Task Force on Longitudinal Data for Migration Statistics

Why longitudinal data for immigration statistics?

• To study immigration is to study change
  • Changes in residence
    • Immigration and emigration
    • Subnational migration
  • Changes in status
    • Temporary to permanent resident
    • Citizenship acquisition
• Integration and settlement are processes, not states
  • Socio-economic outcomes evolve over time
  • Impact of interventions
    • Macro-level interventions (e.g., policy changes, shifts in economy)
    • Micro-level interventions (e.g. post-secondary participation)
UNECE Task force

- Several driving factors
  - Increased use of data integration facilitates the creation of new longitudinal data sources
  - Integration and settlement are processes, not states, and outcomes can be short or long-term
  - Specific topics like circular migration and family reunification also benefit from longitudinal data
- Build on work done by past task forces
  - Socio-economic characteristics (2015)
  - Circular migration (2016)
  - Data integration (2017)

Schedule of activities

- Terms of reference for new task force on the use of longitudinal data for migration statistics approved by CES in February 2018
- Regular meetings began in Spring 2018
- Survey among participating countries and organizations in Summer 2018
  - UNECE, Eurostat, OECD
  - Austria, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Kazakhstan, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom
- Chapters drafted beginning in fall 2018 with modifications and examples added through 2019
**Task force report**

- Overview of longitudinal data sources
- Guidelines on developing longitudinal data from integrated data sources
  - Statistical design with data quality considerations
  - Source file assessment and pre-processing
  - Data integration
  - Longitudinal individual identifiers
  - Preparation of final database
  - Dissemination of results
- Disseminating regular migration statistics from longitudinal data
  - Key indicators
  - Best practices

**Types of data**

- Panel Surveys
- Single source administrative data files
- Statistical population registers
  - Belgium - Central Population Register
  - Italy - Anagrafe
  - Spain - Padrón
- Integrated administrative data
  - Canada - Longitudinal Immigration Database
  - Germany - Central Alien Register
  - Switzerland - Swiss Longitudinal Demographic Database
  - More being developed…
Key challenges raised

• Limitations of administratively collected data
  • Lack of control over measurement, periodicity, coverage
  • Need strong communication with data source providers regarding quality and limitations but also opportunities
  • Access limitations and other possible barriers

• Data integration challenges
  • Possibly compounded longitudinally; could benefit from longitudinal linkage source
  • Need to ensure consistent individual identifier longitudinally

• Challenging to disseminate
  • Need to make users aware of limitations
  • More complex to present; need to think of novel techniques to disseminate

Unique opportunities are still available

• Best practices outlined throughout report using country-based examples
  • Combining sources to improve coverage
  • Identifying duplicates before integration stage
  • Assigning anonymized longitudinal individual identifiers after integration
  • Producing technical report / user guide with exhaustive details on data quality

• Indicators provided even when data have measurement, coverage or periodicity limitations
Key indicators

- Migration patterns
  - Length of stay
  - Post-migration internal movements (e.g. moving from one region to another within the host country)
  - Circular migration
  - Transitions through immigration (different pathways; time before transition)
  - Acquisition of host country citizenship

- Socio-economic outcomes
  - Labour market (First entry, occupational and employment income mobility)
  - Language acquisition and usage
  - Health outcomes

- Family migration
Measuring income trends…

Median total income of principal applicants who were economic immigrants admitted in 2006, by years since admission

Conclusions and next steps

• Longitudinal data for migration statistics poses many challenges but presents new opportunities to better understand migration, integration and settlement
  • Important to understand limitations and address them where possible
  • Consider how best to achieve the statistical objectives
  • Technical report identifies key challenges but also best practices

• Draft technical report finalized by November 2019
• To be circulated among CES countries in the coming months