International Migration Statistics: concepts, definitions and sources

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An **immigrant** of a country:
- entering the country by crossing the border
- not a usual resident of the country when entering
- staying or intending to stay in the country for at least one year.

An **emigrant** of a country:
- leaving the country by crossing the border
- being a usual resident of the country
- staying or intend to stay in another country or abroad for at least one year.
Identifying immigrants at the border

Have you been in the country before?
- Yes
- No

How long were you away from the country?
- 3 months
- 1.5 years
- NO

How long do you intend to stay in the country?
- 3 months
- 12 months
- NO

How long do you intend to stay in the country?
- NO
- YES

3 months

NO

12 months

YES
Who is an international migrant?

Mr. Phan Chinda
- Born in Cambodia, age 27
- Came to Thailand for the first time to work, on 29 January 2016

Mr. Phan Chinda
- Born in Cambodia, age 27
- Came to Thailand for the first time to work on 7 October 2016
Ms. Maria Teresa
- Lived in the Philippines, Filipino citizen
- Went to USA in July 2012
- Came back to live in the Philippines since December 2015
Who is an international migrant?

Ms. Sallymata

- Lived in Lao, DPR
- Arrived at Suvarnabhumi airport on 1 March 2015, filling out an embarkation form with the following information:
  - Visa to work for 5 months
- Filed an extension of stay on 1 August 2015 for another 10 months
Identifying migrants for what?

Population estimates & projections

Population in 2015

+ births in 2015

- deaths in 2015

+ net immigrants in 2015

= Population in 2016
Identifying migrants for what?

How many foreigners are coming to the country each year?
- From which country? Age? Education level?
- They are coming for what reason(s)? (Study? Work?)
- Is the labour market ready for the immigrants?

How many citizens are emigrating each year?

How many emigrated citizens are moving back to the country each year? (Diaspora)
### Key inflows and outflows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inflows of</th>
<th>Usual residence of the country concerned</th>
<th>Citizenship status when crossing border</th>
<th>Categorization of flows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-residents</td>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td><strong>Immigrating citizens (Group A)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreigners</td>
<td><strong>Immigrating foreigners (Group B)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>Residents returning from visits abroad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreigners</td>
<td>Residents returning from visits abroad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outflows of</td>
<td>Non-residents</td>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>Visitors departing after short-stay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreigners</td>
<td>Visitors departing after short-stay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td><strong>Emigrating citizens (Group C)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreigners</td>
<td>Emigrating foreigners (Group D)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Population stocks related to international migration

Stock of foreign-born
Stock of foreigners
Stock of returned migrants (citizens)
Stock of “second-generation immigrants”
Stock of emigrants
Major sources of international migration statistics

Main data sources:
- Population and housing censuses
- Household surveys
- Administrative sources
  - Registers: population register; register of foreigners
  - Issuance of residence permits; work permit

Other data sources
- Border cards
- Border surveys
“The total process of collecting, compiling, evaluating, analysing and publishing or otherwise disseminating demographic, economic and social data pertaining, at a specified time, to all persons in a country or in a well-delimited part of the country.”

A major source of international migration statistics
Advantages:
- Universal → capturing the small proportion of migrants
- Only a small # of questions → more comparable data across countries
- Large number of Social-economic characteristics → characterising migrants (compared to adm sources)
- Small areas estimates

Limitations:
- Infrequent
- Not into causes/consequences
- Unreliable data on emigration (entire house migrated; rely on proxy respondent)
Household sample surveys

- Specialised survey on international migration
- Integrating migration questions in a multi-purpose survey (LFS, DHS, living standard measurement survey etc)
Advantages:

- Wealth of information, causes and consequences (e.g., employment conditions of labour migrants)
- Able to add more questions to identify migrant groups that are of interest/flexible

Limitations:

- Sample size!
- Expensive (specialised survey)
Registers (population register, register of foreigners, register of asylum seekers)
  • Register/deregister rules might not be strictly followed

Issuance of residence permits/work permits

Register at consulates abroad
Counting of people or records?

Coverage issue – rules for registration/de-registration not strictly followed

Set up for administrative rather than statistical purposes; legal provision for data exchange

But all information is valuable – piece information together
Other data sources

- **Border collection (arriving/departure cards)**
  - Purpose/duration important
  - Processing records require a lot of work

- **Border surveys**
  - Sampling among passengers arriving/departing at different location and time
  - Asking questions to find “migrants” (duration, residence, purpose)
  - Interviewers following a passenger and asking questions
  - Apply to Island countries (UK, for example)
  - Very expensive
Integrating multiple sources

Harmonisation of concepts and definitions!!!
Your recent Amazon purchases, Tweet score and location history makes you 23.5% welcome here.
The use of mobile phone data for tourism statistics

Source: Mobile Telephones and Mobile Positioning data as source for statistics: Estonian Experiences, Ahas et. Al. (2011)
A few points about country experience/challenges

- Almost all collecting basic information on international migration through population censuses (e.g., country of birth, citizenship and Emigration!)
- Specialised migration surveys are being carried out
- Migration module is incorporated in many national multi-purpose surveys
- Administrative procedure is in place in almost all countries
A few points about country experiences/challenges (2)

Challenges:

- Linkage between collection of information and statistics is missing
- Many publish the volume of arrivals/departures, not directly relevant for international migration
- Census/survey data: not a priority for compilation, takes a long time before data are made available; or data on migration are not analysed
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Census years</th>
<th>Information asked on census</th>
<th>Availability of stock data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Country of birth</td>
<td>Country of citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>No census in 2010 round</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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Source: United Nations Statistics Division