challenging political climate could put a chill on the participation of immigrant and Latinx people



The Goal of our Study

- Our goal was to better understand how these risks could impact the 2020 Census count
- We created realistic “risk” scenarios to present a range of miscounts for the nation, by state, and by demographic groups
- Risk scenarios are based upon the very best evidence, in most cases, produced by US Census Bureau researchers themselves

Quick overview of the risk scenarios

We assessed miscounts under three scenarios—reflecting the miscount risk as low, medium, or high.

- Low risk: If the 2020 Census performed as the 2010 performed, what would be the outcomes?
- Medium risk: If the 2020 Census operates to the expectations of the Census Bureau, what would be the outcomes?
- High risk: If the 2020 Census operates below the expectations of the Census Bureau, and discourse about immigration and the citizenship question suppress participation, what would be the outcomes?

Snapshot of the methodology

Demographic projections:

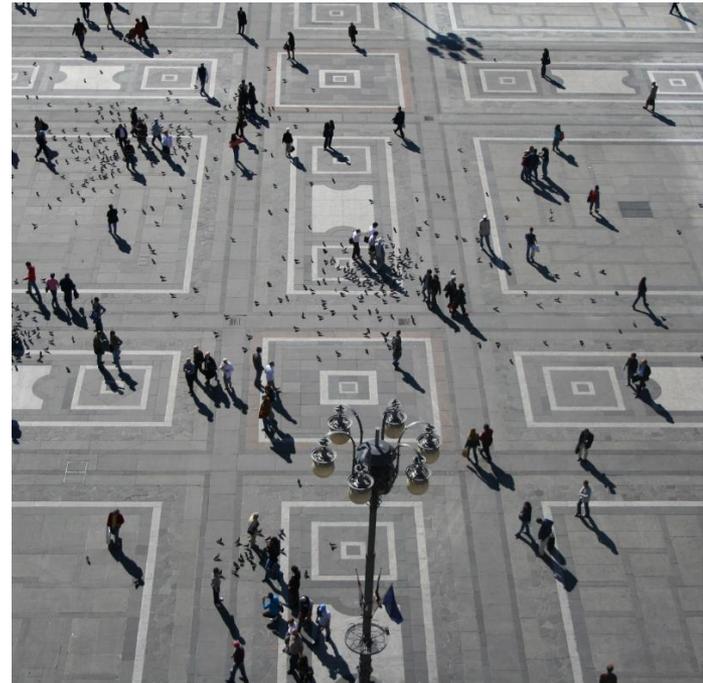
- We start with Census projections data
- We advance the population forward to April 1, 2020;
 - Realistic snapshot of nation's population on Census Day
 - Baseline for the risk scenario data

Data for risk scenarios (national, state, demographic groups):

- Low risk: Apply 2010 Census performance to 2020 projections
- Medium risk: Apply Census operational planning assumptions
- High risk: Apply lowest threshold of Census performance as well as citizenship question impact

High Level Findings

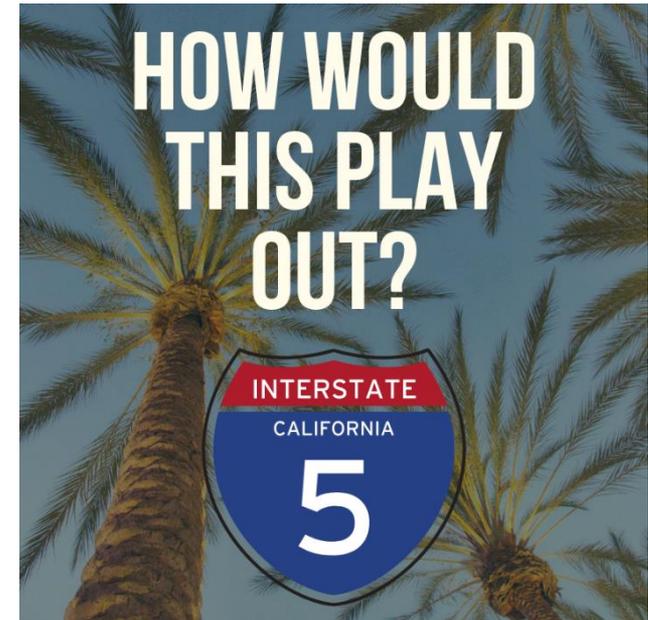
- National undercount likely under each scenario:
 - From 0.27 % (low risk) to 1.22 % (high risk);
 - Up to 4 million people could be missed entirely in the final count
- *Overall* count masks *subgroup* undercounts; e.g., for high risk scenario, undercounts are:
 - Black (3.68%);
 - Hispanic/Latinx (3.57%);
 - Children under 5 yrs. Old (6.31%)



- States at highest risk of undercounts:
 - California, Texas, New Mexico, Nevada, Georgia, New York, and Florida

Example: California

- California total population undercount:
 - ranges from 0.95% (low) to 1.98% (high)
- Some groups more affected than others
- CA high risk scenario:
 - Black people undercounted by 3.87%
 - Hispanic/Latinx-identified people undercounted by 3.65%
 - Children under age 5 could be undercounted by 7.05%
- Data like this is provided for every state plus DC (interactive)



Interactive Tool: Data at Your Hands

Let's explore the [interactive](#) and use California as our example.



Questions - Contact Me!

Diana Elliott

delliott@urban.org

@dianabelliott