

The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP)

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by

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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 migrations have increased in scale and now involve all countries as senders or receivers of migrants. A growing number of countries are both senders and receivers. 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 illegally or overstay their visas and countries want guidance regarding 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'Etudes Demographiques (INED), with financial support from INED and the Department of Population and Migration (DPM) of the French Ministry of Social Affairs held a Seminar in Montreal, Canada, in 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 indexes, intermarriage rates, homogamy within social networks, 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 policy making were the main questions dealt with at the Seminar.

• *Seminar findings*

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 the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used to produce them. Participants highlighted several issues that need to be dealt with in order to refine integration indicators, including:

- Depending upon their destinations, migrants face different structural and policy conditions. Comparative country studies of integration are needed that look

systematically at cross-country differences toward integration and how differential country practices affect migrant outcomes.

- In large countries, spatial indicators of integration are needed since migrant reception and outcomes also vary depending upon where migrants settle.
- Case studies obtain heuristic data on immigrant communities that are difficult to capture with standard statistical indicators and need to be carried out in addition to quantitative and comparative studies.
- An evaluation of integration into a host country requires specification of the pertinent mainstream population. Although integration is treated as a one-way process, mainstream populations are also undergoing change in response to immigration and globalization and studies are needed of that process too.
- The relative importance of the three main theories of integration (straight line theory, segmented assimilation theory, and pluralist integration theory) may differ across country contexts depending upon policy and structural factors.
- 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.

2. IUSSP XXVI International Population Conference, Marrakech, Morocco

At the kind invitation of the Moroccan Government, the XXVI IUSSP International Population Conference will be held at the Palais des Congres in Marrakech, Morocco, 27 September to 2 October 2009. The IUSSP and the Moroccan National Organizing Committee 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 provided 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 by going to the Conference website at <http://www.iussp.org/marrakech2009>. The IUSSP expects 1,500-2,000 participants from over 100 countries to participate in the Conference.

International migration is one of seven themes that will receive attention at the Conference. The IUSSP International Organizing Committee has identified six international migration topics for in depth attention at the meetings, including: Migration and co-development; international labour migration: trends, policies and legal issues; the international migration of highly skilled workers; transnational communities, social networks and international migration; measuring integration: political debates, scientific and methodological issues; and international migration and transnational families and households. The IUSSP expects that 12-14 sessions will be held on these topics that each include four experts invited to present papers on these topics. In addition, the IUSSP plans to organize a debate 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 and in a number of other events sponsored by international, regional and national organizations, the argument have been advanced that international migration can be mutually beneficial to both sending and receiving countries. The 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 (p. 5).”² While there is room for optimism regarding the positive impacts of international migrations on sending and receiving countries, the empirical and theoretical basis for these contentions is weak.

The IUSSP has already carried out work that sheds light on migration and co-development. In the 1980s the IUSSP carried out 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 other 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.³ 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.⁴ 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 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 already link groups of persons adversely affected by development changes to compatriots living in another country, increased out-migration is likely to result.⁵

² United Nations General Assembly, International Migration and Development. Report of the Secretary-General, 18 May 2006 (A/60/871)

http://www.un.org/esa/population/hldmigration/Text/Report%20of%20the%20SG%28June%2006%29_English.pdf

³ *International Migration Systems: A Global Approach*, edited by Mary M. Kritz, Hania Zlotnik and Lin Lean Lim, IUSSP/OUP Series on International Studies in Population, Oxford University Press, 1992.

⁴ *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millenium*, edited by Douglas S. Massey, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino, and J. Edward Taylor, IUSSP/OUP Series on International Studies in Population, Oxford University Press, 1998.

⁵ *International Migration: Prospects and Policies*, edited by J. Edward Taylor and Douglas S. Massey, IUSSP/OUP Series on International Studies in Population, Oxford University Press, 2004.

The IUSSP plans to contribute to future discussions about migration and co-development at its 2009 International Population Conference, discussed above, and in other meetings that it plans to organize. For instance, the IUSSP is seeking funding for a meeting on the role that social and institutional networks play in facilitating migration and furthering Diaspora exchanges. In today's globalizing world characterized by increasing transnationalism, international population movements, and multiple national identities, some experts argue that demographers need a new conceptualization of national population membership. One idea suggested is to develop and collect data on different conceptualizations 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 Diasporas, defined as persons born in a given country who reside on a long term or permanent basis elsewhere but retain close links with their homeland. The IUSSP will explore methods for using censuses to assemble counts of Diaspora population from a particular emigration country. To carry forward that agenda, the IUSSP will draw on its earlier work carried out in 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.⁶ In addition, the IUSSP will explore ways to build data on how Diasporas ties contribute to co-development.

4. *Conclusions*

As the international professional association of demographers, the IUSSP is well positioned to contribute to international discussions on international migration and development. The IUSSP has a membership of 2,100 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 homelands, 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.

⁶ Measurement of Emigration Using Indirect Techniques - Manuel for the Collection and Analysis of Data on Residence of Relatives, Basia Zaba, Ordina Editions, 1986. (Also available in Spanish and French). Also of interest is a collection of articles edited by Hania Zlotnik, Measuring International Migration: Theory and Practice, International Migration Review, vol. 21, 1987. This collection of articles was generated by a collaboration between two IUSSP scientific committees – The Committee on International Migration and the Committee on Data Collection and Processing in LDCs – and presented at a Workshop entitled "International Migration Statistics: Their Problems and Use" that took place in Ottawa, Canada, in November 1987 with support from Statistics Canada and the U.S. Bureau of the Census.