

A Modern Conceptual Framework for Statistics on International Migration and Mobility: Discussion and Application to the United States

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Aims of the new guidelines

- Build stronger links between data and policymaking;
- Revisit the concepts and definitions of international migration;
- Include new migration patterns and new data sources;
- Incorporate relevant internationally agreed upon frameworks;
- Provide guidance on data collection and analyses;
- Find a balance between relevance to national policymaking and the promotion of international comparability across countries;
- Harmonization across different international statistical frameworks;
- Help in the production of population estimates and projections.

New Definitions

- International mobility includes all movements that cross international borders within a given year
 - International migration is as a change in country of residence (resident population)
 - Resident population consists of individuals who have lived in the country of measurement for either (a) most of the preceding 12 months (or intend to, or have permission to live in that country for at least six months and one day) or (b) at least the preceding 12 months (or intend to, or have been permission to live in that country for at least 12 months
 - Implies a duration of either 6 months or 12 months so that flows of migration coincide with changes in the resident population during a given year
 - International temporary mobility includes all international border crossing events, except those related to changes in the resident population
 - “Temporary population”: all persons present in the country at a specific point in time who are not residents

Conceptual Framework Definitions

- Like the new conceptual framework (in theory)
- Simplicity is beneficial compared to complication of the 1998 recommendations
- Gets rid of distinction between short-term (3-month)/long-term (12-month) migrants and change in country of “usual” residence
- Emphasizes consistency between stocks and flows in national accounting
- Provides flexibility (6- or 12-months) for defining international migration
 - At cost of international comparability

Data Requirements (in practice)

- Encompasses more than previous recommendations by including ALL forms of “international mobility”
- Producing comparable statistics on both international migration and temporary movements requires access to individual data on all border crossings
 - Administrative data (visas, border crossings)
 - Detailed migration histories (e.g. surveys)
- Duration of stay (actual and intended)
- Purpose of Move

International Temporary Mobility Types

- *Cross-border workers* refers to all persons who are not residents of the country of measurement but have been engaged in economic activities in that country repeatedly, provided that they depart from the country at regular and short intervals (daily or weekly)
- *Seasonal workers* refers to all persons who are not residents of the country of their employment, whose work, by its character, is dependent on seasonal conditions and is performed during part of the year (see *ibid.*).
- *Other types of temporary workers* refers to all persons who are not residents of the country of measurement but travel to that country for short periods (less than the minimum duration required to be considered residents) for work-related reasons, such as itinerant workers and project-tied workers (for detailed categories of workers included in this group, see *ibid.*).
- *Training-related mobility* refers to movements by all persons who are not residents of the country of measurement but travel to that country to attend a short-term training programme for less than the minimum duration required to be considered residents.
- *Health-related mobility* refers to movements by all persons who are not residents of the country of measurement but travel to that country to access health-care services with or without a written agreement with a health-care facility.
- *Asylum seekers in transit* refers to persons who travel to the country of measurement in transit with the intention to travel to another country to file an application for asylum.
- *Circular movement* refers to movements by persons who are not residents of the country of measurement and who travel to the same country more than once during a particular year

From June 20, 2020 EGM outcome document

- “The meeting discussed at length topics, that although relevant to international mobility of temporary population, are **out of scope** from the international recommendations for statistics on international migration and similar mobility. In this context, it was agreed that certain population subgroups, such as tourists, are going to be acknowledged vis a vis the conceptual framework, but the development of statistics on tourists is beyond the scope of work of the Expert Group.”
- Still the case?
 - Not clear from the latest document.

International Temporary Mobility

- A prominent feature of this conceptual framework
- Difficult to measure and intensive data requirements
- The majority of international temporary population mobility is not related to international migration thus not of interest (or needed) for production of international migration estimates or projections
- Lack of information on informal movement would make the recommended “visa oriented” system difficult to accurately measure the temporary population
- Many differences between various types of international mobility, which will require different measurement approaches and classifications
 - Seasonal workers vs temporary students/day laborers vs shoppers (tourists)
 - Will require further clarification of the subcomponents of this group and recommendations for operationalization

Potential Implementation in the United States

- Decentralized Federal statistical system
 - Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Homeland Security, State Department, Department of Justice, etc.
- In the United States, migration is defined based on the criteria of data sources used to measure it, which may or may not meet international standards
- No direct measures of monthly duration of stay or reason for move in Census data (some exceptions)
 - Year of entry (ACS, CPS)
 - Month of entry (SIPP)
 - Reason for move (CPS)

U.S. Census Bureau Surveys

American Community Survey (ACS)

- Implemented in 2005, estimates released annually
- Large sample allows for studying small levels of geography
- Relevant questions: country of birth, U.S. citizenship status, year of naturalization, year of entry, residence one year ago, race, ethnicity, language spoken at home

Current Population Survey (CPS)

- Primary data source for U.S. labor force statistics
- Began in 1940's so allows for time series analyses
- Contains most foreign born items in ACS plus parental place of birth & reason for moving

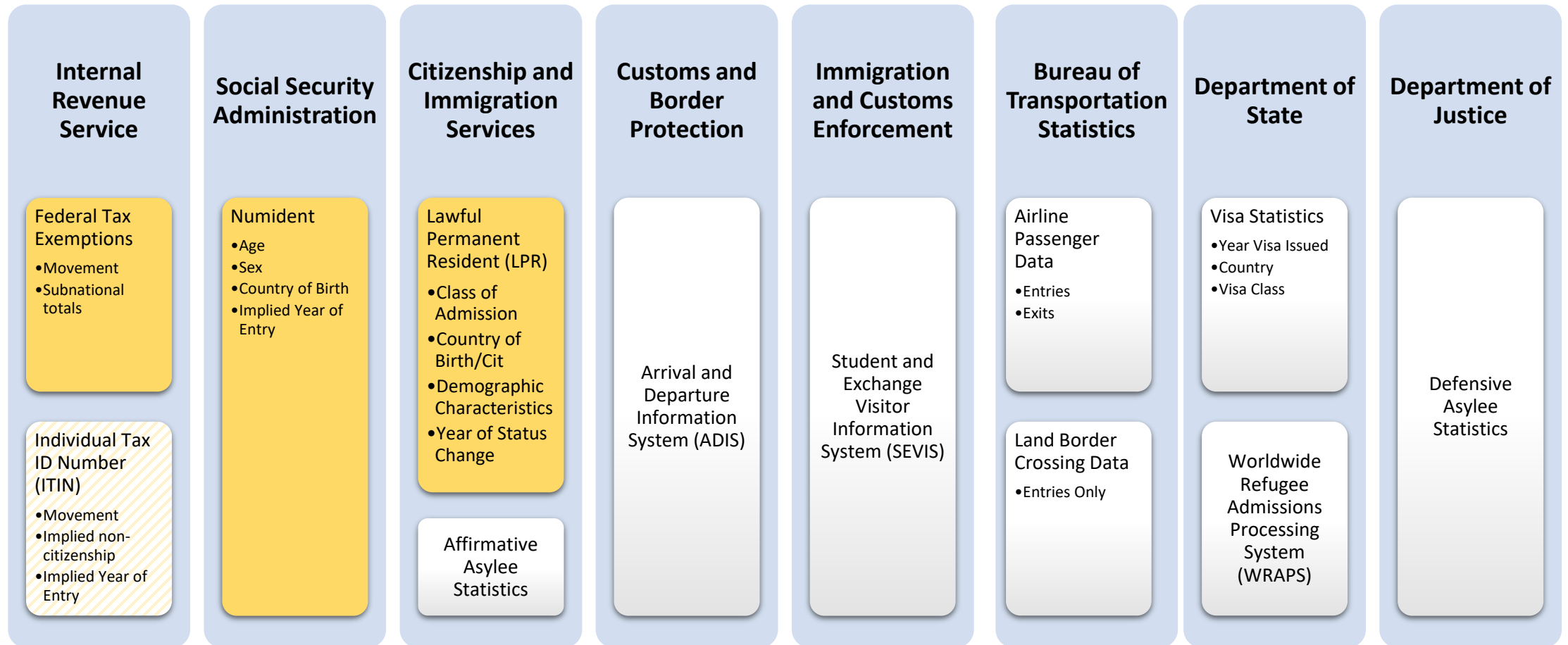
Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)

- Longitudinal survey; each panel is about four years long
- Relevant questions: whether born in U.S., citizenship status
- Topical module contains information on immigration status upon entry to the U.S., whether and when status changed to permanent resident, country of previous home

Current Census Bureau methodology uses the ACS to estimate international migration

- Includes all persons residing (actual or intended) in the United States for more than 2-months in its sample
- Can identify:
 - Native-born citizens, foreign-born citizens, and foreign-born foreign citizens (native-born foreign citizens not possible, since all U.S. born are U.S. citizens)
- Cannot identify
 - Monthly duration of stay (aside from “year of entry” question)
 - Purpose of movements

U.S. Administrative Data Sources on International Migration



In use



Needs processing

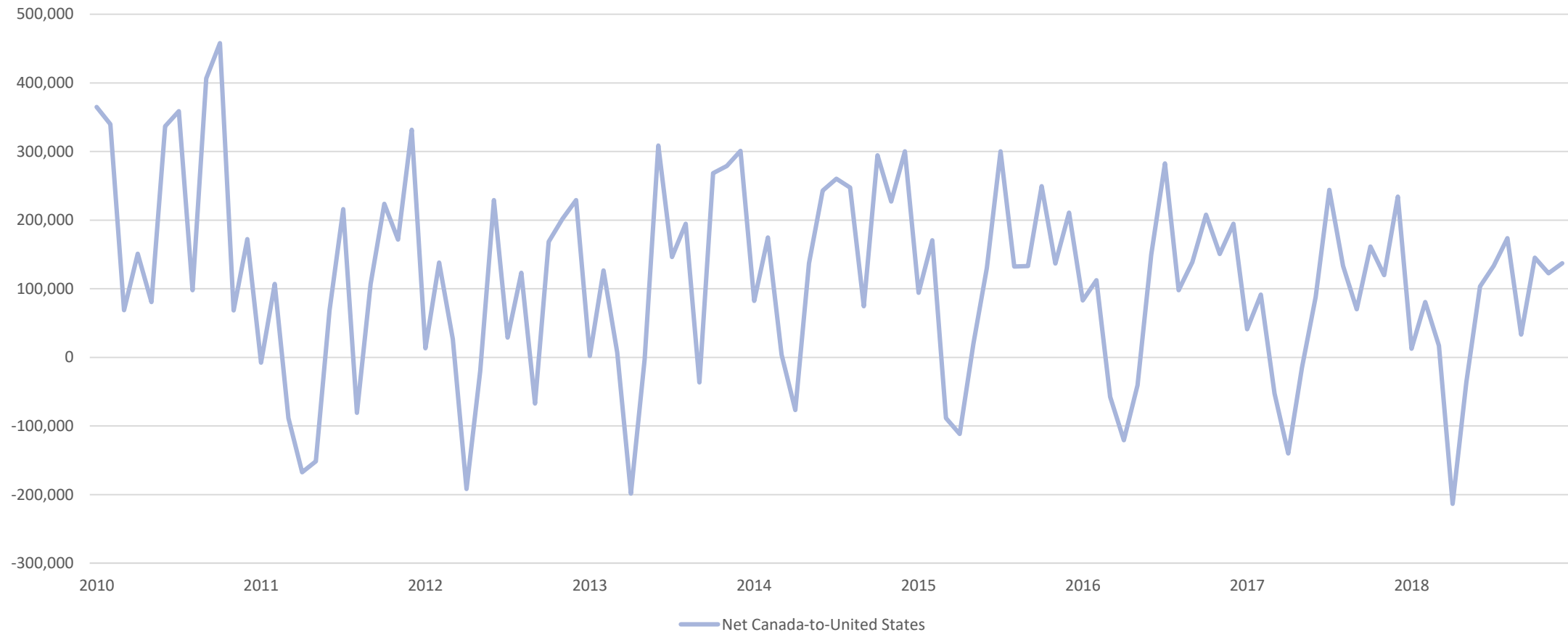


Not acquired

Alternative Measurement using Administrative Data?

- Visa types
 - Visas issued by Department of State and statistics compiled by Department of Homeland Security (Office of Immigration Statistics)
 - Visas issued for a particular duration, but can be extended
 - Certain non-immigrant visas valid up to 6 years, extendable
 - Daily travelers/border crossers (3-days)
- Border Control Information
 - Arrival and Departure Information System (ADIS) is a database managed by the US Customs and Border Control
 - Includes individual information on visas (duration), how long expected to remain in country, when borders crossed, renewals, etc.
 - Coverage limitations (some land border crossings not included, formal movement only)
 - Data quality? Monitoring of exits?
 - Data is inaccessible to the Census Bureau
 - Even DHS' Office of Immigration Statistics does not have direct access to data and must request special tabulations

Net Monthly Land Border Crossings between Canada and the United States: 2010-2018



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Transportation; Statistics Canada (Frontier Counts) 2010-2018.

U.S. Situation

- Currently no effort to collect information on international temporary mobility (and not needed for production of net international migration estimates)
- Some “non-migrants” per UN recommendations included in ACS estimates, which are based on a longer than 2-month residence criterion
- Border crossing information
 - Flight data has very complete coverage, but not the case for U.S. land and sea borders
 - Special border surveys exist, e.g. Mexico

Summary/Questions

- Theory vs Practice
- Multiple ways of defining resident population hampers international comparability
- Emphasis on measuring international temporary mobility, which is not international migration
 - Opening Pandora's Box trying to measure "international mobility"?
 - Dependence on visa data
 - No information on informal movements
- An improvement over previous recommendations in terms of complexity?
 - "The 1998 Recommendations were often seen as a theoretical framework that is difficult to operationalize"
 - "Others have found the 1998 recommendations too complex, requiring advanced administrative data systems..."
- Only applicable to advanced statistical systems, given reliance on administrative data and detailed border crossing information?
- How will alternative data sources (e.g big data) be tied into operationalizing these new definitions?
- Would require implementation of new methodologies at the US Census Bureau, and would be very difficult to produce separate estimates of international temporary mobility (and not needed for our population estimates)
 - Would require access to detailed administrative data from the Department of Homeland Security, which is not a realistic option