

WORK ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP)

A. BACKGROUND AND RECENT ACTIVITIES

As the international professional association of demographers, the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) works to advance understanding of international population trends and their determinants and consequences. In recent years, international migration flows have increased in scale and now involve many countries as senders and receivers of migrants. Most international migrants are legally admitted by receiving countries for reasons considered in the national interest —family reunification, permanent settlement, temporary work, skills and capacity, humanitarian, refuge, study and regional and international diplomacy, among others. Some migrants, however, arrive without documents or overstay their visas and countries seek guidance on how to deal with these migrants while protecting both the rights of their citizens and the migrants.

1. Immigrant integration in developed countries

The IUSSP Scientific Panel on the Integration of Migrants in collaboration with the Quebec Inter-University Centre for Social Statistics (QICSS) and the Institut national d'études démographiques (INED), with financial support from INED and the Department of Population and Migration (DPM) of the French Ministry of Social Affairs held a Seminar on Indicators of Integration in Social Statistics in Montreal, Canada, from 10 to 11 December 2007, to examine country practices toward integration.

Most scientific research on the integration of migrants makes extensive use of quantitative data, but few studies offer a critical assessment of the significance and the limitations of the indicators that are used. Unemployment rates, segregation indices, intermarriage rates, social networks, settlement patterns, linguistic maintenance or shift, discrepancies in health status, crime rates and cultural preferences are regularly used as benchmarks for assessing integration or assimilation processes. Typically countries gather data on these indicators through surveys and censuses but there is no agreement across countries in how to define and measure these concepts. Although integration statistics are vital for devising and implementing public policies, they are not as value-neutral as often portrayed. The way they are conceived and developed are frequently policy-driven. As a result, the notion of “indicators of integration” needs to be viewed from a normative perspective. Why and how far census and survey indicators are relevant for the study of integration and to which extent they can be used for policymaking were the main questions dealt with at the seminar.

Papers presented at the seminar highlighted the discrepancy between the policy perspective, which is necessarily normative, the social sciences perspective, which tends to be critical and relatively complex, and the actual statistics and indicators, which are often unsophisticated and disconnected from theoretical and conceptual frameworks used to produce them. Participants stressed several topics that need to be addressed in order to refine integration indicators, including:

- (a) Depending upon their destinations, migrants face different structural and policy conditions. Comparative cross-country studies of integration are needed that look systematically at different practices toward integration and how differential practices affect migrant outcomes;
- (b) In large countries, geographically speaking, spatial indicators of integration are needed since migrants' reception and outcomes vary depending on where they settle;

- (c) Case studies obtain heuristic data on immigrant communities that are difficult to capture with standard statistical indicators. Quantitative and qualitative data can complement each other and improve understanding;
- (d) The evaluation of integration processes in host countries requires specification of the pertinent mainstream population. Although integration is treated as a one-way process, mainstream populations also undergo change in response to immigration and globalization and studies are needed of that process as well;
- (e) The relative importance of the three main theories of integration (straight line theory, segmented assimilation theory and pluralist integration theory) may differ across countries depending on policy and structural factors;
- (f) Although census and survey statistical indicators are not typically designed for policies, carefully designed studies can produce policy relevant findings. Researchers need to keep policy concerns in mind when presenting research findings.

The IUSSP Scientific Panel on the Integration of Migrants will organize a second workshop on the Policy Use of Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators of Integration in Paris, France, from 25 to 26 May 2009. This workshop will focus on the link between theoretical and political approaches to integration in the scientific literature and public policies and the design of quantitative studies devoted to the analysis of integration of migrants. Through a comparison of the main models of integration and leading theories on the issue, the workshop will identify the conceptual shortcomings that result from the absence of a theoretical definition of integration and attempt to build a more thorough understanding of how integration is conceptualized in quantitative studies. This workshop will be jointly organized with the International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion Network of Excellence of the European Commission (IMISCOE)¹.

2. IUSSP XXVI International Population Conference, Marrakech, Morocco

At the invitation of the Moroccan Government, the XXVI IUSSP International Population Conference will be held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 27 September to 2 October 2009.² The IUSSP and the Moroccan National Organizing Committee (NOC) will invite members of the international population community to participate in this conference. The conference will include over 180 regular scientific sessions, poster sessions and training sessions, as well as plenary and debate sessions, side meetings and exhibitions. Simultaneous translation in French and English will be provided for all plenary, debate, regular and training sessions. In addition, simultaneous translation in Arabic will be available for all plenary and debate sessions and all sessions organized by the Moroccan National Organizing Committee on population issues in the Arab world. Institutions and others interested in displaying publications, products or services for the population community are invited to do so and can request an exhibit stand by 15 March 2009. The Moroccan NOC has provided space for meeting rooms to institutions working in the population field at no cost. Organizations wishing to reserve space to hold a side meeting should request space before 15 March 2009.³ The IUSSP expects 1,500 to 2,000 conference participants from over 100 countries.

International migration will receive special attention at the conference. The IUSSP International Organizing Committee has identified six international migration topics for in-depth discussion at the meetings, including: (a) migration and co-development; (b) international labour migration: trends, policies and legal issues; (c) international migration of highly-skilled workers; (d) transnational communities, social networks and international migration; (e) measuring integration: political debates, scientific and methodological issues, and (f) international migration and transnational families and

households. The IUSSP expects 12 to 14 sessions to be held on these topics with four invited experts presenting papers in each of these sessions. In addition, the IUSSP will host a debate at the conference on the pros and cons of international migration and the Moroccan National Organizing Committee is preparing several sessions on international migration to, from, and within the Arab region.

3. Migration and co-development

In 2006, the IUSSP launched a new initiative on international migration and co-development. In background proceedings for the United Nations High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and in a number of other events sponsored by international, regional and national organizations, the argument has been advanced that international migration can be mutually beneficial to both sending and receiving countries. The United Nations Secretary-General reported to the General Assembly in 2006 that “There is an emerging consensus that countries can cooperate to create triple wins, for migrants, for their countries of origin and for the societies that receive them” (United Nations, 2006, p. 5). While there is room for optimism regarding the positive impacts of international migration on sending and receiving countries, the empirical and theoretical basis for these contentions is weak.

The IUSSP has carried out work that sheds light on migration and co-development. In the 1980s, the IUSSP conducted an in-depth review of international migration in different world regions, which concluded that international migration is not a random process that stems from differentials between countries in economic development and population growth, but is closely linked to ties between countries. The IUSSP reported that distinctive international migration systems had evolved in different world regions between countries linked by historical ties, cultural affinities, transportation networks and geographic proximity and that these systems were sustained by migrant social networks and macro institutional linkages (Kritz, Lim and Zlotnik, 1992). Subsequent IUSSP work on international migration refined theoretical and empirical understanding of international migration determinants by reviewing how economic, social and political forces promote migration flows (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino and Taylor, 2005). Based on that review the IUSSP experts concluded that economically-motivated emigration is more likely to occur in countries that have already reached a certain level of development and are advancing economically, rather than in countries that are low on the development scale and experiencing economic stagnation. This pattern occurs because the development process itself is destabilizing and, over the short run, increases rather than decreases emigration pressures. Furthermore, free trade and investment flows can accelerate economic growth among trading partners, leading to alterations in relative prices, wages, incomes and job opportunities. If migration networks link groups of persons adversely affected by development changes to compatriots living in other countries, increased out-migration is likely to result (Massey and Taylor, 2004).

The IUSSP plans to contribute to future discussions on migration and co-development at its 2009 International Population Conference and at other meetings. The IUSSP is currently seeking funding for a seminar on the role that social and institutional networks play in facilitating migration and furthering transnational community exchanges. In today’s globalizing world characterized by increasing transnationalism, international population movements and multiple national identities, some experts argue that demographers need to rethink the concept of “national population membership”. One idea is to develop and collect data on different concepts of national populations that could be used for different population size estimates. Rethinking of national population membership is needed given that many countries have growing transnational communities, defined as persons born in a given country who reside on a long-term or permanent basis elsewhere but retain close links with their countries of origin. The IUSSP will explore methods for using censuses to assemble counts of populations in transnational communities from a particular emigration country. In order to carry forward this agenda, the IUSSP will draw on its earlier work

from the 1970s which recommended using “place of birth” questions and “relatives living elsewhere” in national population censuses as a means for improving data on international migrants (Zaba, 1986; Center for Migration Studies and International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, 1987). In addition, the IUSSP will explore ways to build data on how transnational community ties contribute to co-development.

B. CONCLUSION

As the international professional association of demographers, the IUSSP is well positioned to contribute to international discussions on international migration and co-development. The IUSSP has 2,100 individual members in 140 countries and works to develop scientific knowledge and data on demographic trends and their relationships to economic and social development and human welfare. The IUSSP does not have a political agenda but seeks to advance policy discussions by contributing empirical data and analyses about demographic, economic, political and social relationships and how these relationships are affected by policy measures. While many IUSSP members have served in policy-making positions in their countries of origin, when they participate in IUSSP activities they do so as professionals working to understand complex relationships. The IUSSP has a long history of working as a neutral expert body and is widely respected by development experts throughout the world.

NOTES

¹ For more information on IMISCOE, see <http://www.imiscoe.org/> (accessed 2 March 2009).

² For more detailed information on the conference, see <http://iussp2009.princeton.edu/> (accessed 24 January 2009).

³ For more information, see <http://www.iussp.org/marrakech2009/exhibit.php> (accessed 20 January 2009).

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