



An alternative view on the statistical definition of migration

UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on
Migration Statistics

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Background

- *On-going work on the revision of the UN recommendations on international migration statistics by the UNSD Expert Group on Migration Statistics, namely by its Task Force 2 on "Key Concepts and Definitions of Migration"*
- *Discussion on the future architecture of population statistics in the European Statistical System*

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Current international recommendations

- *Different definitions of migration by UNSD, IOM, OECD, ILO, EU*
- *Widespread definitions:*
 - **Migration is a change of 'usual residence'**
 - **Stocks: based on 'country of birth' / 'citizenship'**
 - **Flows: based on 'duration of stay'**

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Critical features of 'usual residence'

- *Various interpretations of the place of 'usual residence'*
- *Different assessment criteria for 'duration of stay'*
- *Undefined moment of change of usual residence*
- *Difficult application of the 'intention of stay'*
- *Timeliness*

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Preliminary input

- *Original meaning of migration: move for new settlement in another geographic place*
 - **crossing of a "border"**
 - **"long-term" stay / no intention of return (soon)**
- *Migration as 'change of residence'*
 - **Which 'residence'?**
- *Multiple forms of migration:*
 - **Point-to-point in a single moment in time**
 - **Transition via one or more intermediate places**
 - **Progressive "detachment" from place of origin**
 - **Etc..**

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Main features for "migrants"

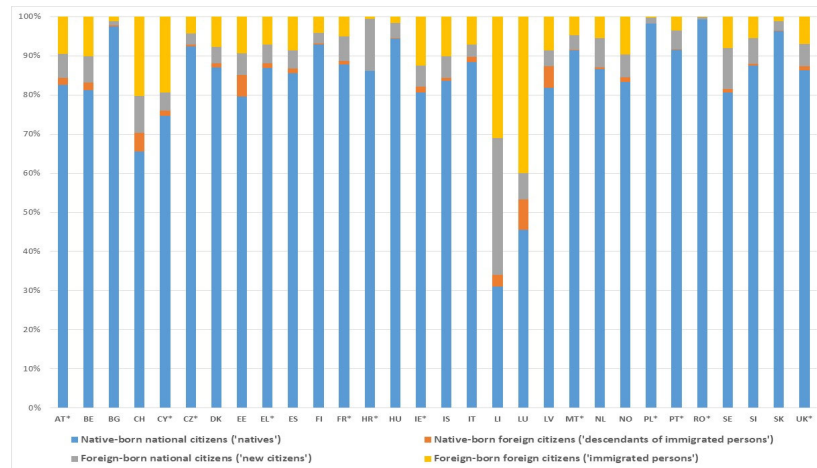
- *'Country of birth'*
 - **Used to identify at least one migration into the reporting country**
- *'Citizenship'*
 - **High policy interest**

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Population by COB and CTZ on 1.1.18



(*): data are from census 2011 and thus at its reference date

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Combining the main migration features

"Stocks"	Native-born	Foreign-born
National citizenship	Natives	New citizens
Foreign citizenship	Descendants	Immigrated persons

"Inflows"	Native-born	Foreign-born
National citizenship	Inflow of 'natives' ('return migration')	Inflow of 'new citizens'
Foreign citizenship	Inflow of 'descendants'	Inflow of 'immigrants' ('immigration')

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Persons with foreign background

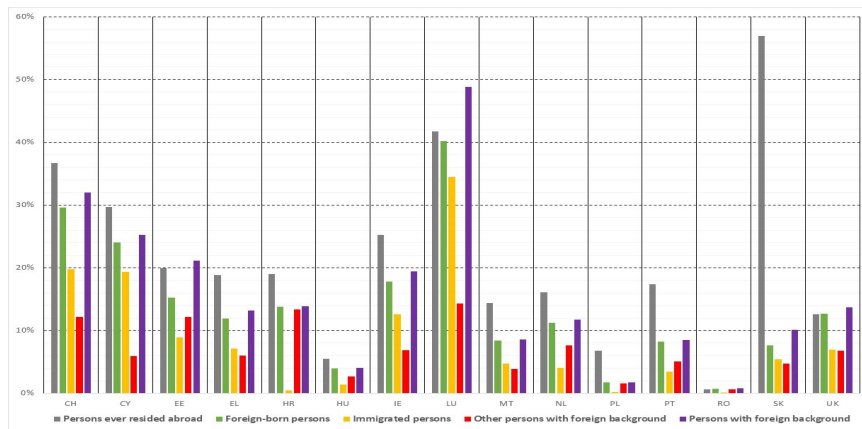
- *Current recommendations:*
 - **Persons with both parents born abroad**
 - **Proxy: time of acquisition of citizenship**
- *New definition:*
 - **Persons who are foreign-born and/or foreign citizens = 'immigrated persons' + 'new citizens' + 'descendants'**
- *Difference only for foreign-born persons with national citizenship at birth*

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Alternative definitions of "migrants stock"



Source: census 2011

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Emigration

- 3 main options for its new definition:
 - Consistent with new definition of 'immigration'
 - Specular, i.e. 'immigrants' in another country
 - National view

"Outflows"	Native-born	Foreign-born
National citizenship	Outflow of 'natives' ('emigration')	Outflow of 'new citizens'
Foreign citizenship	Outflow of 'descendants'	Outflow of 'immigrated persons'

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Demographic balances

- General: **population** at the **beginning** of the period + live **births** – **deaths** + **inflows** ('natives' + 'new citizens' + 'descendants' + 'immigrants') – **outflows** ('emigrants' + 'new citizens' + 'descendants' + 'immigrated persons') = **population** at the **end** of the period
- "Migrants stock": **'immigrated persons'** at the **beginning** of the period – **deaths** of 'immigrated persons' + **'immigrants'** – **outflow** of 'immigrated persons' + **changes of status** (former 'new citizens' who lost the national citizenship – former 'immigrated persons' who acquired the national citizenship) = **'immigrated persons'** at the **end** of the period

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Return migration

- *Current recommendations:*
 - **persons returning to their country of citizenship after having been international migrants (whether short-term or long-term) in another country and who are intending to stay in their own country for at least a year**
- *New definition:*
 - **Inflow of 'natives'. Flow opposite to 'emigration'.**

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Change of residence

- *Proposal: change of 'main' residence*
 - **'Main' qualification needed for single counting**
- *Match of two wills (with empirical evidence):*
 - **Would-be new resident by declaring / applying for the (main) residence**
 - **Receiving country by granting permission of stay**
- *Eligibility to residence: granted stay for >90 days*

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Conclusive remarks

- *Main features proposal:*
 - **Revised terminology**
 - **New concept of 'change of residence'**
- *Advantages:*
 - **Consistent general framework (demographic balances and population bases)**
 - **Potential high timeliness**
- *Challenges:*
 - **Connection with administrative system**
 - **Data exchange**
 - **Factual presence on the territory**
 - ...

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To help remembering...

- *...here a few sentences using the new definitions:*
 - **"each migration is a change of (main) residence, but each change of (main) residence is not necessarily a migration"**
 - **"an immigrated person is a former immigrant"**
 - **"natives emigrate and return"**
 - **"a person with foreign background has a 'foreign' feature (foreign-born and/or foreign citizen)"**

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Thank you for the attention!

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