

The Measurement of Labor Migration to the United States

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Outline

- Introduction
- International Guidelines
- U.S. data sources on labor migration
- Results
- Observations on other ILO populations of interest
- Future work
- Conclusions

Introduction

- Labor migration remains a prime driver of international migration to the United States
- Census Bureau wants to improve measurement of international migration sub-components
 - Previous research examined measurement of refugees and international students.
- ILO Working Group developed guidelines to measure labor migration statistics
- Apply U.S. data to ILO guidelines to test feasibility of stock and flow measurement

International Guidelines

- 19th ILCS (2013) –develop international framework for improving labor migration statistics
 - International migrant worker: international migrants in labor force or in potential labor force or engaged in any form of work
 - **Stock:** total numbers of international migrant workers present in country at a given point in time.
 - **Flow of “For-Work” international migrants:** Annual number entering country to undertake or seek work, and whose intention to work was documented/declared at time of entry
 - Legal reason vs. “stated” reason

U.S. Data on International Labor Migration

- American Community Survey (ACS)
- Current Population Survey (CPS)
- Administrative data from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
 - Visas issued
 - Border entries
 - Legal Permanent Residents, etc.

American Community Survey (ACS)

- Major source of international migration data
- Annual survey conducted monthly since 2005
- Large sample size allows for studying small levels of geography
 - 3.5 million households surveyed per year
 - 1-year (national) and 5-year files (subnational) to produce estimates
- Relevant questions: country of birth, U.S. citizenship status, year of entry, country of residence one year ago, detailed labor force and occupation and job activity.
- Complete resident population
 - Uses the concept of “current residence,” meaning everyone who is in the housing unit on the day of interview who is living or staying there for **more than two months** is included.

7 Where was this person born?

☐ In the United States – Print name of state.

☐ Outside the United States – Print name of foreign country, or Puerto Rico, Guam, etc.

8 Is this person a citizen of the United States?

☐ Yes, born in the United States → SKIP to question 10a

☐ Yes, born in Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Northern Marianas

☐ Yes, born abroad of U.S. citizen parent or parents

☐ Yes, U.S. citizen by naturalization – Print year of naturalization

☐ No, not a U.S. citizen

9 When did this person come to live in the United States? If this person came to live in the United States more than once, print latest year.

10 a. At any time IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS, has this person attended school or college? Include only nursery or preschool, kindergarten, elementary school, home school, and schooling which leads to a high school diploma or a college degree.

☐ No, has not attended in the last 3 months → SKIP to question 11

☐ Yes, public school, public college

☐ Yes, private school, private college, home school

b. What grade or level was this person attending? Mark (X) ONE box.

☐ Nursery school, preschool

☐ Kindergarten

☐ Grade 1 through 12 – Specify grade 1 – 12

☐ College undergraduate years (freshman to senior)

☐ Graduate or professional school beyond a bachelor's degree (for example: MA or PhD program, or medical or law school)

☐ Kindergarten

☐ Grade 1 through 11 – Specify grade 1 – 11

☐ 12th grade – NO DIPLOMA

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE

☐ Regular high school diploma

☐ GED or alternative credential

COLLEGE OR SOME COLLEGE

☐ Some college credit, but less than 1 year of college credit

☐ 1 or more years of college credit, no degree

☐ Associate's degree (for example: AA, AS)

☐ Bachelor's degree (for example: BA, BS)

AFTER BACHELOR'S DEGREE

☐ Master's degree (for example: MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MSW, MBA)

☐ Professional degree beyond a bachelor's degree (for example: MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD)

☐ Doctorate degree (for example: PhD, EdD)

F Answer question 12 if this person has a bachelor's degree or higher. Otherwise, SKIP to question 13.

12 This question focuses on this person's BACHELOR'S DEGREE. Please print below the specific major(s) of any BACHELOR'S DEGREES this person has received. (For example: chemical engineering, elementary teacher education, organizational psychology)

14 a. Does this person speak a language other than English at home?

☐ Yes

☐ No → SKIP to question 15a

b. What is this language?

For example: Korean, Italian, Spanish, Vietnamese

c. How well does this person speak English?

☐ Very well

☐ Well

☐ Not well

☐ Not at all

15 a. Did this person live in this house or apartment 1 year ago?

☐ Person is under 1 year old → SKIP to question 16

☐ Yes, this house → SKIP to question 16

☐ No, outside the United States and Puerto Rico – Print name of foreign country, or U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, etc., below; then SKIP to question 16

☐ No, different house in the United States or Puerto Rico

b. Where did this person live 1 year ago?

Address (Number and street name)

Name of city, town, or post office

Name of U.S. county or municipio in Puerto Rico

Name of U.S. state or Puerto Rico

ZIP Code

Person 1 (continued)

- 29** a. LAST WEEK, did this person work for pay at a job (or business)?

☐ Yes → SKIP to question 30
☐ No – Did not work (or retired)

- b. LAST WEEK, did this person do ANY work for pay, even for as little as one hour?

☐ Yes
☐ No → SKIP to question 35a

- 30** At what location did this person work LAST WEEK? If this person worked at more than one location, print where he or she worked most last week.

- a. Address (Number and street name)

If the exact address is not known, give a description of the location such as the building name or the nearest street or intersection.

- b. Name of city, town, or post office

- c. Is the work location inside the limits of that city or town?

☐ Yes
☐ No, outside the city/town limits

- d. Name of county

- e. Name of U.S. state or foreign country

- f. ZIP Code

- 31** How did this person usually get to work LAST WEEK? If this person usually used more than one method of transportation during the trip, mark (X) the box of the one used for most of the distance.

<input type="checkbox"/> Car, truck, or van	<input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle
<input type="checkbox"/> Bus or trolley bus	<input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle
<input type="checkbox"/> Streetcar or trolley car	<input type="checkbox"/> Walked
<input type="checkbox"/> Subway or elevated	<input type="checkbox"/> Worked at home → SKIP to question 39a
<input type="checkbox"/> Railroad	

- J** Answer question 32 if you marked "Car, truck, or van" in question 31. Otherwise, SKIP to question 33.

- 32** How many people, including this person, usually rode to work in the car, truck, or van LAST WEEK?

Person(s)

- 33** What time did this person usually leave home to go to work LAST WEEK?

Hour Minute ☐ a.m.
☐ p.m.

- 34** How many minutes did it usually take this person to get from home to work LAST WEEK?

Minutes

- K** Answer questions 35 – 38 if this person did NOT work last week. Otherwise, SKIP to question 39a.

- 35** a. LAST WEEK, was this person on layoff from a job?

☒ Yes → SKIP to question 35c
☐ No

- b. LAST WEEK, was this person TEMPORARILY absent from a job or business?

☐ Yes, on vacation, temporary illness, maternity leave, other family/personal reasons, bad weather, etc. → SKIP to question 38
☐ No → SKIP to question 36

- c. Has this person been informed that he or she will be recalled to work within the next 6 months OR been given a date to return to work?

☐ Yes → SKIP to question 37
☐ No

- 36** During the LAST 4 WEEKS, has this person been ACTIVELY looking for work?

☐ Yes
☐ No → SKIP to question 38

- 37** LAST WEEK, could this person have started a job if offered one, or returned to work if recalled?

☐ Yes, could have gone to work
☐ No, because of own temporary illness
☐ No, because of all other reasons (in school, etc.)

- 38** When did this person last work, even for a few days?

☐ Within the past 12 months
☐ 1 to 5 years ago → SKIP to **L**
☐ Over 5 years ago or never worked → SKIP to question 47

- 39** a. During the PAST 12 MONTHS (52 weeks), did this person work 50 or more weeks? Count paid time off as work.

☐ Yes → SKIP to question 40
☐ No

- b. How many weeks DID this person work, even for a few hours, including paid vacation, paid sick leave, and military service?

☐ 50 to 52 weeks
☐ 48 to 49 weeks
☐ 40 to 47 weeks
☐ 27 to 39 weeks
☐ 14 to 26 weeks
☐ 13 weeks or less

- 40** During the PAST 12 MONTHS, in the WEEKS WORKED, how many hours did this person usually work each WEEK?

Usual hours worked each WEEK

Current Population Survey (CPS)

- Primary data source for U.S. labor force statistics
- Began in 1940's so allows for historical time series analyses
- Sample size of about 60,000 households provides national estimates
- Contains detailed labor force and migration-related items
 - March supplement (ASEC) contains ACS foreign-born items plus parental place of birth & **reason for moving**.
- Civilian non-institutional population
 - Uses the concept of “usual residence,” meaning it interviews everyone staying at the housing unit at the time of the interview who considers the housing unit as their usual residence or who has no usual residence elsewhere.

CPS “Main Reason for Moving” question

What was [your/name’s] main reason for moving to this house (apartment)?

- 1 change in marital status
- 2 to establish own household
- 3 other family reason (specify)
- **4 new job or job transfer**
- **5 to look for work or lost job**
- **6 to be closer to work/easier commute**
- **7 retired**
- **8 other job-related reason (specify)**
- 9 wanted to own home, not rent
- 10 wanted new or better house/ apartment
- 11 wanted better neighborhood/less crime
- 12 wanted cheaper housing
- 13 foreclosure/eviction
- 14 other housing reason (specify)
- 15 to attend or leave college
- 16 change of climate
- 17 health reasons
- 18 natural disaster (hurricane, tornado, etc.)
- 19 other reason (specify)

Administrative Sources

- Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS)
 - Visas, work permits issued, border crossing statistics, adjustment of status, etc.
 - Administrative actions not migration events
 - Admissions vs individuals vs total number of moves
 - Admissions (published): # of entries by all visa holders over fiscal year
 - Individualized data eliminates multiple moves by individuals over the year, but still includes people issued visas in prior years
 - New visas issued during year more comparable to concept of flow
 - Ideally, individualized entries of new entrants during the year

Work-Related Visa Types (duration of at least one year)

Temporary workers in specialty occupations (H1B)

Chile and Singapore Free Trade Agreement aliens (H1B1)

Registered nurses participating in the Nursing Relief for Disadvantaged Areas (H1C)

Workers with extraordinary ability or achievement (O1)

Workers accompanying and assisting in performance of O1 workers (O2)

Internationally recognized athletes or entertainers (P1)

Artists or entertainers in reciprocal exchange programs (P2)

Artists or entertainers in culturally unique programs (P3)

Workers in international cultural exchange programs (Q1)

Workers in religious occupations (R1)

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) professional workers (TN)

Intracompany transferees (L1)

Comparing Administrative and Survey-based Data

- Flows vs Stocks
 - Published administrative data for flows only
- Time period of measurement
 - Fiscal year vs calendar year
- Non-individualized nature of the data
 - Administrative measures events not individual movement
- Timing of the migration event
 - Border control at time of event, while surveys collect retrospective information (measurement lags actual event)

Table 1. Estimates of Labor-Related Migration from United States Data Sources: 2016

Migrant category of interest to ILO	CPS		ACS		DHS	
	Stock	Flow ¹	Stock	Flow ²⁽³⁾	Stock	Flow
Total foreign born	26,741,000	227,000	27,632,000	552,000 (379,000)	NA	NA
<i>Margin of Error (90% CI)</i>	<i>447,169</i>	<i>66,522</i>	<i>92,630</i>	<i>14,628⁹</i>		
Naturalized migrant	12,476,000	6,000	13,501,000	42,000 (24,000)	NA	NA
<i>Margin of Error (90% CI)</i>	<i>288,928</i>	<i>5,154</i>	<i>60,232</i>	<i>3,504⁹</i>		
Non-citizen migrant	14,265,000	221,000	14,131,000	510,000 (355,000)		2,301,500⁴/ 608,284⁵/ 340,059⁶
<i>Margin of Error (90% CI)</i>	<i>377,100</i>	<i>66,364</i>	<i>89,677</i>	<i>14,200⁹</i>		
Return-migrant	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Refugee, asylum seeker	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	54,218⁷
Undocumented	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
"Short-term" migrant	NA	NA	NA	NA		218,995⁸
Border workers and similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Notes

NA- Not available

1- CPS labor flows based on residence one-year ago outside the US, and main reason for move work-related

2- ACS labor flows based on residence one-year ago outside the US, and currently in labor force

3- ACS total immigration flow times % of CPS flow moving for work-related reasons (.2548)

4- Number of admissions during fiscal year of people possessing work-related visas (of one-year or longer)

5- Number of individuals with work-related visas (of one-year or longer) entering the US during the fiscal year

6- Number of new work-related visas issued during fiscal year

7- Sum of refugee arrivals and individuals granted asylum, excluding children, as an upper-bound estimate of labor force members

8- Number of H2A and H2B visas issued during year (visas of less than one year duration).

9- Margin of error for ACS currently in labor force only (see note 2).

Figure 1. Stock of International Labor Migrants: 2010-2016

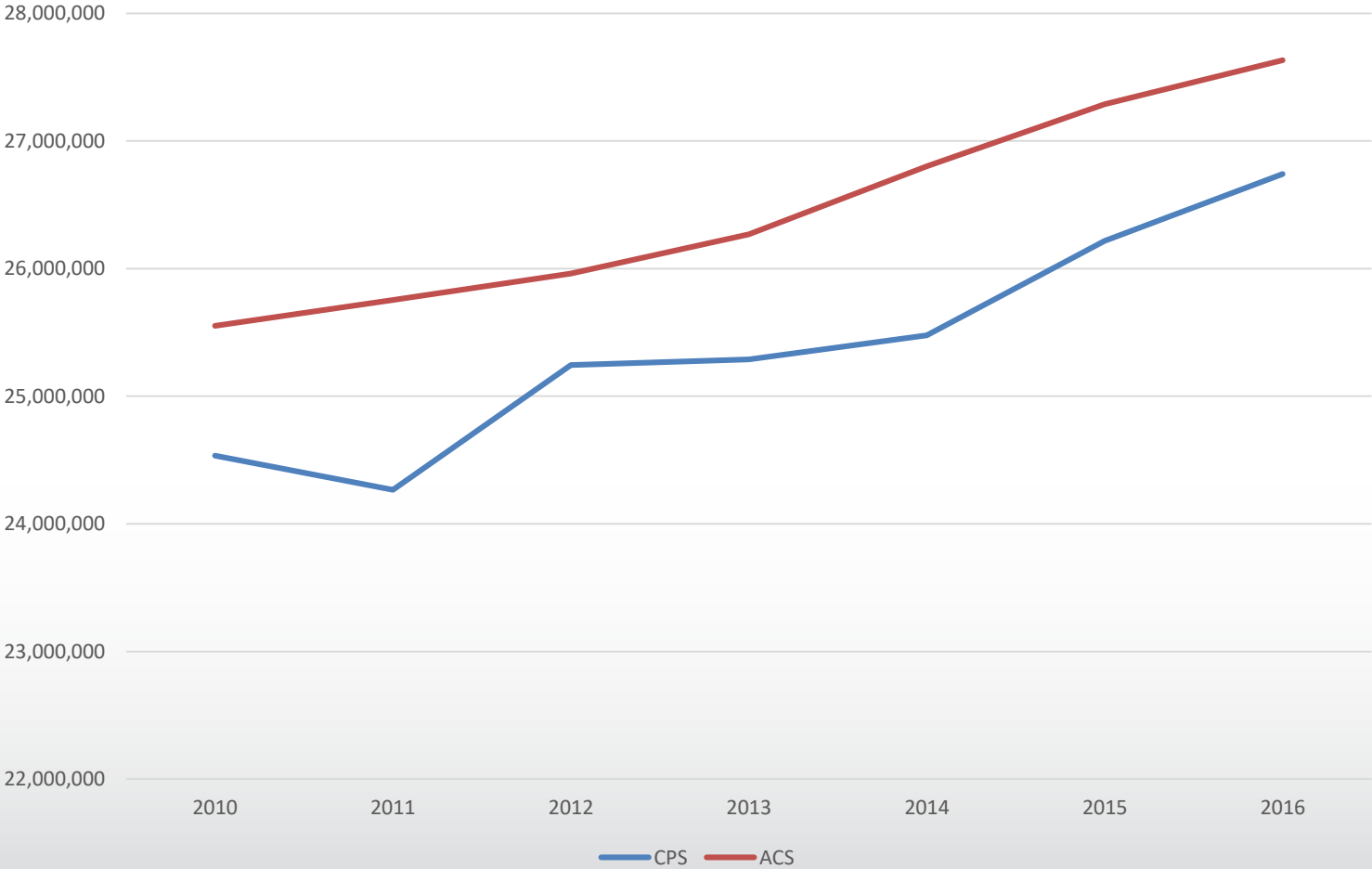
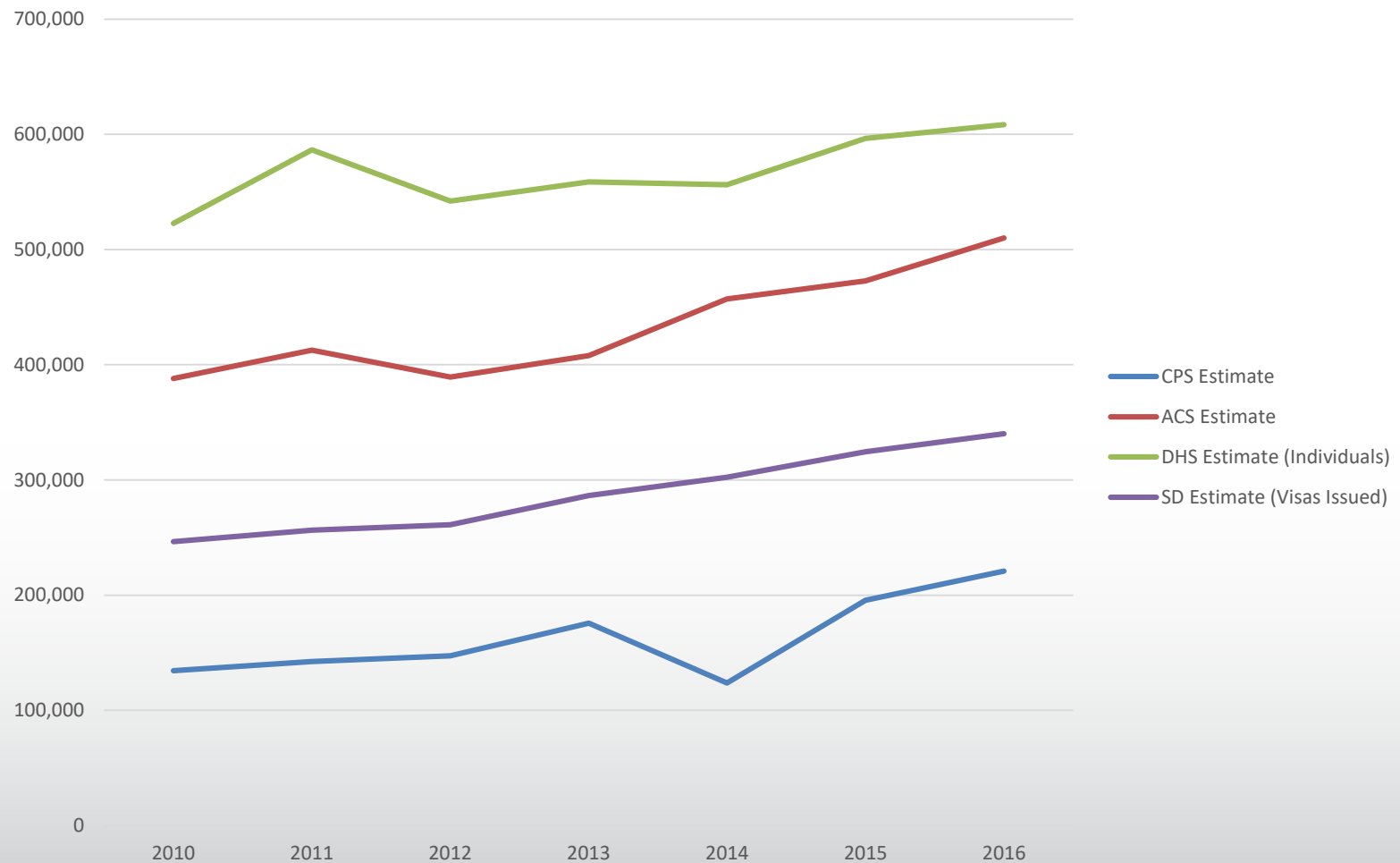


Figure 2. Non-Citizen Labor-Related Migration Flows: 2010-2016



Results

- 2016 ACS and CPS estimates of the stock of labor migrants are quite similar/consistent over time (27-28 million)
- Flows estimates (six different variations) vary widely (226,000 to 2.3 million)
- “Derived” ACS and number of new visas issued are most compatible flow figures (340-380,000)
- Not able to produce estimates for many of ILO’s populations of interest

Other ILO Populations of Interest

- Return migrant– only information from “residence one-year ago.” No migration history questions on CPS or ACS.
 - Administrative data: e.g. Tax return data (IRS)
 - If residence abroad one year and in the U.S. following year. Link IRS to SSA data to get “country of birth.”
- Refugee/asylum seeker
 - Refugees eligible to apply for Social Security Numbers when resettled to the United States
 - Census Bureau does not produce separate estimates. Presumed to be included in ACS and CPS
 - Refugee resettlement and asylum application numbers available from State Department and Department of Justice.
 - Current research

Other ILO Populations of Interest, cont.

- Undocumented migrants
 - Census Bureau does not produce separate estimates. Presumed to be included in ACS and CPS
 - OIS responsible for estimates of undocumented population
- “Short-term” migrant
 - Census data sources do not distinguish by duration of stay (actual or intended), thus dependent on if included in survey population
 - H2A and H2B are visas issued for less than 12 months. Stay can be for less than three months
 - Eligible for extension, so not know how long in US
- Frontier workers and similar
 - Not international migrants
 - No information available. Does border control measure these populations?

Future Work

- Modeling international migration estimates by combining different data sources
 - Bayesian hierarchical models
 - Demographic account (immigration subcomponent) cross-classified by characteristics
 - Time series estimates to produce better “fit”
 - CPS reason for move (ID labor migration), ACS for immigration flow estimates: separate modeling technique to estimate number of labor migrants
- Alternative data sources
 - SSA and tax return data information on the stock of legal foreign-born workers and new entries into the system (somewhat equivalent to a “flow”)

Conclusions/Limitations

- How many migrant workers.....it depends....
- How to get comparable flow numbers?
 - Stock information relatively stable, but very different flow numbers based on how operationalize or data used
- Limited amount of information collected on surveys
 - Good information on sector and occupation and employment status, but lack data on remittances, migrant worker rights, etc.
 - Lack of comparable “change of usual residence” criterion
 - Surveys collect “year of entry,” not date of entry

Conclusions, cont.

- Limitations of published administrative data
 - Published numbers are not measuring migration events, but administrative transactions
 - Need to link administrative records across databases to look at individual outcomes over time
- Preferred method for measuring flows
 - Difficult to operationalize at international level
 - Legal entry status or self-identified?
 - Harmonize stock and flow definitions (use same criteria: currently engaged in labor force)?
 - Make it easier to collect comparable information?
 - More policy relevant?

Contact Information

Thank you!

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