Cross-National Data Sources for Studying Immigrant Child Well-being

for the Princeton meeting on Immigrant Children
August 27-28, 2010

Tim Smeeding
Director, Institute for Research on Poverty,
University of Wisconsin Madison
Data Sources for studying immigrant child well-being in cross national context

A. Definition and identification problems
( income datasets and education datasets only, nothing on health in my repertoire!)

B. A few comparative datasets: LIS-LWS-LMICS/PISA-TIMMS-PIRLS/IPUMS/EU-SILC

C. Brief Illustration of use of EUSILC and LIS on child poverty effects of income transfers
A. The definition problems: large issue in cross national comparability

• Who what is an immigrant? A minority?

• Larger “children's” issues:
  -- children who emigrate
  -- children born to immigrants in destination country
  -- children left at home in origin country
So what is an Immigrant? Minority?

• NO ‘standard’ OECD definition—sorry
• Demographic datasets do better than income or well being surveys at comparability of immigrant status
• BUT progress is being made( e.g. SILC is better than ECHP in many ways)
• Some examples form my own research follow
EUSILC--Meaning of ‘Minority’ or ‘Immigrant’ in LIS and EUSILC data

- LIS: US, France, Italy, Canada: ‘Born outside country’
- LIS Australia, Germany, Sweden: ‘Non-national’
- LIS UK: ‘Non-white or minority’ --but ‘non national’ in EUSILC!
- EU-SILC: Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Denmark, Netherlands “non-native” and-or “non-national”
Idiosyncrasies

• Europeans and many Euro data sources have not yet recognized the concept of “immigrant,” or have old samples:
  a. EU-ECHP (old 1990 based panel samples and therefore unreliable for this purpose)
  b. EU-SILC (birth, nationality, are consistent and are improvements—we think—but data is messy and not sure about some surveys, especially Eastern European ones)
B. General Data Issues

• Cross-sectional coordinated data means more comparability, we hope (sampling issues)

• Panels, plus and minus—e.g. PSID/ CNEF (leave most to Gert)

• Cross-sections, up to date in theory, but sampling and access issues may be important

• Look at just a few examples from education and income data here
Education Data

- TMMS, PISA, PILRLS, comparative education work — e.g. see Sylke Schnepf (from ‘Immigration and Future of Europe’ and elsewhere—and on distributed reading list), follows
- Micklewright, others are in PISA-PIRLS—also on distributed paper list
Schnepf. Percentage of natives and immigrants not able to solve basic math tasks in TIMSS

Schnepf : Ratio of achievement scores of immigrants to natives by percentile for PISA reading
LIS and LWS and soon LMICS

- LIS and other datasets like EU-SILC offer the possibility to compare ‘immigrants’ (and ‘minorities’) to majorities (natives) in several nations for at least one time period (circa 2000 or later).

- LIS wave 7, due later this year, will have immigrant minority identifiers for both the LIS (income) and LWS (wealth); as will the middle income country (LMICS) data by 2011.
• LIS Ethnicity / nationality / immigration data

• Most common information (though not for all datasets) from LIS sweeps includes:
  -- Citizenship
  -- Residency status
  -- Year of Arrival
  -- Years since immigration
  -- Nationality
  -- Country of Birth
  -- Mother tongue
  -- Parents’ nationality
**LIS Current PROPOSAL:** Create 5 separate variables to capture as much information as possible on immigration, background, and minority status:

- PCITIZEN – Official citizenship
- PRESYR - Years in residence
- PMINOR – Indicator of minority status
- PETHNIC – Ethnicity
- PIMMIG – Indicator of immigration status

- **Bottom Line**—LISS sees the need and is working on it
- **Use Issues:** how much will nations mask immigrant data in what they send to LIS—eg Canada does it all the time
- **My solution:** “hire a Canadian co-investigator with access to restricted files”
New data -- EU-SILC, 2005-2007

Quick Description of Data

1. substitute for ECHP and covering all EU 27 plus Norway and Turkey –at least in theory comparable

2. first year 2004 or 2005 (‘new’ EU nations); we are generally have used 2006 or 2007

3. representative cross section with sampling frame being household addresses in most countries

4. sample drawn based on 2000 or later records

5. same core survey in all nations, but each nation collects own data and has own idiosyncrasies

6. Access is limited to EU researchers with contracts from EU—like one co-author (so again, rent a co-author/co-investigator)
EU-SILC Immigrant Parameters

B. Many choices, in theory
1. "came from EU country and citizen"
2. "came from non-EU country and citizen"
3. "came from EU country and not citizen"
4. "came from non-EU country and not citizen"
5. "came from non-EU country and citizenship is other EU country"
6. "native“ or “national”

C. For our work, we chose only born outside of country (sum of 1-5) —vs. native or national (#6) due in large part to small public use samples for any subset of #1 to #5—this may be a sample size problem for others as well

D. Further we decided to include only older (EU17) samples and not the “new” Eastern European countries, where sampling and editing are ‘messy’ (Toth & Medgesy, 2009)
New data from EU-SILC, 2006—Whole Sample

The Prevalence of Immigrant Households

- Luxembourg
- Estonia
- Austria
- Latvia
- Sweden
- Ireland
- United Kingdom
- Belgium
- France
- Cyprus
- Slovenia
- Iceland
- Germany
- Norway
- Greece
- Netherlands
- Italy
- Lithuania
- Spain
- Denmark
- Czech Republic
- Hungary
- Finland
- Portugal
- Slovakia
- Poland

- Children Living in Immigrant Households (%)
- People Living in Immigrant Households (%)
Finally--IPUMS-I—briefly

• great on comparability—weak on periodicity and anything but demography in many cases
• Data not fully up to speed yet, especially lags in rich countries-- see coding
  https://international.ipums.org/international-action/variableDescription.do?mnemonic=NAIVITY
• BUT they are ready to help out projects like the ones that may emerge here as well
IPUM and IPUMS-I -- a Few Recent Papers from their Website

- Papers, see:
How much help do less-advantaged families and children get from social tax-benefit programs and from their own market incomes in rich nations?
Working hypothesis:

The country where ‘immigrants’ (also identified as minorities in some EU nations) live is more important than their legal (majority-minority/immigrant) status in determining net social benefits (cash and near-cash transfers) and poverty status for families with children.

If supported, then countries can make a difference for immigrant child well being—at least in income support policy terms.
Methods

• Measure relative HOUSEHOLD poverty at 50 percent adjusted median disposable income (EU uses 60 percent but we are using LIS definitions)
• Market Income (MI) vs. Disposable Personal Income (DPI)
• Net social benefits (cash and near-cash transfers minus direct taxes paid)
• Not counting health or education benefits
• define ‘immigrant’ and/or ‘minority’, as above
LIS Results: Big **Global** Differences

- Standard LIS finding:
  
  Big differences in welfare state support for all families across nations
  
  MI vs. DPI Child Poverty for all Households with Children (Figure 2)
Figure 2. Market Income and Disposable Income Poverty Rates for All Households with Children (0-17)
LIS Results: How About Poverty and Anti-Program Effects for ‘Immigrant’ vs. ‘Majority’?

• Minority-Majority Poverty Rates for all and for children (Table 2)

• Overall System Effects: Majority Kids (Figures 4a) vs. Minority Kids (Figures 4b)
## Table 2: Household and Child Poverty by Minority Status across Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Household Poverty</th>
<th>Child Poverty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>Minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States*</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium (e)</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria (e)</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal (e)</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Countries marked with (e) use data from the echp outside of LIS.

*Naturalized foreign-born heads are classified as minorities*
Figure 4a. Market Income and Disposable Income Child Poverty for Majority Households with Children

- United States
- United States*
- Italy
- England
- Canada
- Australia
- Portugal (e)
- Average
- Germany
- Belgium (e)
- France
- Austria (e)
- Sweden
- Finland

Country

MI Poverty
DPI Poverty

Child Poverty (Majority)
Figure 4b. Market Income and Disposable Income Poverty for Minority Households with Children
Results So Far:

• Minority poverty rates exceed majority rates by 50-100 percent

• But overall system effects for majority and minority households with kids, appear to be very similar –as indeed we show later on
Final LIS-SILC Results

• Majority vs. minority poverty reduction for all households with kids: Figures 5 and 6
  • **Regression line (solid):** Consistency of spending effects
  • **45-degree line (hatched):** Similarity of effects on each group
Figure 5. Antipoverty Effects for Immigrant and Majority Children, LIS and EU-SILC

Percent Reduction in Child Poverty: Immigrants vs Natives

Red: LIS Data
Blue: EU-SILC Data
Figure 6. Antipoverty Effects for Immigrant and Majority Children, LIS and EU-SILC – Anglos

Percent Reduction in Child Poverty: Immigrants vs Natives

Red: LIS Data
Blue: EU-SILC Data
Figures 5 & 6 notes:

• Figure 5 is all best LIS data plus EUSILC for rest (I know the LIS data is mostly right and we work lost with it —so I trust this one the most)

• Figure 6 is EUSILC data plus LIS (where we have two estimates, we use SILC--plus we include a few other SILC nations like Luxembourg, which is small and weird)

• BOTH figures 5 and 6 STRONGLY SUPPORT THE HYPOTHESIS THAT COUNTRY Makes MORE difference THAN IMMIGRANT-NON immigrant differences
Figures 5 & 6 notes, cont’d.

• In no country do immigrant kids have a bigger poverty reduction than natives as there is nothing above 45 degree line) BUT the effects are really close( see regression lines)

• Cant wait to write this up!!( for Marbach Volume)

• Jannsons (2009) and Boeri ( 2009) are consistent with these results
Discussion

• Majority-minority poverty rates and welfare state treatment differ by nation, but biggest differences are across nations and not within nations.

• USA looks bad in most comparisons, especially compared to Canada and Australia, but mainly because of its weak welfare state—not because it’s welfare state mistreats immigrants in particular.
Quick Summary

• Definitions of immigrant are rough and inconsistent and need more consistency across nations

• ‘Immigrant’ is not the same as ‘minority’

• Solid support for hypothesis that destination country more important than minority-immigrant status in determining poverty status
What is left to do? LOTS—cont’d.

- Really need comparable assessments for education and health care systems:
  -- education appears to be almost universal, though not always of same quality
  -- health care is distributed on ‘need-only’ basis in other rich nations; but now in USA, SCHIP and Medicaid can allow access for legal immigrants here less than 5 years
Thanks

Hope this helps

Send follow-ups/ comments to

smeeding@lafollette.wisc.edu