Challenges in Migration Data Dissemination and Communication

The Experience of Switzerland

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Outline of Presentation

• Principles and Guidelines for Data Dissemination
• Dissemination of Official Migration Statistics in Switzerland: Two Major Players
• Release Calendar for Migration Data Outputs
• Lessons Learned / Conclusions
Principles and Guidelines for Data Dissemination (1)

- relevance
- quality (comprehensive and accurate statistics)
- objectivity, integrity, confidentiality
- periodicity, timeliness
- accessibility
Principles and Guidelines for Data Dissemination (2)

Types of data dissemination / channels for distribution

- standard tabulations, databases
- special tabulations on request
- microdata
- documentation and metadata
- visualization (graphs, charts, maps etc.)
- electronic media, paper format
Principles and Guidelines for Data Dissemination (3)

User groups, information needs, communication strategies

• conceptual reference: user segments <-> information needs
• user groups: policy-makers / general public (non specialist audience) / researchers / non-users who are potential users
• targeted dissemination and communication strategies
• pre-announced release calendar
• information needs will change over time
The Swiss Framework for Migration Statistics

Two government agencies that disseminate official migration data at national level:

1. FSO (Federal Statistical Office)
2. SEM (State Secretariat for Migration)

-> different objectives with respect to data dissemination
FSO Migration Data (1)

Part of population statistics -> in the context of the annual demographic balance

Data sources: administrative registers (at federal and municipal level)

Internationally recommended concepts and definitions: permanent resident population (usual residence, 12-month duration rule)

Long-term migrant stock, long-term immigration and emigration (disaggregated by sex, age, citizenship, marital status)
FSO Migration Data (2)

Migrant population stock (three classifications):

• by citizenship status
• by nativity status (country of birth)
• by migratory status

based on

• permanent resident population
• register and survey data
Migrant Population Stock According to 3 Classifications, 2017

- **Non-national population**: 25.1%
- **Foreign-born population**: 29.7%
- **Population with a migration background*: 37.2%

*Including persons with Swiss nationality who have a migration background*.

Number of persons:
- 0
- 500,000
- 1,000,000
- 1,500,000
- 2,000,000
- 2,500,000
- 3,000,000

Number of persons in percent:
- 0
- 5
- 10
- 15
- 20
- 25
- 30
- 35
- 40

Source: FSO/STATPOP, SLFS

* 15 years and older
FSO Migration Data (3)

Other data sources:

- Structural Survey
- Labor Force Survey
- various data sources for socio-economic conditions of the migrant population
FSO Migration Data (4)

Other statistical outputs, e.g.:

- economically active migrant population (LFS data)
- labor force immigration and emigration (as part of LMA statistics)
- foreign students with foreign school education
- indicators of immigrant integration

-> data based on different population concepts
SEM Migration Data

Two federal laws governing entry and residence of non-nationals:

• Foreign Nationals and Integration Act -> Foreign Population Statistics

• Asylum Act -> Asylum Statistics

Data source:

• Central Migration Information System ( = federal register of foreigners)
## FSO and SEM Migration Data (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSI – Federal Statistical Office (FSO)</th>
<th>Immigration authority – State Secretariat for Migration (SEM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>statistical code of practice, adherence to statistical concepts and definitions of international migration (e.g. place of residence, time criterion)</td>
<td>statistics as by-product of administrative actions (immigration control and related processes), adherence to national laws on immigration and asylum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data production:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Data production:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject to detailed verification processes (quality and process checks) - compliant with Code of Practice for Official Statistics</td>
<td>subject to less stringent verification processes -&gt; produced for operational management purposes (“management information system”)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### FSO and SEM Migration Data (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSI – Federal Statistical Office (FSO)</th>
<th>Immigration authority – State Secretariat for Migration (SEM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data reflect demographic aspects of migration: socio-demographic characteristics of migrants (gender, age, citizenship, place of birth, place of previous/next residence, duration of stay etc.)</td>
<td>Data reflect administrative procedures involved in obtaining permission to reside in the country: admissions, visas, permits (issuance, renewal, cancellation), citizenship, purpose of stay, asylum etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics cover all non-nationals</td>
<td>Statistics cover specific groups of non-nationals (subject to Foreign Nationals and Asylum Acts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissemination of consistent, harmonized data from different administrative register</td>
<td>Dissemination of “raw” results drawn from one register</td>
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</table>
## Release Calendar: FSO and SEM Migration Data Outputs (1)

**Periodicity: annual (reference period: previous calendar year)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Release Date</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Data Coverage + Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>SEM</td>
<td>Foreign Population Statistics (final figures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>SEM</td>
<td>Asylum Statistics (final figures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>FSO</td>
<td>«Demographic» Migrant Stock and Migration Flow Data (preliminary figures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>FSO</td>
<td>LFS Migration Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>FSO</td>
<td>«Demographic» Migrant Stock and Migration Flow Data (final figures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>FSO</td>
<td>Migrant Stock Data: Migratory Status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Release Calendar: FSO and SEM Migration Data Outputs (2)

**Periodicity: monthly/quarterly (reference period: current calendar year)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periodicity</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Data Coverage</th>
<th>Timeliness</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>SEM</td>
<td>Foreign Population Statistics</td>
<td>1 month after end of month</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Asylum Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>SEM</td>
<td>Foreign Population Statistics</td>
<td>2 months after end of quarter</td>
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<td>Asylum Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>FSO</td>
<td>Migrant Stock Data (citizenship) – no flow data</td>
<td>3 months after end of quarter</td>
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Lessons Learned (1)

• Communicating and reporting conflicting data: different figures from individual sources - even if not contradictory - pose some risks and challenges for data dissemination and interpretation

Within FSO:

• Focus on demographic aspects of migration. Reliance on international recommendations about change of usual residence and duration of stay -> still adequate/sufficient?

• Timeliness and periodicity of disseminating migration data
Lessons Learned (2)

- There is not necessarily a single, easily identifiable reason why migration figures differ across sources. Instead, there are a surplus of factors that each contribute to observed differences.

- Use (integrate?) data from multiple official sources: consider all available data sources to make the best assessment of the overall patterns in international migration

- Migration is a cross-cutting topic -> sectoral vs. holistic approach
Lessons Learned (3)

Objectives of different players: a common goal? or divergent needs?

• How to reconcile the different needs of a statistical office and administrative authorities in data dissemination?

• Inter-agency cooperation and coordination
Lessons Learned (4)

• International recommendations (concepts, definitions) vs. national information needs

• Use different terminology for different concepts/definitions

• Coordinate release schedules and main messages among all players involved in migration data dissemination
Some Final Conclusions (1)

• Which are the ‘correct’ data? Should there be only one reference source for dissemination purposes? Or should divergent data be made available to users of official statistics?

• While the designation of a specific data source as the base of reference for a certain kind of information can avoid confusion among users, it may also be argued that different data sources serve different purposes.
Some Final Conclusions (2)

• If divergent data from different sources, how can the reasons of such differences be explained in a transparent and comprehensible way? -> provide metadata

• Guidance to users: “Which data (source) should I use?” The answer is often context specific, meaning it depends on the ultimate objective of the data user/analyst.
Thank you for your attention

Additional information:

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