Collecting migration data across borders: Canadian - United States experience

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National data exchanges as a way to improve migration statistics

- North American Migration Working Group – a forum to discuss approaches to measuring international migration

- Lack of quality data on flows (especially outflows) is a major challenge

- Canada – U.S. collaboration
  - development of temporary migration statistics
  - data exchanges as a way to improve estimates of emigration
Looking at American immigrants from the Canadian perspective

CANADIAN IMMIGRANTS in the United States

A. Canadian-born who came from Canada
B. Canadian-born who came from other countries
C. Not Canadian-born who came from Canada
American data sources on Canadians in the U.S.

- **Administrative sources**
  - Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS), Dept. of Homeland Security

- **Surveys**
  - Current Population Survey (CPS)
  - American Community Survey (ACS)
In the last 10 years, the annual number of landed immigrants with Canada as the country of last residence was between 10K and 30K...

...but the annual number of those who newly arrived in the U.S. was not higher than 5.5K
In the last 10 years, the annual number of authorizations issued to Canadian citizens under NAFTA reached its peak in 2001, at almost 120K. …but the annual number of those arriving in the U.S. to work under NAFTA was the highest in 2001, at 40K.
Advantages of using “outside the country residence”: sending country perspective

- More complete coverage of flows originated in the sending country
- Possibility of distinguishing between emigration of country-born persons and emigration of country’s immigrants
Since the beginning of the 21st century, Canadian emigration to the U.S. has shown a general decreasing trend.
Half of Canadian emigrants to the U.S. have a university degree

...and this is over 20% more than the proportion in the Canadian population
American Community Survey, 2000-2003
(population 25 years and over)

Top occupational groups for Canadian emigrants to the U.S. are management, engineering and science, and services

... but among Canadian-born and born outside the NA continent those with engineering and science occupations emigrate more often than other groups

Differences between % among the Canadian emigrants to the U.S. and the Canadian population
American Community Survey is useful in measuring the levels and characteristics of emigration from Canada to the U.S.

- Annual data
- Covers departures of all groups of Canadian residents
- Measures migration as change of residence
- Relates to longer-term migration, permanent and temporary
- Could include movements not traditionally in international migration statistics (ex. Canadian snowbirds)
Lessons learned

- There are a number of feasible methods for obtaining information on emigration from immigrants’ receiving country

- Cross-tabulating information on residence outside the country X years ago and place of birth could be the most beneficial to produce statistics

- Usefulness of sharing data across countries relies upon the understanding of underlying concepts/terminology
Since 2000, emigration from Canada to the United States has been decreasing.
... and participation of non-Canadian born residents of Canada was the main reason behind the decrease

Emigration
Canada → the United States

American Community Survey estimates