The Measurement of Labor Migration to the United States

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UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics
26 October, 2018, Geneva, Switzerland

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Outline

- Introduction
- International Guidelines
- U.S. data sources on labor migration
- Results
- Observations on other ILO populations of interest
- Future work
- Conclusions
Introduction

- Labor migration remains a prime driver of international migration to the United States
- Census Bureau wants to improve measurement of international migration sub-components
  - Previous research examined measurement of refugees and international students.
- ILO Working Group developed guidelines to measure labor migration statistics
- Apply U.S. data to ILO guidelines to test feasibility of stock and flow measurement
International Guidelines

- 19th ILCS (2013) – develop international framework for improving labor migration statistics
  - International migrant worker: international migrants in labor force or in potential labor force or engaged in any form of work
    - **Stock**: total numbers of international migrant workers present in country at a given point in time.
    - **Flow of “For-Work” international migrants**: Annual number entering country to undertake or seek work, and whose intention to work was documented/declared at time of entry
      - Legal reason vs. “stated” reason
U.S. Data on International Labor Migration

- American Community Survey (ACS)
- Current Population Survey (CPS)
- Administrative data from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
  - Visas issued
  - Border entries
  - Legal Permanent Residents, etc.
American Community Survey (ACS)

- Major source of international migration data
- Annual survey conducted monthly since 2005
- Large sample size allows for studying small levels of geography
  - 3.5 million households surveyed per year
  - 1-year (national) and 5-year files (subnational) to produce estimates
- Relevant questions: country of birth, U.S. citizenship status, year of entry, country of residence one year ago, detailed labor force and occupation and job activity.
- Complete resident population
  - Uses the concept of “current residence,” meaning everyone who is in the housing unit on the day of interview who is living or staying there for more than two months is included.
**Person 1 (continued)**

29. **LAST WEEK, did this person work for pay at a job (or business)?**
   - Yes → **SKIP** to question 30
   - No → **SKIP** to question 35

   **b. LAST WEEK, did this person do ANY work for pay, even for as little as one hour?**
   - Yes → **SKIP** to question 35

30. **At what location did this person work LAST WEEK?**
   - If this person worked at more than one location, print where he or she worked most last week.
   - **a. Address (Number and street name)**
   - If the exact address is not known, give a description of the location such as the building name or the nearest street or intersection.
   - **b. Name of city, town, or post office**

31. **Is the work location inside the limits of that city or town?**
   - Yes
   - No, outside the city/town limits

32. **How many people, including this person, usually rode to work in the car, truck, or van LAST WEEK?**
   - **Person(s)**

33. **What time did this person usually leave home to go to work LAST WEEK?**
   - **Hour**
   - **Minute**
   - **a.m.**
   - **p.m.**

34. **How many minutes did it usually take this person to get from home to work LAST WEEK?**
   - **Minutes**

35. **LAST WEEK, was this person on layoff from a job?**
   - Yes → **SKIP** to question 35c
   - No

   **b. LAST WEEK, was this person TEMPORARILY absent from a job or business?**
   - Yes, on vacation, temporary illness, maternity leave, other family/personal reasons, bad weather, etc. → **SKIP** to question 39
   - No → **SKIP** to question 36

   **c. Has this person been informed that he or she will be recalled to work within the next 6 months OR been given a date to return to work?**
   - Yes → **SKIP** to question 37
   - No

36. **During the LAST 4 WEEKS, has this person been ACTIVELY looking for work?**
   - Yes
   - No → **SKIP** to question 38

37. **LAST WEEK, could this person have started a job if offered one, or returned to work if recalled?**
   - Yes, could have gone to work
   - No, because of own temporary illness
   - No, because of all other reasons (in school, etc.)

38. **When did this person last work, even for a few days?**
   - Within the past 12 months
   - 1 to 5 years ago → **SKIP** to question 47
   - Over 5 years ago or never worked → **SKIP** to question 47

39. **a. During the PAST 12 MONTHS (52 weeks), did this person work 50 or more weeks? Count paid time off as work.**
   - Yes → **SKIP** to question 40
   - No

   **b. How many weeks DID this person work, even for a few hours, including paid vacation, paid sick leave, and military service?**
   - 50 to 52 weeks
   - 48 to 49 weeks
   - 40 to 47 weeks
   - 27 to 39 weeks
   - 14 to 26 weeks
   - 13 weeks or less

40. **During the PAST 12 MONTHS, in the WEEKS WORKED, how many hours did this person usually work each WEEK?**
   - Usual hours worked each WEEK
Current Population Survey (CPS)

- Primary data source for U.S. labor force statistics
- Began in 1940’s so allows for historical time series analyses
- Sample size of about 60,000 households provides national estimates
- Contains detailed labor force and migration-related items
  - March supplement (ASEC) contains ACS foreign-born items plus parental place of birth & reason for moving.
- Civilian non-institutional population
  - Uses the concept of “usual residence,” meaning it interviews everyone staying at the housing unit at the time of the interview who considers the housing unit as their usual residence or who has no usual residence elsewhere.
CPS “Main Reason for Moving” question

What was [your/name’s] main reason for moving to this house (apartment)?

▪ 1 change in marital status
▪ 2 to establish own household
▪ 3 other family reason (specify)
▪ 4 new job or job transfer
▪ 5 to look for work or lost job
▪ 6 to be closer to work/easier commute
▪ 7 retired
▪ 8 other job-related reason (specify)
▪ 9 wanted to own home, not rent
▪ 10 wanted new or better house/apartment
▪ 11 wanted better neighborhood/less crime
▪ 12 wanted cheaper housing
▪ 13 foreclosure/eviction
▪ 14 other housing reason (specify)
▪ 15 to attend or leave college
▪ 16 change of climate
▪ 17 health reasons
▪ 18 natural disaster (hurricane, tornado, etc.)
▪ 19 other reason (specify)
Administrative Sources

- Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS)
  - Visas, work permits issued, border crossing statistics, adjustment of status, etc.
  - Administrative actions not migration events
  - Admissions vs individuals vs total number of moves
    - Admissions (published): # of entries by all visa holders over fiscal year
    - Individualized data eliminates multiple moves by individuals over the year, but still includes people issued visas in prior years
    - New visas issued during year more comparable to concept of flow
      - Ideally, individualized entries of new entrants during the year
**Work-Related Visa Types (duration of at least one year)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporary workers in specialty occupations (H1B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chile and Singapore Free Trade Agreement aliens (H1B1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered nurses participating in the Nursing Relief for Disadvantaged Areas (H1C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers with extraordinary ability or achievement (O1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers accompanying and assisting in performance of O1 workers (O2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationally recognized athletes or entertainers (P1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists or entertainers in reciprocal exchange programs (P2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists or entertainers in culturally unique programs (P3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers in international cultural exchange programs (Q1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers in religious occupations (R1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) professional workers (TN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intracompany transferees (L1)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparing Administrative and Survey-based Data

▪ Flows vs Stocks
  ▪ Published administrative data for flows only

▪ Time period of measurement
  ▪ Fiscal year vs calendar year

▪ Non-individualized nature of the data
  ▪ Administrative measures events not individual movement

▪ Timing of the migration event
  ▪ Border control at time of event, while surveys collect retrospective information (measurement lags actual event)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migrant category of interest to ILO</th>
<th>CPS Stock</th>
<th>Flow&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>ACS Stock</th>
<th>Flow&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>DHS Stock</th>
<th>Flow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total foreign born</td>
<td>26,741,000</td>
<td>227,000</td>
<td>27,632,000</td>
<td>552,000 (379,000)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margin of Error (90% CI)</td>
<td>447,169</td>
<td>66,522</td>
<td>92,630</td>
<td>14,628&lt;sup&gt;8&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalized migrant</td>
<td>12,476,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>13,501,000</td>
<td>42,000 (24,000)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margin of Error (90% CI)</td>
<td>288,928</td>
<td>5,154</td>
<td>60,232</td>
<td>3,504&lt;sup&gt;8&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-citizen migrant</td>
<td>14,265,000</td>
<td>221,000</td>
<td>14,131,000</td>
<td>510,000 (355,000)</td>
<td>2,301,500&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;/608,284&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>340,059&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margin of Error (90% CI)</td>
<td>377,100</td>
<td>66,364</td>
<td>89,677</td>
<td>14,200&lt;sup&gt;9&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return-migrant</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee, asylum seeker</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>54,218&lt;sup&gt;7&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undocumented</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Short-term&quot; migrant</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>218,995&lt;sup&gt;8&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border workers and similar</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

1- CPS labor flows based on residence one-year ago outside the US, and main reason for move work-related
2- ACS labor flows based on residence one-year ago outside the US, and currently in labor force
3- ACS total immigration flow times % of CPS flow moving for work-related reasons (.2548)
4- Number of admissions during fiscal year of people possessing work-related visas (of one-year or longer)
5- Number of individuals with work-related visas (of one-year or longer) entering the US during the fiscal year
6- Number of new work-related visas issued during fiscal year
7- Sum of refugee arrivals and individuals granted asylum, excluding children, as an upper-bound estimate of labor force members
8- Number of H2A and H2B visas issued during year (visas of less than one year duration).
9- Margin of error for ACS currently in labor force only (see note 2).
Figure 1. Stock of International Labor Migrants: 2010-2016
Figure 2. Non-Citizen Labor-Related Migration Flows: 2010-2016
Results

- 2016 ACS and CPS estimates of the stock of labor migrants are quite similar/consistent over time (27-28 million)
- Flows estimates (six different variations) vary widely (226,000 to 2.3 million)
- “Derived” ACS and number of new visas issued are most compatible flow figures (340-380,000)
- Not able to produce estimates for many of ILO’s populations of interest
Other ILO Populations of Interest

- Return migrant—only information from “residence one-year ago.” No migration history questions on CPS or ACS.
  - Administrative data: e.g. Tax return data (IRS)
    - If residence abroad one year and in the U.S. following year. Link IRS to SSA data to get “country of birth.”
- Refugee/asylum seeker
  - Refugees eligible to apply for Social Security Numbers when resettled to the United States
  - Census Bureau does not produce separate estimates. Presumed to be included in ACS and CPS
    - Refugee resettlement and asylum application numbers available from State Department and Department of Justice.
  - Current research
Other ILO Populations of Interest, cont.

- Undocumented migrants
  - Census Bureau does not produce separate estimates. Presumed to be included in ACS and CPS
  - OIS responsible for estimates of undocumented population
- "Short-term" migrant
  - Census data sources do not distinguish by duration of stay (actual or intended), thus dependent on if included in survey population
  - H2A and H2B are visas issued for less than 12 months. Stay can be for less than three months
    - Eligible for extension, so not know how long in US
- Frontier workers and similar
  - Not international migrants
  - No information available. Does border control measure these populations?
Future Work

- Modeling international migration estimates by combining different data sources
  - Bayesian hierarchical models
    - Demographic account (immigration subcomponent) cross-classified by characteristics
    - Time series estimates to produce better “fit”
    - CPS reason for move (ID labor migration), ACS for immigration flow estimates: separate modeling technique to estimate number of labor migrants
  - Alternative data sources
    - SSA and tax return data information on the stock of legal foreign-born workers and new entries into the system (somewhat equivalent to a “flow”)

Conclusions/Limitations

▪ How many migrant workers.....it depends....
▪ How to get comparable flow numbers?
  ▪ Stock information relatively stable, but very different flow numbers based on how operationalize or data used
▪ Limited amount of information collected on surveys
  ▪ Good information on sector and occupation and employment status, but lack data on remittances, migrant worker rights, etc.
  ▪ Lack of comparable “change of usual residence” criterion
  ▪ Surveys collect “year of entry,” not date of entry
Conclusions, cont.

- Limitations of published administrative data
  - Published numbers are not measuring migration events, but administrative transactions
  - Need to link administrative records across databases to look at individual outcomes over time
- Preferred method for measuring flows
  - Difficult to operationalize at international level
  - Legal entry status or self-identified?
    - Harmonize stock and flow definitions (use same criteria: currently engaged in labor force)?
      - Make it easier to collect comparable information?
      - More policy relevant?
Contact Information

Thank you!

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