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Study

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Immigrant women having signed the CAI in 2009

In 2009 France received 97,736 migrants on a first residence permit, signatories of the Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration (CAI, reception and integration contract). Women are the majority, 51,092, representing 52.3% of signatories. Most of these immigrated for family reasons and so the administrative processing of their applications has been quicker than for men. Although their level of education is higher they have experienced greater problems on the employment market. Very many are unemployed or have become housewives. A few months after obtaining their residence permit all of the women do however express satisfaction with their experience in France. 97% of women declare that coming to France was the right decision.

More than 8 out of 10 women who have a first residence permit had a family reason for coming

The women who obtained their first residence permit in 2009 are around 2 years younger than the men. They are on average 31.6 years old while the men are 33.6 years old.

The relative preponderance of the different reasons for applying for residence is different for men and for women. More than 8 out of 10 women have come to France for family reasons, versus 6 out of 10 men (Table below). More than half are members of French families. Two thirds of the women granted residence for family reasons come from Africa, in particular from the Maghreb (42%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (21%) (Box 1).

Table : Breakdown of men and women according to the reason for applying for residence

Reason for residence application	Men (%)	Women (%)
Professional migration	15.2	3.5
Family migration	62.3	81.5
<i>Family reunion</i>	3.3	14.1
<i>Member of French family</i>	44.1	53.3
<i>Personal and family links</i>	14.9	14.1
Refugees and Expatriates	15.4	10.0
Others	7.1	5.1
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Elipa survey, 1st wave (2010), SSM Immigration

They are therefore less often admitted for work or international protection: 3.5% and 10% for women and 15.2 and 15.4% for men respectively. The women admitted for professional reasons come from Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb, while the refugees and expatriates come from Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (30% each) and then from Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (19%).

73% of women are married and 10% are in a couple, so only 17% are single or without a partner. These categories represent 60%, 18% and 22% of the men respectively. The family motivation, which implies that there is a legitimate partner, logically implies a higher frequency of marriage.

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Box 1: Geographical distribution

Third countries are distinguished from the European Economic Area and Switzerland due to the different legal systems for admission and residence of foreigners in France.

The *European Economic Area* (EEA) consists of all the member states of the European Union (EU-27) and three countries of the *European Free Trade Association* (EFTA): Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Europe, for the purposes of this study, outside the EEA and Switzerland, is Albania, Andorra, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

According to the ISO (international standards organisation), and the list of countries established by the United Nations, *Turkey* is in Asia.

Sub-Saharan Africa is understood here to mean the countries previously under French administration: Benin, Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Centrafrica, Comoros, the Popular Republic of the Congo, Ivory Coast, Djibouti, Gabon, the Republic of Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Gambia, Chad and Togo.

The European part of the *Commonwealth of Independent States* (CIS) is made up of Byelorussia, the Russian Federation, Moldavia, and the Ukraine, and the Transcaucasian / Asian part of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (in Transcaucasia), Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan (in Central Asia).

The procedures followed by women to obtain their residence permit are quicker

This difference in the reason for admission is reflected in their experience between arrival on French soil and the time when the residence permit is granted. More than 80% of women arrive with their papers in order, and 7 out of 10 women have always had a legal status. For men, the proportion arrived with their papers in order is only 70%, and only half have always had a legal status. So it is women who most often have a legal status, before obtaining their residence permit.

At the time of the survey women had been residing in France for an average of 2.8 years versus 4.9 years for men. 58% of them had been in France for less than two years whereas this applied to only 37% of men. The administrative procedures followed by women to obtain a residence permit seem to be quicker.

So women, mostly coming to France for family reasons, have had an easier time than men. Not only do they less often find themselves in an illegal situation, but the steps they had to take have been greatly facilitated and therefore quicker.

Better educated women, and with higher qualifications...

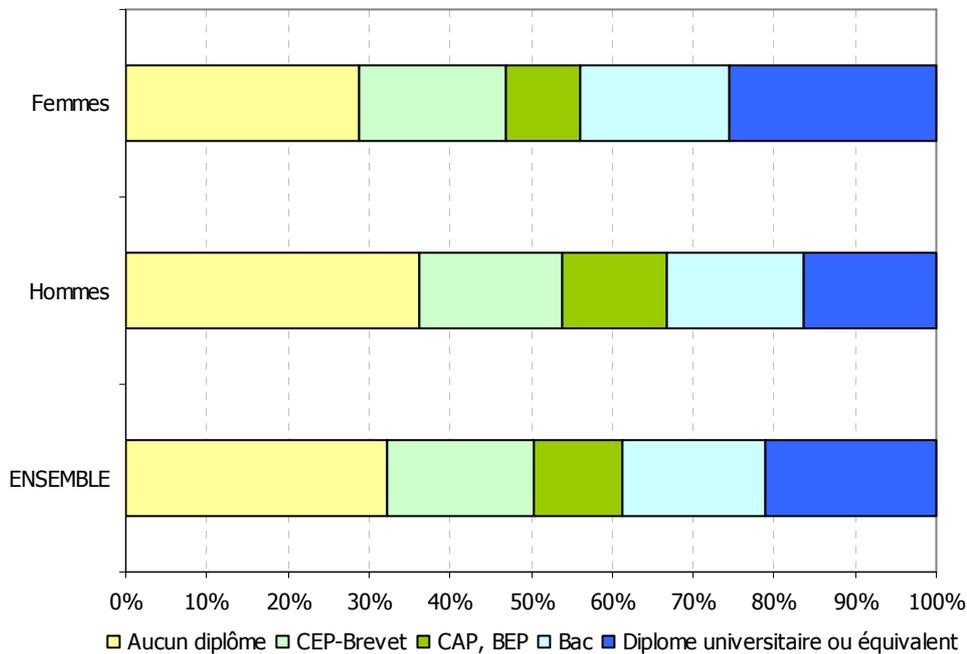
Generally speaking, the new migrants are poorly qualified (Graph 1). Almost one out of three have no qualification at all. At the other end of the scale, two out of ten migrants have a higher education diploma. As a comparison, using the Labor force survey 2009, 19% of non-immigrants in France have no qualifications or the certificate of primary studies (38% for first-time arrivals) but the percentage of higher education diplomas is barely higher: 25% for non-immigrants, 21% for first-time arrivals.

This distribution is different according to gender. 29% of women have no qualifications versus 36% for men. Of those with qualifications, almost 36% of women have a university diploma or equivalent, while this is the case for only one man out of four. Not only are women better qualified than men but they also are more likely to have a higher education diploma. The advantage in terms of education does not however translate into a work situation that is any more favourable for them. One explanation would be that access to professional areas that can be accessed by those with higher level qualifications is all the more difficult as minorities are generally underrepresented and so, probably, barely recognised [1]. Also, whatever the level of qualification, almost all of the signatories of the CAI have a foreign diploma, generally not much validated in France.

1. It is the highest diploma obtained when the survey was conducted that was recorded, whether in France or abroad.

2. Insee data, www.insee.fr, Emploi surveys of 1st and 4th quarters of 2009, results as a yearly average. Sample: people aged 15 to 64 in metropolitan France.

Graph 1 : Breakdown between men and women according to the highest qualification obtained



Yellow : no diploma Light green : primary school, vocational Green : professionn vocational Light blue : university entrance level Blue : university diploma or equivalence

Conclusion : 28.7% of women have no diploma.

Source : *Elipa survey, 1st wave (2010), SSM Immigration*

... but less well integrated into the employment market

More than 7 out of 10 migrants said that they had a job before their migration, and only 6% that they were unemployed (Graph 2), the remainder corresponding to those who were inactive. Most men were employed before their migration. The majority of women were also employed (almost 6 out of 10) but a non-negligible percentage of them were housewives (almost 3 out of 10). Active women were unemployed more often than men, 10% of them looking for work versus 6% of men. Therefore, there were male-female inequalities in the home country before they migrated: although mostly active, a non-negligible percentage of women were housewives; and when active they were more likely to lose their job.

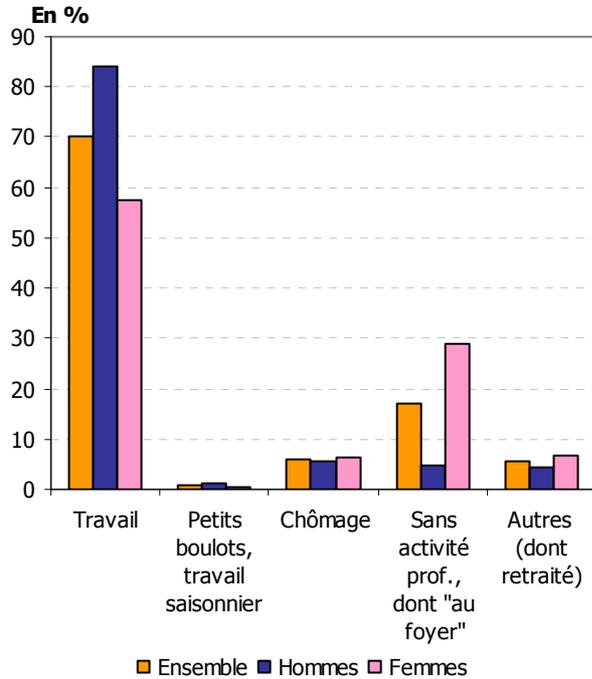
Following their migration to France, and after obtaining their first residence permit, their situation changed: their position on the job market deteriorated and some women, previously active, become housewives (Graph 3).

In France, more than 48% of migrants work and almost a quarter are registered unemployed. The women who were mostly active before migrating (64% of women) are fewer on the job market but the majority are still in work or seeking work (53%). 37% of women are now housewives. So, some women, who before migrating were working or seeking work, have now become inactive. For example, 28% of women who were employed or did odd jobs before migrating are now inactive in France. These are mainly women who are better qualified with a diploma that is superior to that of other women (22% have no diploma while more than 30% have a higher education diploma), with children, who migrated for family reasons. More than half are in France to rejoin their French partner.

It seems that for a number of women migration had the immediate consequence that they became inactive. Among the active women, more than half are unemployed. So migration reduces the chances of working, particularly for women. The second and third phases in the longitudinal survey of the integration of first-time arrivals (Elipa), to be conducted in 2011 and then 2013, are going to look into whether this situation is temporary or not (Box 2).

3. including odd jobs.

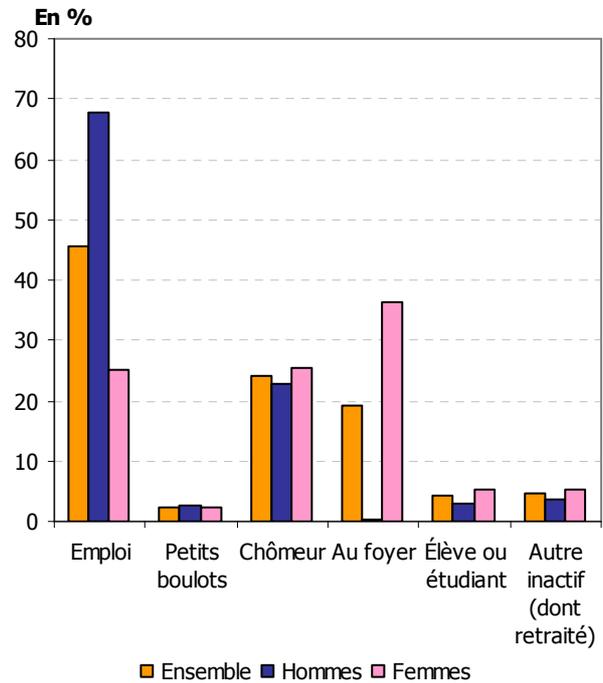
Graph 2 : Situation before migration (excluding students)



Work	Odd jobs, seasonal work	Unemployment	No prof. activity, incl. "at home"	Others (incl. retired)
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Conclusions : 70% of migrants with a residence permit in 2009 were working before migrating
 Scope : People non student at the time of migration
 Source : *Elipa survey 1st wave (2010), SSM Immigration*

Graphique 3 : Situation in France at the moment of interviewing (excluding people before migration)



Work	Odd jobs	Unemployed	At home	School or student	Other inactive (incl. retired)
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Conclusions : 46% of migrants with a residence permit in 2009 had a job when the survey was conducted
 Scope : People non student at the time of migration
 Source : *Elipa survey 1st wave (2010), SSM Immigration*

What is the diploma's effect on finding work ?

Women who were working in the country from which they emigrated and who became inactive in France are better qualified and are more likely to have a higher education diploma. The result is that women who are still on the job market are less likely to be qualified and are less well qualified. Is the high percentage of women who are job seeking in France a consequence of the selection of women on the job market with a lower level of education, a selection that has occurred following migration?

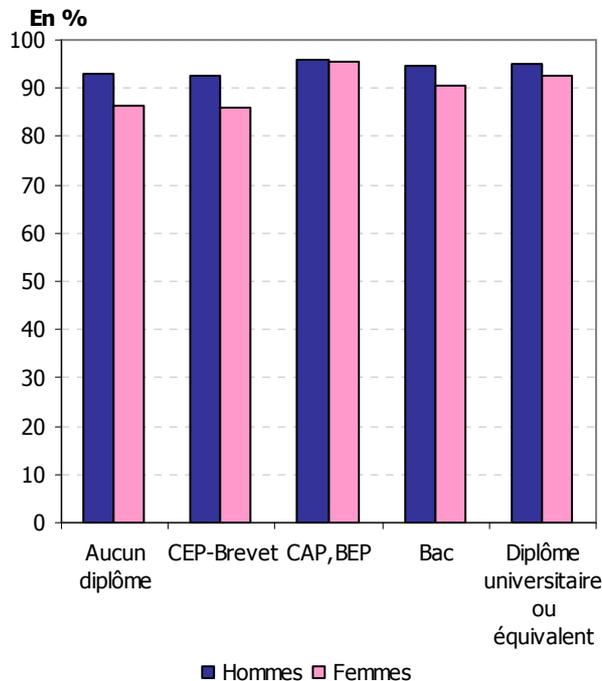
To verify this, an analysis for a population with the same level of education is needed. Whatever the highest level of diploma, men were more likely to be employed than women before migration (Graph 4). There was therefore, even before migration, a slight inequality on the job market against women at all levels of qualification with the exception of the CAP-BEP (*professional, vocational*) and the higher education diploma.

After migration, the differences between employment rates according to gender increase (Graph 5). The employment situation for women is such that, for equal qualifications, the differences were found to be between 18.4 and 26.8 points between male and female rates of employment in France, against a maximum difference of 6.7 points before migration. So, the fact that women, more likely to be qualified, become housewives after migrating cannot explain the inequalities observed on the current job market for first-time arrivals. Migration to France, rather than hiding or attenuating these inequalities, in fact tends to have the opposite effect of increasing them.

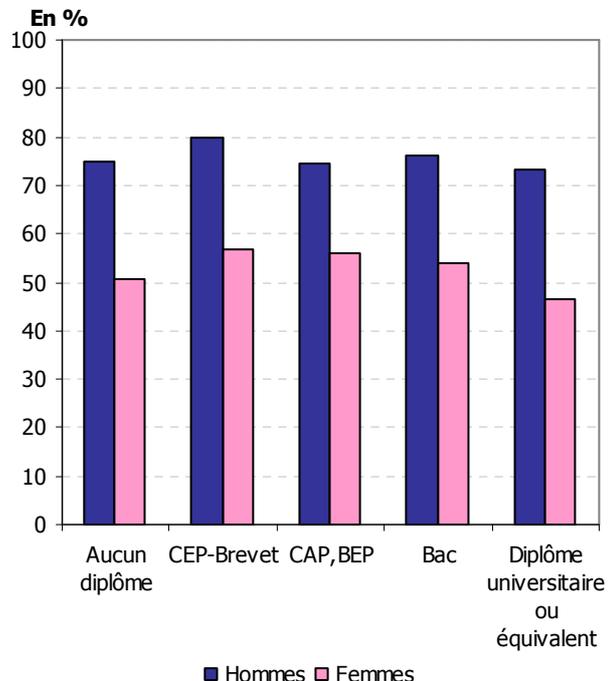
4.The highest level of diploma obtained before migration, outside France.

5.Here the employment rate is defined as the number of people working among the active population, not the people working among the population of working age

Graph 4 : Percentage of the active population in employment before migration (excluding students) according to gender and qualifications



Graph 5 : Percentage of the active population in employment when the survey was conducted (excluding students before migration) according to gender and qualifications



No diploma	CEP-Brevet (<i>primary school, vocational</i>)	CAP, BEP (<i>professional, vocational</i>)	Bac (<i>university entrance level</i>)	University diploma or equivalent
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Conclusions : Almost 93% of active men and more than 86% of active women having no diploma were working before migrating
 Scope : Active people non students when migrating, according to the highest foreign diploma obtained
 Source : Elipa survey, 1st wave (2010), SSM Immigration

Conclusions : 75% of active men and half of active women having no diploma were working when the survey was conducted
 Scope : Active people non students when the survey was conducted, according to the highest diploma obtained (in France or abroad)
 Source : Elipa survey, 1st wave (2010), SSM Immigration

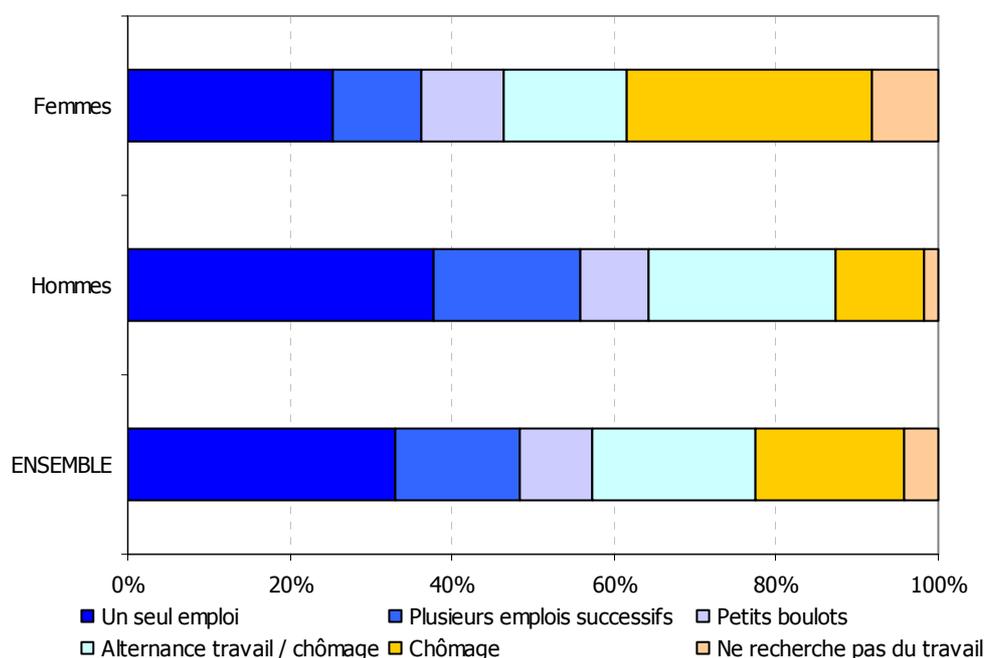
Moreover, the professional career of active women since their arrival in France is also different from that of men (Graph 6). Only a quarter of women had only one job since they arrived in France (versus almost a third of the men) and almost 2 women out of 10 have never worked versus 1 man out of 10. This confirms the fact that migrant women encounter difficulties more often in finding work on the job market. Mainly migrants find work through relations but while 57% of working active men found their job through relations, this proportion only reaches 50% for women. Unless they have a very extensive network they tend to rely on ads.

Nevertheless, their situation on the job market improves over a period of several years. So almost 6 active women out of 10 present in France for less than 2 years are still without work. Once they have been in France for 3-4 years, only 3 out of 10 are still in this situation. It would seem that, even if after a period of time the differences according to the genre are sustained on the job market, the situation for women does improve somewhat. The next round of Elipa surveys will help to confirm this trend or contradict it.

Among women who are housewives, 8 out of 10 declare that they are not looking for work. They cite (directly or indirectly) children as the main reason for not looking for a job. Almost three women out of 10 give health as the reason, including pregnancy and maternity, and 28% say that they have to, or want to, look after children, whether the latter are theirs or those of close relations. However, we cannot know directly, using Elipa data, whether these women look after their children by choice or because they have found no other solution. Plus, migration disrupts the reproductive life of women [2]. As a general rule, their fertility is low before migrating, followed by a period of catch up after migrating, and even when they have migrated relatively late in life.

The barrier of language can be added to these two reasons. 2 women out of 10 declare that they don't speak French well enough at the moment.

Graph 6 : Active men and women according to professional career since arriving in France



Conclusions : 25% of women have had just one job since their arrival in France.

Source : Elipa survey, 1st wave (2010), SSM Immigration

Dark blue : a single job Blue : several successive jobs Pale mauve : odd jobs Pale blue : in and out of the work

Children are mostly looked after by the family or friends

As a general rule, women interviewed do not have their children looked after. Only 30% of them arrange for their children to be minded during the day, understandable if we remember that the percentage of inactive women is high. The use of an external system depends greatly on the situation of the woman in terms of activity. Active women in work are the most numerous to arrange for childcare (62%). On the other hand, only 28% of women out of work and 14% of housewives arrange care for their children. So the more women are drawn away from the labour market the less they ask others to look after their children.

For active women in work it is generally family or friends who help out with children. This is the case for 46% of such women. On the other hand, 54% do use paid child care services: 26% use group care (crèche, leisure centre, day nursery) and 28% prefer individualised childminding (baby-sitter, child-minder). The Labor force survey 2005 shows that, for all active women in work in France, family and friends play this role slightly less (41%) [3]. On the other hand, they use individual childminders much more (39%) and 20% use group services. So, when they use paid childcare services, first-time arrivals use group services more heavily. The more modest finances of these migrant women probably explain why they have to use this cheaper form of care.

Women have greater difficulty in speaking French than men

Another possible reason for women's difficulties in finding work may be their poorer grasp of the French language. The Elipa indicators for languages show that women generally speak French less well than men. Under the CAI scheme [4], language training can be offered by the OFII (French Office of Immigration and Integration) where appropriate. This training of variable duration (from 10 to 400 hours) is ratified, for those that wish it, by an examination for an initial diploma in French (DILF). This training is offered to women more often than to men, 37% versus 28%. 39% of them also declare that they do not speak French very well, or even hardly or not at all, as against 27% of men.

After the same period of presence in France it is again the number of women speaking French that is proportionally lower. So the fact that women, in general, are in France for a shorter period of time before obtaining their residence permit cannot really explain these differences.

However, it is true that active people learn French better than inactive people. The OFII language training has been offered to 23% of working active women, 28% of unemployed women and 55% of housewives. As far as their self-assessment in French is concerned, 27%, 30% and 42%, respectively, declare that they do not speak French very well or hardly or not at all. So the less women take part in the job market, the less well they speak French. The fact is that 4 out of 10 women are housewives. For an identical activity profile (same proportion of people working, unemployed, doing odd jobs, school pupils or students, remaining at home, retired, other types of inactivity), language training would be offered to 25% of women, which is less than men (28%). Again, for the same activity profile, 28% of women reckon that they do not speak French very well, more or less the same as men (27%). Women's poorer grasp of the French language is therefore associated with the higher proportion of women that are inactive.

Women's satisfaction

Finally, despite the difficulties they encounter, 90.9% of women declare that they are entirely satisfied, or quite satisfied, with their experience in France, while this proportion rises to 92.9% for men. These very high results should not be taken at face value [4]. Indeed, migrants do tend to compare their current situation with their former way of life, or with the life of people who have remained in their country of origin and they prefer, despite the difficulties, their new life. Moreover, the survey is conducted shortly after they obtained their first residence permit which, for most of them, involved some long and complex procedures, and they are probably feeling quite relieved when the interview takes place, having reached a degree of security for which they had been hoping for some time. Depending on the work situation faced by active women, their satisfaction does differ a little. Globally, and not surprisingly, out of work women are slightly less happy than active women in work, 86.7% and 90.2% respectively.

Of the 9.1% who are not satisfied, the difficulties in finding satisfactory work is the main reason given, followed by the complicated administrative procedures involved in obtaining the papers, as well as the difficulties they feel in living far from their country and/or family.

So, while women are slightly less satisfied than men with their experience in France, mostly because of their difficult work situation, they do not regret coming, 97% declaring that their decision was the right one.

Box 2 : The longitudinal survey on the integration of first-time arrivals

The main objectives of the longitudinal survey on the integration of first-time arrivals (ELIPA) are to discover how migrants are integrated in the first three years following the granting of a permanent residence permit and to assess the reception mechanism.

This mechanism, set up by the French Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII), consists in helping the migrant by offering training courses and personal services (free language training that may total 400 hours, training in the values of the French Republic, compilation of a skills profile, orientation to social services, "Living in France" training).

The survey was conducted with a representative sample of 6107 migrants aged 18 years and over, from countries outside the EEA and Switzerland, who came to France to request a residence permit and who were received by the OFII between September 2009 and February 2010 in one of the four regions of Ile de France, PACA, Rhone Alpes and Alsace.

For the first wave, the data collection was conducted in face to face interviews by the TNS-SOFRES between March and June 2010 in 14 languages (French, Albanian, English, Arab-Berber, Bengali, Chinese, Spanish, Russian, Serb, Soninke, Tamil, Thai, Turkish and Vietnamese) by interviewers/interpreters.

These same people are being interviewed again, between March and June 2011, that is to say a year later (2nd wave), and then will be interviewed a third time three years later (3rd and last wave, 2013).

The scope of the survey excludes:

- 16-17 year olds who are eligible for the CAI;
- temporary migrants; students, temporary workers (seasonal workers in particular), workplace trainees and asylum seekers;
- employees on a mission, holders of a "skills and talents", "scientist", "trader" card, high level managerial staff and their family;
- holders of a "visitor" or "artistic and cultural profession" card, former soldiers and foreigners undergoing medical treatment.

However, it does include nationals of the two new member states that joined the European Union in 2007, Rumania and Bulgaria, who are still in a transition period for the case of residence permit for professional reasons.

Box 2 : The longitudinal survey on the integration of first-time arrivals (ctd)

So the persons within the scope of this survey are designated as "new migrants", "first-time migrants" or "signatories of the CAI".

This survey is coordinated by the Department of statistics, studies and documentation (DSED) of the General Secretariat for Immigration and Integration (SGII). Giving their scientific support are some departments of the Ministry (in the first instance the department for citizenship, immigration and integration and also OFII and the High Council on integration – *HCI*) as well as external partners (DARES, INED, INSEE, OFPRA and the OECD). It is financed half by the Ministry of the Interior, Overseas, territorial collectivities and immigration and half by the European Integration Fund of the European Commission.

For more information:

http://www.immigration.gouv.fr/spip.php?page=dossiers_det_res&numrubrique=232&numarticle=2132

For more reading on the subject :

[1] Population & Sociétés n°466 – Avril 2010 : Les discriminations : une question de minorités visibles (Cris Beauchemin, Christelle Hamel, Maud Lesné, Patrick Simon et l'équipe de l'enquête TeO)

[2] La population de la France. Évolutions démographiques depuis 1946, tome 2 – 2005 : Fécondité des immigrées et apport démographique de l'immigration étrangère (Michèle Tribalat)

[3] Insee Première n°1132 – Avril 2007 : Faire garder ses enfants pendant son temps de travail (Sandrine Micheaux, Olivier Monso)

[4] Infos Migrations n° 19 – January 2011 : The new migrants in 2009 (Corinne Régnard, Florent Domergue).

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