BORDERS Immigration Research Requirements Workshop
October 10-11 2012

Institute for the Study of International Migration, Georgetown University
Washington, D.C.

SUMMARY NOTES FROM DHS STAKEHOLDER PRESENTATIONS

The purpose of this workshop was to bring together DHS stakeholders and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to discuss the agency's current needs for immigration research. Based on these presentations, participants identified the most critical gaps in immigration studies and formulated research questions to address them. The outcome of this effort is a Request for Proposals (RFP) from BORDERS that solicits new immigration projects that are highly relevant to DHS stakeholders and the public at large.

The notes that follow are from the stakeholder presentations at the workshop and are organized by the five broad topic areas from the RFP.

- Impacts of Enforcement on Unauthorized Flows
- Population Dynamics
- Immigration Policy
- Immigration Administration
- Civic Integration and Citizenship

General Advice to Researchers
- Researchers must understand the missions of various DHS departments and offices that deal with immigration.
- Researchers should know how the agency is funded (e.g. fee-based or federal budget).
- Be sure to scope a problem and not just a research interest.
- Be cognizant of the fine line between advocacy and objective research.
- Data availability: While some data are publicly available, others belong to various DHS components. Much of these are not available to researchers because of privacy concerns. Make sure you know whether the data you need will be accessible.

Impacts of Enforcement on Unauthorized Flows

Migration Trends: There has been a shift in immigration flows to the US, with a steep decline from 2004 until 2010. There has also been a shift in immigration trends on the southwest border, with a growing percentage of migrants originating from Central Americans, in FY2012.

Historical Returns/Repatriations: In the past, immigration officials utilized prosecution for egregious offenders. The vast majority, however, were granted a voluntary return. While this allowed immigration officials to address the large number of illegal migrants apprehended (within budgetary constraints), this approach resulted in high recidivism rates which added to a 'cluttered border'.

Laying the Foundations for Consequence Delivery System (CDS): In recent years, there has been a transition to CDS. CDS is an analytical process used to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative, criminal, and programmatic consequences, and to manage workload and resource allocation. It ultimately will be used to evaluate performance and cost-effectiveness of various consequences. Subsequently, CDS guides agents in the application of the most appropriate consequence for each alien apprehended, based on the analysis of potential outcomes with consideration to effectiveness and efficiency.

With CDS, DHS can now manage the border and not simply react to the volume of illegal traffic. In an effort to break the smuggling cycle, CBP developed CDS, in consultation and with support from all its strategic partners. The use of CDS based consequence application facilitates deterrence of further illegal activity based on sector-specific conditions.

We are interested in an inquiry concerning the relative deterrence effects of CDS developed by ICE and CBP compared with misdemeanor prosecution in the traditional federal criminal justice system. Given the apparent changes in border enforcement patterns on the southwest border and demographic and economic trends in Mexico, the results of such research will have significant practical implications for DHS policies and programs.

Additional Relevant Topics:
1. Total flow of unauthorized migrants, probability of apprehension, evaluation of CDS, impact of increased border enforcement and the U.S. economy on flow / apprehension rates.
2. Illicit pathways - supply chain risk analysis. Interested in looking at ways to halt these chains.
3. Extended Border Zone: The agency needs further assistance on automated gating, secondary response, and remote processing. With more checks done in advance of the border, we could reduce workload at the border.
4. Need for researching the use of technology and its ability to assist the agency in improving accuracy, efficiency and security at the border.
5. Reduce false positives. Our agency's current rate is 58% false positives. Would like to be able to better differentiate between high and low risk individuals crossing the border.
6. Public-private partnerships: Would like to know how to leverage funding for a greater impact with public-private partnerships.
7. Linking biographical data to biometric data: Would like to see analysis of how we can produce 'biometrics on the move'

Population Dynamics

Demographic Profiles of Immigrants: The story of Mexicans is very different from other Latino groups, and we need to understand why those differences exist. We need more than administrative data to tell us 'WHO' is entering. We also need age, country, gender, family ties, internet access, migration history, etc.

Immigration Trends and Projections: We need to understand population flows (e.g. who is likely to come to the US and what factors will impact these trends). Would like to know more about what changes we might expect to see in the next three to five years. This research will enable us to proactively respond with budget and staffing changes.

We are interested in projections about the future in terms of flows. According to the recent Pew study, the Mexican-born population in the US is decreasing. What we expect going forward is reduced flows from Mexico. With the likely recovery of the US economy, we will need more workers at the exact same time as the Mexican workforce is decreasing. Immigration to the US will probably come from another source – possibly Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. It also means that Mexico could become a destination country. As Mexico becomes a receiving country, the way in which they view migration will shift.

Immigration Estimates: Our agency does not generate its own data. We work with and 'try to get creative with data' from other departments. We try to make population estimates of stock of legal immigrants. To do this, we make certain assumptions and we need help on this. We estimate the number of unauthorized, which is also an area where help is needed.

GIS capabilities - Spatial analysis can help us understand where populations reside and to visually represent data.

Visa Overstays: Improving overstay rate estimates is a big question in terms of policy. Would like better estimates of how many people are overstaying and what percentage of the illegal population is overstay versus entered without inspection (EWI).

Additional Relevant Topics:

- Interested in projections of where the next wave of US-bound migrants will come from, both short-term and longer-term. Interested in how this might impact Mexican and Central American economies.
- Would like to understand the impact of regional/hemispheric visa policies – (e.g. an examination of how Guatemala's visa policy towards India plays into overall migration patterns to the United States).
- Study of Mexico's Southern border -- 'New US border is Guatemala,' according to some policy makers and researchers. The Guatemala-Mexico border is completely ungoverned. We need to understand the situation (geographical and historical factors), and then ask how we might address the issues.

Immigration Administration

Our agency's work is primarily service provision in granting immigration and citizenship benefits, as well as education and awareness about receiving those benefits to those who are legally eligible. Since we are client-based, you should be aware of the different groups we serve and their demographic profiles. We would like to understand the behavior of clients and staff, evaluate new programs, and evaluate the impact of existing programs.

Customer experience: We would like to know more about our customer's experiences when applying for benefits, using on-line services, etc. and how we can improve this experience.

Immigration Decision-making and Fraud Detection: We would like to know more about the following: what are the mental models that agency personnel use to determine benefit eligibility; how do we make decisions; how accurate are these decisions; how accurate are the assumptions that are made in short timeframes; what possible indicators can officers use to detect fraud; how can we conduct more effective interviews and site visits.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): We would like to understand how DACA might influence people's decisions to come to the US. We are now seeing a high level of applications coming in (est. 100,000). Data projections on what the application stream might look like over time is extremely interesting. We need to know how many applicants are in school and other characteristics, not just the number.

Transformation: The agency is undergoing transformation, from a paper-based system to e-system. Converting our information to workable data is a challenge due to outdated systems. We would like to be able to understand internet access and usage among our clients, particularly in low broadband system areas.

Automating Visas, Paper-Free Visas, and Extended Border Zone: Packages of forms and documents for immigrants are cumbersome. Agencies should have their own communication channels to one another, perhaps a document-free system. We would like to see suggestions for how can we automate these systems. Electronic or 'virtual visas' – how this might look in the next 3-5 years

Civic Integration and Citizenship

Emigration: There is little information on emigration of Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs), unauthorized, temporary and circulation of these populations. We receive data from Department of State on refugees and time between arrival and LPRs. We need more information on this, particularly longitudinal research with regard to Mexican and refugee LPRs. Would like to know why some people choose to stay permanently and others do not.

Naturalization: Would like to know more about why some groups of immigrants choose to naturalize while others do not.

Non-traditional receiving communities: Would like to know more about the experience of immigrants and communities non-traditional receiving communities.

Immigration Policy

Measurements of immigration policy impacts: We need to look at immigration policy impacts and how we can improve these measurements.

High-skilled migrants – The US is not looking as competitive as we used to be as a place for high-skilled migrants. We need to understand this better.

Cross-country comparisons - Compare US immigration policy to other receiving countries experiencing similar phenomena. What do other high-receiving countries do? Case studies should be chosen with the top ten source countries in mind.

Impact of visa waiver program study – promotes tourism, creates jobs, but how many jobs? There is a 15% increase on admissions based on visa waiver.

Beyond the Borders (BTB)
Beyond the Border was announced in 2011 by the US President and Canadian Prime Minister, to move beyond the narrow on border management to thinking

more broadly about issues 'beyond the border', including a shared framework for perimeter security and economic competitiveness with our largest . With this initiative, the United States and Canada share responsibility for working within, at and away from borders to enhance the security and economic competitiveness of both countries.

Beyond the Border is designed to fit the need to be able to work together as a regional bloc in immigration, trade, attracting talent. It was a paradigm shift in terms of acknowledgment of joint responsibility in protecting against the 'home-grown threat' of terrorism as well as threats from abroad. There is a lot of scope for researchers in assisting DHS with the BTB initiative.

Additional Relevant Topics:
- One of the largest debates is trying to figure out input-based measurements of BTB initiatives (border wait times, trusted traveller and trader program usage, law enforcement interdictions, etc.). We need help with developing useful metrics (e.g. what benefits we getting from the BTB initiatives; whether more people using the programs; whether wait times are decreasing; how traffic management has been impacted; program costs, etc.)
- US is also working to share expertise with Canada and vice-versa on refugee / asylum-seeker applicants. This contains a large element of biometrics.