Measuring international migration from population censuses: Global perspectives

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Overview of international recommendations for population censuses

Measuring STOCKS

➢ Foreign-born population (Core)
➢ Foreign-citizen population (Core)

Measuring FLOWS (estimation of recent immigrants)

➢ Place of usual residence at a specified time in the past
  - one year prior to the census (or five years) (Core)
➢ Year or period of arrival (Core)

Additional topics recommended by the UN

➢ Acquisition of citizenship
➢ Ever-resided abroad
➢ Country of birth of parents
Revision of Existing Recommendations for Statistics on International Migration

The Expert Group on Migration Statistics established by UN Statistical Commission in 2018

The revised conceptual framework and accompanying definitions were discussed and endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission at its 52nd session in 2021


Technical reports - ongoing
a. Indicators for international migration and temporary mobility
b. Data integration methods (macro and microdata)
c. Operationalization of the revised conceptual framework and data sources
I. Clear distinction between international migration and temporary mobility
   - **International migration** results in a change in the country of residence
   - **International temporary mobility** are movements that do not result in a change in the country of residence

II. Alignment of migration flows with resident population change
   Definition of resident population based on minimum duration of stay-the P&R on censuses rev 3 suggests two options:
   - 6 months +1 day or 12 months
   - Same criteria for defining resident population and flows

III. Coherence between flows and stocks- important for updating the stock of international migration
Adoption of the revised conceptual framework through population census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resident population - STOCKS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CITIZENS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign-born</td>
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<td>FOREIGN</td>
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<td>Foreign-born</td>
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Immigration - FLOWS?

Traditional census should collect data on previous country of residence and year/month of arrival

- Detailed information for the STOCKS
  - Foreign-born population
  - Foreign-citizen population
  - Foreign-born foreign-citizen population
  - Return migrants
  - Second generation migrants

Emigration – FLOWS?

Traditional censuses do not produce reliable data
Country practices in 2010 round of censuses

Population groups having high risk of under-coverage

- Undocumented migrants
- Stateless
- Refugees and displaced people
Linking population census and housing censuses provides a wide range of data for international migrants:

- Stocks of migrants
- Characteristics of migrant population
  - age, sex, marital status
  - fertility, mortality
  - Internal migration
  - disability
  - education
  - employment/unemployment
  - occupation (ISCO) /Industry (ISIC)
- Types of housing units in which migrants live
- Characteristics of those housing units
  - construction year and materials, farm building, availability of elevator, etc.
  - availability of electricity, kitchen, toilet, water supply system, fuel used for cooking, sewage system, number of rooms, etc.
  - ICT and availability of washing machine, refrigerator, etc.

Depending on national circumstances

Detailed analysis of differences in international migrants and non-migrant population
Opportunities/challenges

- **Traditional census** — whereby every household/institutional places in the country is approached with a request for information

- **Combined or register-based censuses** — combination of field-based data collection and administrative data sources or fully registers

- **Flexibility in covering all relevant population groups and information about international migrants**
  - Not relevant for emigration
  - Not possible to produce timely information - conducted every ten-year

- **Annual information for stocks and flows**
  - Under-coverage of immigrants –excluding undocumented migrants
  - Over-coverage of citizens living abroad
Few remarks...

- Lack of use of census data - limited dissemination and analysis of international migration data
  - Dissemination of international migration data from population and housing censuses should be carefully planned by all countries
    - to better inform evidence-based policies
    - to enhance the exchange of statistical information between countries

- UN Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses will be revised for 2030 round of censuses
  - in line with upcoming revisions of UN recommendations on Statistics for International Migration
✓ UNSD methodological framework on population and housing censuses


✓ UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/sconcerns/migration/