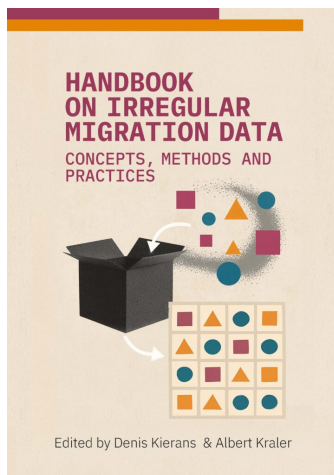




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Box 7.2: Chile's experiences in integrating data for estimating the foreign population with irregular migration status

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The second of these datasets is relevant information about irregular migrants. It comprises all those individuals who, despite not having specific authorization to reside in the national territory (for example, because they have an expired residence permit) show signs of administrative life in Italy (e.g. because of working, studying or awaiting residence permit renewal). Hence, as regards irregular or undocumented migrants, the current structure of the data production system allows to correctly focus on a specific group of irregularly staying migrants. On the other side, the evaluation of fully undocumented migrants is most challenging as, by definition, they do not show any sign of life. Nonetheless, Istat also produces national estimates of fully undocumented migrants on a yearly basis. The sources used to produce these estimates have varied over the years, depending on data availability, including sample surveys and data from administrative sources. In recent years, the methodology has been improved by also integrating data of the Ministry of the Interior relating to police stops on the territory or at the border, as well as data relating to actual repatriations to countries of origin.

In contrast, **Germany** presents a unique case in this regard, as it has been using a Central Register of Foreigners (AZR) for over 70 years, which includes comprehensive data on the majority of non-nationals staying in the country, even parts of those without legal residency status. The reason is that in Germany, many migrants who are formally obliged to leave the country are issued a *Duldung* (tolerated status) while their removal is temporarily suspended due to either actual obstacles (e.g.

missing travel documents or illness) or legal reasons (e.g. family unity) preventing deportation. These migrants are well captured in the Central Register of Foreigners, meaning that the register is suited for detailed analyses aimed at specific subgroups of irregular migrants. The rest of this chapter will present the Central Register of Foreigners and the potentials and pitfalls of using its administrative data in irregular migration research.

Box 7.2: Chile's experiences in integrating data for estimating the foreign population with irregular migration status²

Julibeth Rodríguez and Felipe Mallea

Since 2014, Chile has witnessed an increasing migrant flow, which has meant that the country must assume the challenge of officially measuring the phenomenon. To this end, the National Statistics Institute (INE) and the National Migration Service (Sermig) have developed a methodology for estimating the number of foreign nationals residing in Chile between censuses by linking border-control data with residency applications after the 2017 Census.

This study employs a methodology that integrates baseline data from the census with data from post-census administrative records by linking microdata of various government institutions. A critical component is using administrative records to identify populations with a potentially irregular migration status.

² This work was conducted by the Studies Department at the National Migration Service of Chile and the Demography Subdepartment at the National Institute of Statistics of Chile (team members: Gabriel Santander, Consuelo Salas, Marisol Opazo, Pablo Roessler, Felipe Hugo, Luis Rodríguez, Miguel Ojeda, Francisco González). More details are available at: <https://serviciomigraciones.cl/estudios-migratorios/estimaciones-de-extranjeros/> and <https://www.ine.gob.cl/estadisticas/sociales/demografia-y-vitales/demografia-y-migracion>.

The methodology acknowledges the complexities in precisely quantifying irregular migration, which are due to the multifaceted character and the dynamic fluidity of migration status. Consequently, the scope of the estimation is deliberately confined to a specific subset of the population with irregular status, a delimitation necessitated by the availability of relevant data sources and by the objective of clearly distinguishing the populations with regular and irregular migration status.

The estimation of the population with irregular status specifically includes individuals who do not possess any type of residency permit application, who have been in the country for at least six months, and who have no recorded departure for the period ending on December 31, 2023. The sources for the estimation are as follows:

1. The biometric control system (between June and December 2023)
2. Expired tourist visa extensions or police reports (including both formal denunciations for unauthorized entry and self-reported clandestine entries)
3. Primary and secondary student enrollment in Chilean educational institutions of those who are assigned a provisional identifier because they lack a national identification number (RUN)

By including a wide range of administrative records, we can account for the two main areas that form the basis of irregular migration of foreign nationals in Chile: (1) those who enter the country clandestinely and who cannot apply for a residency permit, and (2) those who enter the country legally and who cannot apply for a residency permit. With these two areas and their combination with records from border control, it can be determined whether the person was in the country for the period ending on December 31, 2023. In processing the data, 33,251 people who left the country were excluded. In contrast, we included those whose presence and residence in Chile were shown by the records of their administrative acts to be subsequent to their exit from the country.

The final dataset for the population with irregular migration status comprised 336,984 individuals, whose information was categorized by primary source: 261,449 from police reports, 10,217 from expired tourist visas, and 65,318 from official enrollments without a national identification number (RUN).

In conclusion, this study presents a methodology that contributes to international migration statistics by integrating census data with diverse administrative data. While recognizing the inherent uncertainties in estimating the population with irregular migration status, the results offer valuable insights for targeted public policy design and demonstrate potential for adaptation in other countries, which would thereby improve the quality and comparability of regional migration data.

Structure and contents of the AZR

The *Ausländerzentralregister* (AZR, Central Register of Foreigners) is Germany's primary administrative register for non-German nationals living in Germany. Established in 1953 and governed by law (*Gesetz über das Ausländerzentralregister*), the AZR plays a central role in federal and local migration governance, strategic planning as well as in daily

migration-related administrative activities. The data is entered into the register primarily by local immigration offices (*Ausländerbehörden*) as well as other public institutions such as the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*, BAMF) or federal and state police forces. Various public authorities use