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Use of longitudinal data for migration statistics

The German Central Register of Foreigners as a longitudinal data source**Note by the Federal Statistical Office, Germany****Abstract*

There is a growing demand for more and better migration statistics, particularly at an international level. Experts see great potential in using longitudinal data within migration statistics. In Germany, the Central Register of Foreigners (CRF) qualifies as a potential longitudinal data source. Statistical data sets from the CRF are created via annual register excerpts made at defined due dates. With a unique Person Identifier (PI) used in all these excerpts from 2007 onwards, the annual stock data can be combined to create a longitudinal data set.

The annual CRF statistical data sets from 2007 to 2017 contain altogether 86.6 million records on the active stock. The longitudinal data set includes 14.8 million records of foreigners registered in the active stock in at least one year from 2007 to 2017. On average, time-dependent data exists for 53.3% of all time references in the data set. With only 46.7% of the annual data missing, the data source may qualify as rather well stocked given the foreign population increased by 58% from 2007 to 2017.

The potential of the longitudinal data source was explored with a focus on

- factors influencing post-immigration internal mobility of foreigners, and
- the transition into and out of humanitarian protection.

The initial findings look promising; they encourage tapping the full potential of the new data source.

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I. Introduction

1. In 2017, a total of 19.3 million people in Germany had foreign roots, that is, they themselves or their parents did not have German citizenship by birth. Instead, they had gained it as ethnic German repatriates, by naturalisation or adoption, or they were foreigners without German citizenship. This *population with a migrant background* accounted for 23 percent of the total population (83 million) in 2017. In 2005, the relevant population of 15 million had accounted for no more than 18 percent of the total population. In 2017, the 10.6 million foreigners accounted for nearly 49 percent of the population with a migrant background and a good 11 percent of the total population. All of these are covered by the Central Register of Foreigners (AZR). The AZR was established in 1967. Since German reunification in 1990 it has contained data for Germany as a whole. The bodies of official statistics receive selected AZR data – the so-called statistical data set – and make use of the AZR as a source of data for compiling statistics of foreigners.¹

II. The Central Register of Foreigners (AZR)

2. The Central Register of Foreigners (AZR) contains demographic and migration-related data on the “foreign population registered in Germany”. These data refer not only to foreign persons who, according to authority information, are registered in Germany at the reference date, that is, who are staying in the country (*active stock*). Instead, they also concern people who were registered at an earlier time and, according to authority information, do not stay in Germany on the reference day because, for instance, they moved away or died (*inactive stock*).

3. Every year, the Federal Statistical Office receives a register excerpt (reference date: 31 December) from the register-keeping authority, namely the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). This excerpt contains the legally prescribed “facts and information stored for statistical purposes”. As of 2007, the foreigners in the AZR have been distinguished by a cross-period and uniform personal identifier (PI), which is referred to as anonymized AZR code. The PI has made it possible to monitor the foreign population over a period of 11 years now (2007 until 2017) and to observe their residence status and migration-related statistical information based on the individual reference dates. Identification of the original AZR code is however prevented by applying an anonymization procedure.

4. The AZR contains some variables on residence and residence permit status and few socio-demographic variables. This allows the residence permit status (EU freedom of settlement, permanent and temporary residence permit, temporary suspension of deportation, “permission to remain” while an asylum application is pending, and “requirement to leave”) and a status as a refugee or asylum seeker to be properly observed over time. However, there are many meaningful migration-related analyses that cannot take place due to the necessary data not being contained in the AZR. This applies to analysing educational attainment, labour force participation or earned income. The AZR neither includes information on family relationships,

¹ Intercensal population updates, too, provide information on the foreign population. The official proportion of foreigners is calculated from this source as it also includes information on the number of Germans. However, the duration of stay and the residence or protection status are only registered in the AZR.

that is, links are not in place between spouses or cohabiting partners, or between parents and children. Besides, not all members of a large number of families are registered because children with a German citizenship option by birth who are born to two foreign parents are not covered as they are regarded as “Germans”. Furthermore, the housing address is not indicated. Regional information (typically at district level) on the residence of the foreign people registered in the AZR can only be derived from information on the location of the competent foreigners’ authority (ABH).² Movements within an ABH’s area of responsibility are not shown.

5. Before 2007, the AZR provided much less information on the foreigners’ residence and migration status than today. For instance, only 17 of today’s 159 different residence titles were already in use in 2003.

6. In the past few years, the public interest in facts and information relating to residence status or residence permits has significantly grown, not least because the number of foreigners seeking protection or applying for asylum in Germany has substantially increased since 2015. The AZR has a great potential as a longitudinal data source as it provides comparable information for a large number of persons over a period of up to 11 years. Thus changes in residence status or residence permit status can be quantified, and the circumstances that have affected these changes be analysed.

7. At the international level, too, efforts are being stepped up to analyse, based on longitudinal data, the situation of immigrants and foreigners in the host countries. It is of interest to understand whether and to what extent the life situation of immigrants or foreigners differs from that of the native population, what factors have an effect on the duration of stay in the host country and what circumstances encourage the foreign population to decide to temporarily or permanently move to another country.

8. The AZR gives an answer to several of these questions. How mobile is the foreign population in Germany? Is mobility higher than among the native population? Do foreign people move more often from one district to another? What factors influence their mobility? Sex, age, duration of stay, citizenship, residence permit status? How long does it take before a foreigner gets a permanent residence title in Germany? What factors influence this duration? Sex, age, citizenship, residence status? Do changes in the residence permit status affect the mobility of the foreign population? Which changes in the residence permit status increase mobility and which do not? Does an increased mobility affect all regions to the same extent or are there regional differences? How long does it take before a decision is taken on an asylum application? What factors influence this duration? The date of first entry into the country, citizenship? Are there regional differences in the duration of the process? Is there a difference in duration depending on whether protection status was granted or refused?

III. Establishing the AZR as a longitudinal data source

9. This chapter describes the approach taken to setting up the longitudinal data source and the analysis options provided by its data in comparison to other conventional cross-sectional data sources. Due to limited resource it will, however, only be possible to answer very few of the

² The AZR does not contain the housing address of a foreign person. This information is only included in the decentralised stock of data of the relevant foreigners’ authority from which the AZR data are derived. This principle has actually been in place since the AZR was established.

questions above. Regarding the following description, the evaluations presented are rather incidental by-products. The author has deliberately refrained from documenting all feasible analyses comprehensively and especially from presenting spectacular results.

A. The master data set

10. In the years between 2007 and 2017, the number of foreigners registered in Germany ranged between 6.7 and 10.6 million (Table 1). The total of 86.6 million registered cases represented 14.8 million foreigners who stayed and were registered in Germany at least in one of the years from 2007 to 2017. The longitudinal data source contains a record for each of these foreigners. All in all it comprises a total of 14.8 million records. If the data source were actually complete - that is, if all 14.8 million people had stayed in Germany during each of the 11 years - it would cover a total of 162.5 million individual periods of observation. As a matter of fact, however, the source has 86.6 million observation periods, which means that 53.3% of the theoretically possible observation periods are available for purposes of longitudinal analysis.

Table 1: Foreigners registered on 31 December

Year	Number of cases
2007	6.744.879
2008	6.727.618
2009	6.694.776
2010	6.753.621
2011	6.930.896
2012	7.213.708
2013	7.633.628
2014	8.152.968
2015	9.107.893
2016	10.039.080
2017	10.623.941
Together	86.623.008

11. The largest proportion of foreigners, namely 4.5 million, were staying in Germany continuously over the period of 11 years (30%).

Table 2: Foreigners by duration of stay

Years of stay	Numer of cases	Percentage of	
		cases	data
1	2.585.964	17,5	3,0
2	2.038.382	13,8	4,7
3	1.532.879	10,4	5,3
4	1.012.354	6,9	4,7
5	782.005	5,3	4,5
6	621.636	4,2	4,3
7	516.154	3,5	4,2
8	428.947	2,9	4,0
9	388.642	2,6	4,0
10	383.143	2,6	4,4
11	4.481.684	30,3	56,9
Together	14.771.790	100,0	100,0

12. They were followed by foreigners who stayed in the country for no more than one year (2.6 million or 18%), two years (2.0 million or 14%) or three and four years (1.5 million or 10% and 1.0 million or 7%, respectively). These five categories account for 79% of all cases (cf. Table 2).

13. The data source has a *wide format* design, which means that the values measured for the 11 years under observation are each recorded under separate variables. The material comprises a

total of 115 subject-related and 20 technical variables. 110 of the 115 subject-related variables refer to the 11 different observation periods, while five of them are time-independent (identifier, sex, citizenship, date of birth and date of first entry). All time-independent variables and all technical variables have values. On average, 59 of the 110 variables referring to the observation periods have values, while values are not in place for the remaining 51 variables. This means that 38% of the 1.9 billion cells of the material do not include values or, in other words, are “missing”.

B. Data sets for specific analytical purposes

14. Transforming the material from a wide format into a modified long format – and, at the same time, skipping irrelevant data sets and variables – has proved to be useful for specific purposes of analysis. When analysing mobility, for instance, all cases can be ignored where the regional data have not changed. Regarding the transition from or towards a specific residence permit status, all cases can be excluded which do not fulfil the condition of this status. Wide format is transformed into long format by flexible programs using classification variables which, for each data set, describe the condition of a variable over time in the form of a string (pattern variables).

15. The pattern variable of the residence status comprises 11 characters each of which has three values: “1” stands for “registered as staying in Germany at the given time” (member of active stock), “0” stands for “previously staying in Germany, but not registered as staying in the country at the given time” (member of inactive stock) and the dot “(.)” stands for “not yet or no longer contained in the register at the given time”. The latter applies to periods before first entry or after deletion in the register (e.g. after naturalisation).

Table 3: Pattern values of residence status

PatternDA	Number of cases	Percentage of all cases
11111111111	4.481.684	30,3
.....11	1.242.144	8,4
.....1	1.116.509	7,6
.....111	987.227	6,7
.....1111	595.563	4,0
.....11111	436.839	3,0
....111111	325.141	2,2
...1111111	242.043	1,6
.....100	213.612	1,4
...1111111	181.777	1,2
...		
Total	14.771.790	100,0

16. The pattern variable has more than 5,500 different values. The ten most frequent values are shown in Table 3. The 9.8 million persons, to whom these ten values apply, account for 66.4% of all cases in the data source. The category which is by far the most frequent one covers the 4.5 million foreign people who were staying in Germany continuously between 2007 and 2017. They account for not less than 30.3% of all cases. Foreigners entering the country first in 2016 and 2017, rank second and third, respectively. They are followed in places four to eight and ten by foreigners who entered the country for the first time in preceding years. Those who entered the country first in 2015 but have no longer stayed in Germany since 2016 rank ninth (214,000).

17. There are other pattern variables that can be used to select foreigners based on their residence permit status or their protection (i.e. refugee/asylum) status at a given time. These pattern variables have the same structure though the number of different values is much higher.

The protection status has 12 and the residence permit status 15 alternative options, as compared to the residence status with only three options. These pattern variables show that the most frequent value of the protection status (“undecided”=”1” in 2016 and 2017) ranks only tenth as regards the residence permit status (cf. Table 4). The nearly 2.3 million cases which show a protection status at least in one period account for 16.0% of all cases (cf. Table 5).

Table 4: Pattern values of residence permit status (RPS) and protection status (PS)

PatternRPS	Number of cases	Percentage of all cases	PatternRPS|PS	Number of cases	Percentage of all cases
BBBBBBBBBB	1.603.979	10,9	BBBBBBBBBB|11	1.602.486	10,8
CCCCCCCCC	1.598.435	10,8	CCCCCCCCC|1	1.464.937	9,9
.....B	651.436	4,4	.....B|11	651.409	4,4
.....BB	404.940	2,7	.....BB|11	404.906	2,7
.....BBB	369.001	2,5	.....BBB|11	368.996	2,5
.....BBBB	315.287	2,1	.....BBBB|11	315.285	2,1
.....BBBBB	250.294	1,7	.....BBBBB|11	250.288	1,7
.....BBBBBB	183.188	1,2	.....BBBBBB|11	183.183	1,2
CCCCCB	153.299	1,0	CCCCCB|11	151.487	1,0
.....K	138.430	0,9	.....11	146.063	1,0
...			...		
Total	14.771.790	100,0	Total	14.771.790	100,0

Table 5: Pattern values of protection status (PS cases only)

PatternPSOnly	Number of cases	Percentage of all protection cases	Percentage of all cases
.....11	146.063	6,2	1,0
.....1	96.782	4,1	0,7
.....44	77.424	3,3	0,5
2222222222	77.049	3,3	0,5
.....144	73.917	3,1	0,5
.....15	61.686	2,6	0,4
.....14	51.149	2,2	0,3
.....K44	51.098	2,2	0,3
.....55	41.178	1,7	0,3
.....100	40.008	1,7	0,3
...			
Total	2.370.245	100,0	16,0

18. Pattern variables allow easily and flexibly the generation of data sets adjusted to answer any given question. Basically, there are the following options:

- a) Data sets of foreign people who were registered in Germany *in two successive years*. Those people who stayed for a period longer than two years are several times included in the data set; those who were staying continuously in the country between 2007 and 2017 are included ten times, namely for the ‘starting years’ 2007 to 2016.
- b) Data sets of foreign people who were registered in Germany *at any two points in time*, e.g. in 2010 and 2015, as the beginning and the end of the given five-year period.
- c) Data sets of foreign people who were staying in Germany continuously *between any two points in time*, e.g. from 2010 to 2015. As regards the special case of people staying in the country continuously from 2007 to 2017, the relevant file fully corresponds to the original material.
- d) Data sets of foreign people who stayed in Germany in one, but not in the other of two years. The first group comprises first arrivals and re-arrivals and also births which occurred in between the relevant points in time, while the other group includes departures, deaths and ex officio de-registrations and also deletions in the register during the relevant period. These data sets can be created either together with the data files mentioned in items 1 to 3 or as a separate file.

19. All data sets can be further confined by adding more conditions. For instance, the group of persons selected in items a) to d) can be further restricted to people who had a certain residence permit status at certain points in time or who changed their place of residence in Germany in between two points in time. Persons granted protection for the first time are for instance people who stayed in Germany in two successive years and whose protection status was “not yet decided” in the first and “protection granted” in the second period.

20. The data sets can be structured and selected based on demographic variables and variables relating to residence permit status. The demographic variables include, above all, sex, age and the duration of stay, whereas the variables relating to residence status refer to citizenship and residence permit status or, if applicable, protection status. Table 6 contains all personal data that can be used for filtering the statistical population.

Table 6: Personal characteristics to confine the statistical population

Variable	Variable values in the data set
Sex	2
Marital status	4
Age	
• at reference time	any ¹
• at date of first entry	any ¹
Duration of stay	
• since first entry/ birth ²	any ¹
• since last entry	any ¹
Citizenship	200
Place of residence (county-based delimitation)	394
Residence permit status	12
Protection status	9
Period of the last residence permit status or protection status	any ³

¹ The age and duration of stay (also in combination) can be classified as ‘any’ because information is available on the dates of birth, first entry and re-entry.

² The duration of stay corresponds to the age of foreigners born in Germany.

³ The period of validity can be classified as ‘any’ because information is available on the date of granting a residence permit or protection status category.

C. Data sets added for additional analytical purposes

21. Additional information is required for some analytical purposes, for instance on the reference population. To calculate the proportion of foreign people changing their place of residence, information is required on the initial foreign population at the place of residence from which the persons move. Regarding the proportion of protection status recognition, the persons seeking protection whose protection status has changed from unsettled to recognised are related to the total of people seeking protection whose status was unsettled at the beginning of the relevant period. The reference population (stock data) can be filtered by the same variables (cf. Table 6) as the statistical population (flow data).

22. Other analyses are based on the characteristics of the districts from which / to which the place of residence is changed. Common hypotheses are based on data regarding population density (there is a preference to move from sparsely populated to densely populated regions), the number of foreigners by citizenship (diaspora hypothesis: foreign immigrants prefer regions with many fellow countrymen over those with few or none), or the relative income situation (welfare hypothesis: richer regions are preferred over poorer ones). Furthermore, the distance between the previous and the current place of residence can be specified using the distance between the geo-coordinates of the two district centres. Table 7 contains the additional district-related data available for analysis purposes.

Table 7: Data for regional classification

Variable	Variable values in the data set
Multi-annual data	
Administrative districts	394
Länder	16
East-West breakdown:	3
<i>city states (3), (non-city) Länder - West (8) and East (5)</i>	
Breakdown by urban and rural areas:	2
<i>towns constituting districts in their own right (105), rural districts (289)</i>	
Distances between administrative districts	154.842
<i>394*393 districts</i>	
Data for specific years (11 years)¹	
Population density (persons/ km ²)	any | 5 ²
Proportion of foreigners	any | 5 ²
Per capita GDP	any | 5 ²
¹ All data are missing for 2017; additionally, per capita GDP data are not available for 2016. Most recent available data are used for the years for which data are missing.	
² The data can be classified as 'any'; for purposes of better comparability, the data are annually grouped in the form of quintiles.	

23. For performance reasons, these data are kept in separate files and are added to the data sets selected for specific purposes of analysis only when required.

IV. Analysis examples

24. As we were in no position to comprehensively evaluate the analytical potential embedded in the AZR longitudinal data set, we chose two topics for exemplary analysis: (1) the mobility of the foreign population and (2) the transition from regular residence permit status to protection status (as an asylum seeker or refugee) and back. There was no particular reason for choosing these two topics over possible alternatives.

A. Example 1: Mobility of the foreign population

25. Mobility in this chapter refers to – post-immigration – internal migration. Due to the peculiarities of the data set, it is only possible to analyze mobility across district borders and mobility discernible via different regional affiliation at the reference point in time. Foreigners changing their place of residence without crossing county borders will go unnoticed, as will persons who moved more than once within a reporting year (all moves other than the last one will not be recorded).

26. Internal mobility is not as prominent as external mobility: There were 7.5 million cases of first and 1.1 million cases of reentry into Germany from 2007 to 2017 and there were 3.5 million cases of emigration compared to 2.8 million cases of internal movement. On average, 4.0 % of all foreigners ‘active’ in two consecutive years were registered in different districts in the first and second year.

27. But the probability of being a subject of internal mobility changes with both personal and migration-related characteristics, with the place of residence, and with time. Differences by gender and marital status are small (men are more mobile than women, non-married persons more than married ones), they are moderate by age and residence status (young foreigners are more mobile than older ones, asylum seeker and refugees more than foreigners with a permanent residence title), and they are pronounced by duration of stay and citizenship (recently arrived persons are more than persons with a long duration of stay, Asians more than non EU-

Europeans). In general, mobility increased from 2007 to 2017, even if controlled for the growing population count and – thus the growing population at risk. There are distinctive regional pattern, but these appear more pronounced when analyzed in administrative than in geographic border lines: Emigration is highest in rural districts in East German Länder and lowest in Berlin, Hamburg and selected rural districts in southern Bavaria and western North Rhine-Westphalia.

28. There are cumulative interdependencies between the aforementioned influential factors: Internal mobility is lowest among 60 year-old married female citizens of a European country but not an EU-Member State, who live for more than 20 years in Berlin with a permanent residence title: only 0.2% of these persons moved residence between 2007 and 2017. On the other hand, mobility is highest among 20 to 30 year-old unmarried male citizens of a Near and Middle East or a Central Asian country, who live – with a temporary residence status – in a rural district in one of the East German Länder for less than two years: 66.0% of these persons changes their place of residence between 2007 and 2017.

29. From the 4.5 million foreigners, who were registered as living in Germany from 2007 to 2017, 84.0% stayed at the same place throughout the whole time, 11.0% moved once, and 3.6% twice or more often. Those moving particularly often belonged to the person groups described above as showing particularly high mobility rates. Furthermore, the data support all common migration hypotheses: foreigners move from sparsely to densely populated regions (density hypothesis), from areas with a low to areas with a high percentage share of foreigners (diaspora hypothesis) and from less affluent to wealthy areas (relative income hypothesis). It is difficult to decide which hypothesis is supported best, however, as densely populated districts also show above average percentage shares of foreigners and per capita GDP values.

30. The majority of internal mobility is local though. On average, there is a distance of 139 km between the geographical center of the district before and after a move; in 43.5 % of all cases, this distance is less than 50 km and in only 16.4% it is more than 304 km³ – on average amounting to 26 and 430 km, respectively.

B. Example 2: Beginning and end of protection status

31. The general public has a very fuzzy perception of how foreigners become “foreigners seeking protection”, i.e. refugees or asylum seekers, and how this status may end. Mostly, it is assumed that asylum seekers enter the country immediately before applying for asylum and leave more or less immediately, after their application is denied. They hardly concern themselves with the situation of foreigners living in Germany with protection granted temporarily or permanently. How else could there be questions such as “When does a foreigner stop to be a refugee, and what does he or she turn into afterwards?”

32. A foreigner is considered to hold “protection status”, if he or she

- a) applied for asylum and the authorities haven’t decided on the application yet (*open or undecided protection*), or
- b) if he or she has been granted protection (*granted protection*), or

³ 304 km were the average distance between districts, if each of the 154,842 theoretically possible moves between these 394 districts had occurred exactly once.

- c) if he or she has been denied protection but continues to stay in the country (*denied protection*).

33. From 2007 to 2017, there were altogether 9.0 million people holding one of these three protection statuses at one point in time. In 74.5% of these cases, the person had already been granted protection before. In 16.3% of the cases, the foreigner had, for the first time, entered the country before applying for asylum, and in further 1.2% her or she had done so after having been abroad and re-entering the country. In the remaining 8.0% of cases, the foreigners were registered with a “non protection” residence status, in 3.8% of the cases with a regular residence permit and in 4.2% as foreigners “without legal residence status” – thus “required to leave”.

34. Between 2007 and 2017, additional 20,000 foreigners who were denied protection and 2,000 foreigners, who were granted protection before reapplied for asylum, hoping for a different decision or for a “better” protection level, i.e. a Geneva Convention refugee status instead of subsidiary protection.

35. There were 1.1 million asylum decisions from 2007 to 2017. In 80.9% of all cases protection was granted with the percentage slightly lower in 2014–2017 (80.5%) than in 2007–2013 (81.9%). The decision process took on average 0.8 years, if protection was granted, and 0.9 years if denied.⁴

36. Again, there are clear interdependencies between length and outcome of the asylum decision process on one side and both demographic and migration-related characteristics of the applicant and regional influences on the other. The probability of being granted asylum varies with gender, age, marital status, duration of stay, and citizenship of the person and – partly – with the region, i.e. in which of the Länder the decision was taken. Again, there was a cumulative effect of the influence of these factors.

37. 95.9% of all female married asylum seekers, aged 60 years and more, holding an Asian citizenship and residing in Germany for 10 to 20 years in one of the Länder in West Germany were granted protection – 95.4% from 2007 to 2013 and 97.1% from 2014 to 2017. On the other end, the same decision only occurred in 60.1% of all cases when the applicants were unmarried and male, aged 20 to 20, holding an African citizenship and residing in Germany for 2 to 5 years in one of Länder in East Germany – 66.9% of the were granted protection from 2007 to 2013 and 57.5% from 2014 to 2017.

38. 2.4 million foreigners were registered as “seeking protection” for at least one year during the period 2007 to 2017. Their average duration of stay was 4.4 years, of which 3.7 years as seeking protection. For 1.7 million foreigners, the protection status remained unchanged over the whole observation period, for additional 714,000, it changes at least once, of which there were 12,000 cases with three or more changes. The duration of the “undecided protection” status was particularly short for applicants from Kosovo, the Ukraine and Turkey, and particularly long for those from Afghanistan, Iran and Eritrea.

39. In 2017, there were 1.7 million of foreigners seeking protection; on average, they had lived 3.7 years in protection status. In 2007, the respective numbers were 460,000 persons and 7.5 years. Thus, living in protections status does not appear to be a short-lived issue. After all,

⁴ The longer time duration is at least partly caused by “asylum denied” decisions are more likely to be questioned in court than “asylum granted” decisions. During the pending court decision, the foreigner continues to hold the “undecided” protection status.

there were 174,000 foreigners who, for the whole of the 11 years between 2007 and 2017, lived in Germany continuously holding one particular protection status. 75% of them did so with protection granted and 7% with protection denied, of which two thirds with a temporary suspension of deportation.

V. Summary and outlook

40. The AZR is a very rich longitudinal data source, as was clearly shown by the few exemplary analyses outlined here. However, the potential is far from being fully exploited. The following questions are examples of research that might yield new, unexpected and deep insights:

- On average, how long does it take before a foreigner receives a permanent residence status? What are the differences and what role do sex, age, marital status, duration of stay, citizenship and place of residence play?
- How many foreigners hold the same residence permit status at the beginning and the end of a five-year or ten-year period, especially if this status does not concern permanent residence or EU freedom of settlement? How many people held this status during the whole period? How many held this status with interruptions, and what was those people's status during the periods of interruption?
- Do foreigners who interrupt their stay in Germany for a stay abroad afterwards return to the same region in Germany which they left?
- When does a person seeking protection or a refugee cease to be such? What leads to the protection status to end? What are the differences and what role do sex, age, marital status, duration of stay, citizenship, residence status and place of residence play?
- Does the probability of a change of residence increase after a decision has been taken on the asylum application of a person seeking protection and thus prohibition to leave an officially assigned area has ceased?
- On average, for how long do foreigners with a temporary suspension of deportation stay in Germany? How long is the period between the beginning and the end of this suspension? What residence status follows temporary suspension of deportation – aside from departure? What are the differences and what role do sex, age, marital status, duration of stay, citizenship and place of residence play?
- What causes a foreigner to lose his or her residence permit status and becoming “required to leave”?⁵ What was the last legal residence permit status before? For how long do foreigners continue to stay in Germany after being given the status “required to leave”, and how many of them actually leave the country? What residence status follows a “required to leave” for those who continue to stay? What are the differences and what role do sex, age, marital status, duration of stay, citizenship and place of residence play?

⁵ In Germany, legal residence status requires the possession of a residence permit, a visa, a temporary suspension of deportation or it requires being subject of an ongoing asylum application with the decision still pending. Foreigners without any the above are considered as not being a legal resident. This does, however, not mean that the authorities have already started to work on the deportation of these foreigners.