

# ANALYSING CHILD MIGRANTS' LEGAL TRAJECTORIES. EVIDENCE FROM FRANCE

---

Tatiana Eremenko (INED / CSIC), *tatiana.eremenko@ined.fr*

International Forum on Migration Statistics 2018

15-16 January 2018 – OECD, Paris

# Context

- Growing attention to child and youth migration, with a focus on children and youth in vulnerable situations
  - Children seeking protection w/out parents
  - Unaccompanied minors
  - Victims of trafficking
- Children accompanying or reunifying with their parents, i.e. “family” migrants
  - Important component of flows, but under-researched group
- Evidence on child and youth migrants’ precarious legal trajectories, especially when they arrive outside of established legal family migration channels
  - But few studies as the majority focus (explicitly / implicitly) on adult migrants

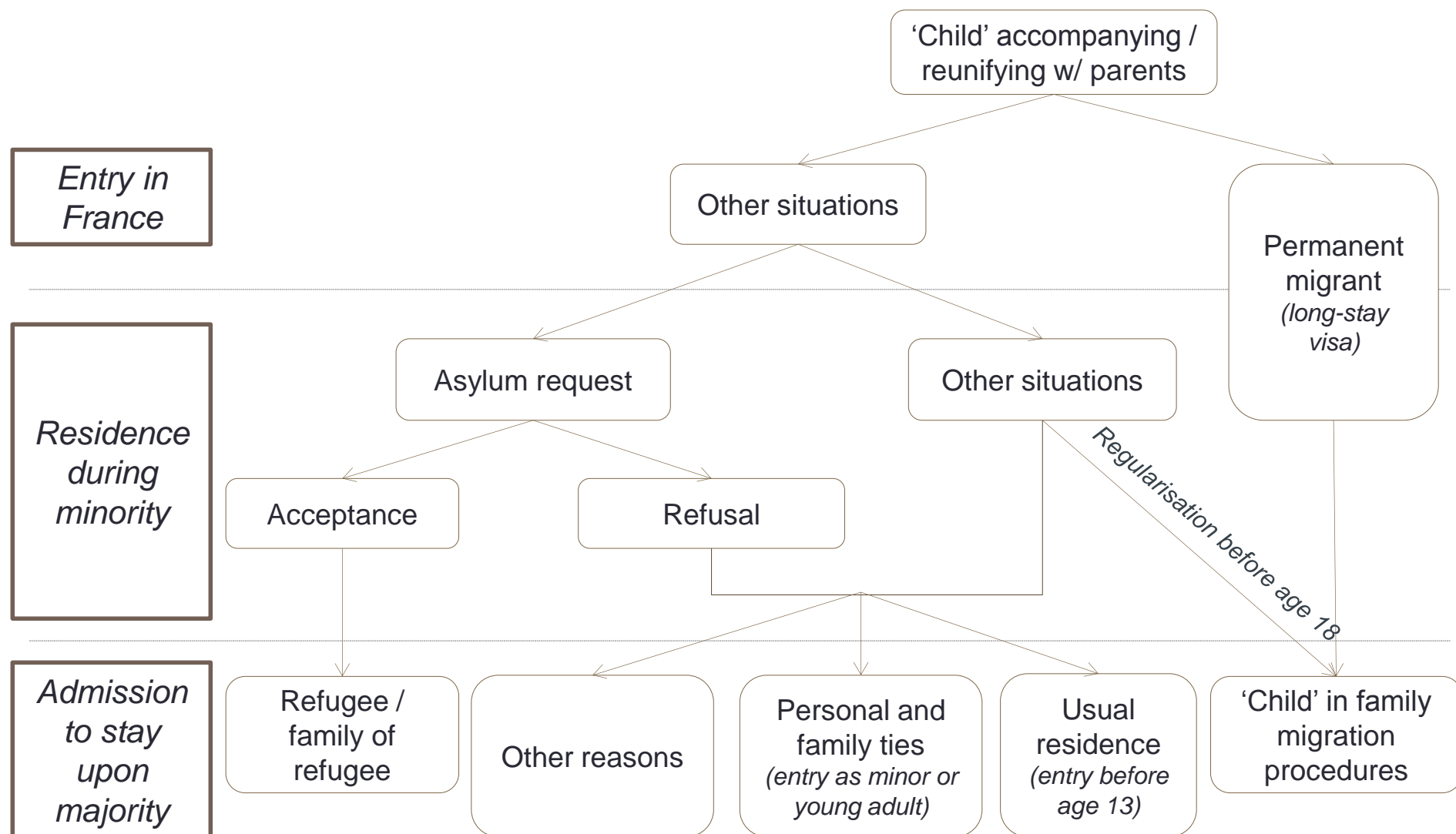
# Child migrants' legal trajectories

- Legal framework:
  - specific status and rights
- Family environment:
  - dependent status
  - rights often derive from other persons (parents)
- Data issues: general *versus* child specific
  - Excluded from data source: only adult migrants (18 or older)
  - Not counted separately: linked to parent application, family unit
  - Not identifiable in a data source: no relevant variables (age at migration, relationship with persons in destination country)

# Aim of this study

- Understand how French immigration administrations deal with child migrants:
  - legal procedures concerning this group
  - statistics produced (or not) on this group
- Plan of presentation:
  - Identify main legal pathways of child migrants
  - Examine the extent to which existing (administrative) data sources allow estimating (*and describing profiles of*) child migrants following these pathways

# Main legal pathways of child migrants

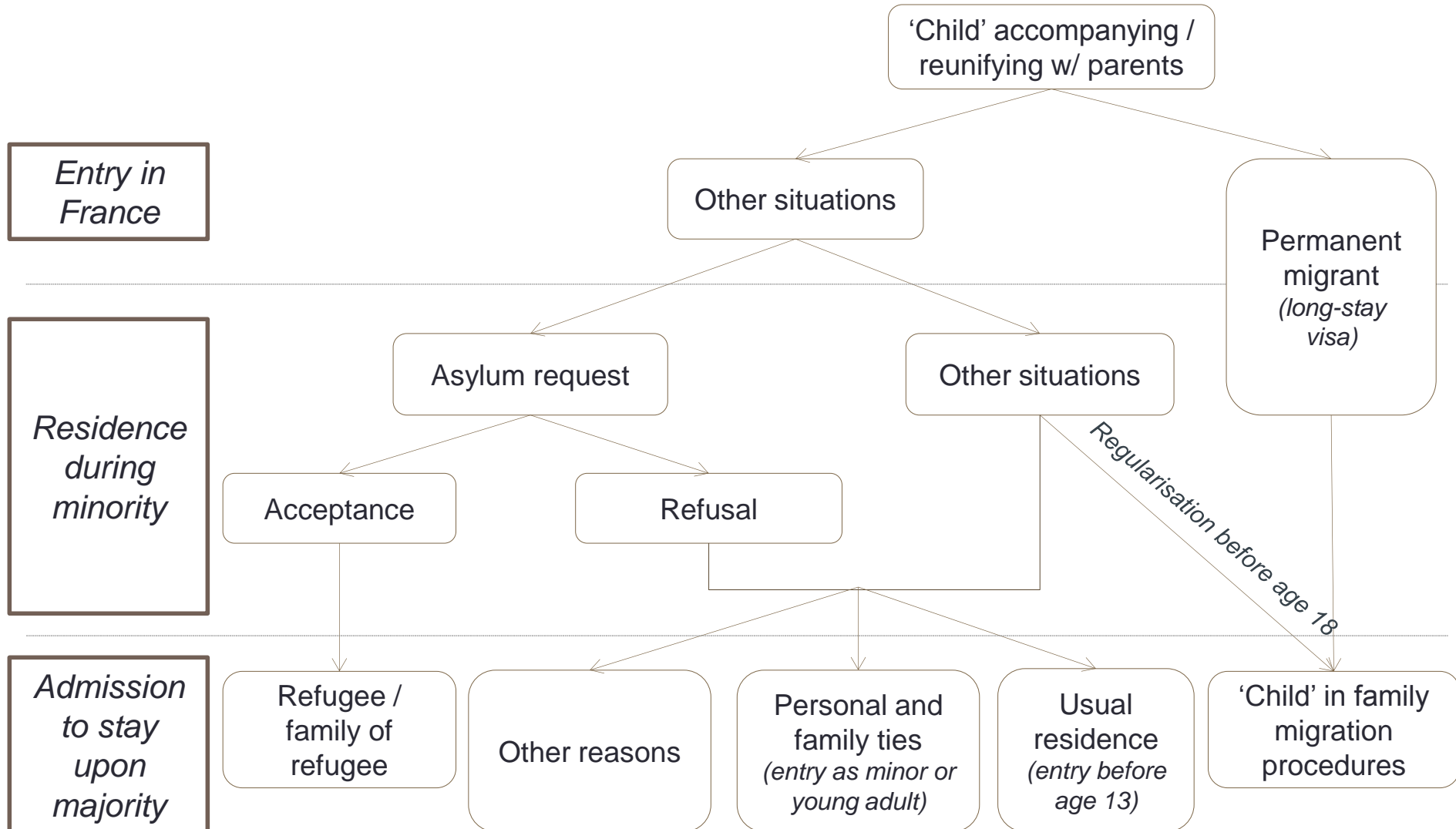


# Availability of administrative data

Available

Not available /  
non-existent

Alternative data



# Longitudinal Survey on Newly Arrived Migrants (Elipa)

- **Target group:** third-country nationals receiving a first “permanent” residence permit in France in 2009
  - Exclusion of students and some groups of workers
  - Signatories of reception and integration contract (CAI)
  - Respondents are 18 or older (holders of residence permit)
  - 6,107 respondents representative of 97,736 migrants
- **Longitudinal survey** with 3 waves: **2010**, 2011 and 2013
- Carried out by the Statistical Service of the Immigration Department, Ministry of Interior (**DSED**)
- **Two approaches** for identifying and describing “child/youth” migrants:
  - **Parent-child:** children cohabiting with respondent at time of parents’ admission
  - **Adult respondent** having migrated as a “child/youth”

# 1) Data on ENTRIES

Available

Not available / non-existent

Alternative data

Entry in France

'Child' accompanying / reunifying w/ parents

Other situations

Permanent migrant (long-stay visa)

Asylum request

Other situations

Acceptance

Refusal

Regularisation before age 18

Residence during minority

Admission to stay upon majority

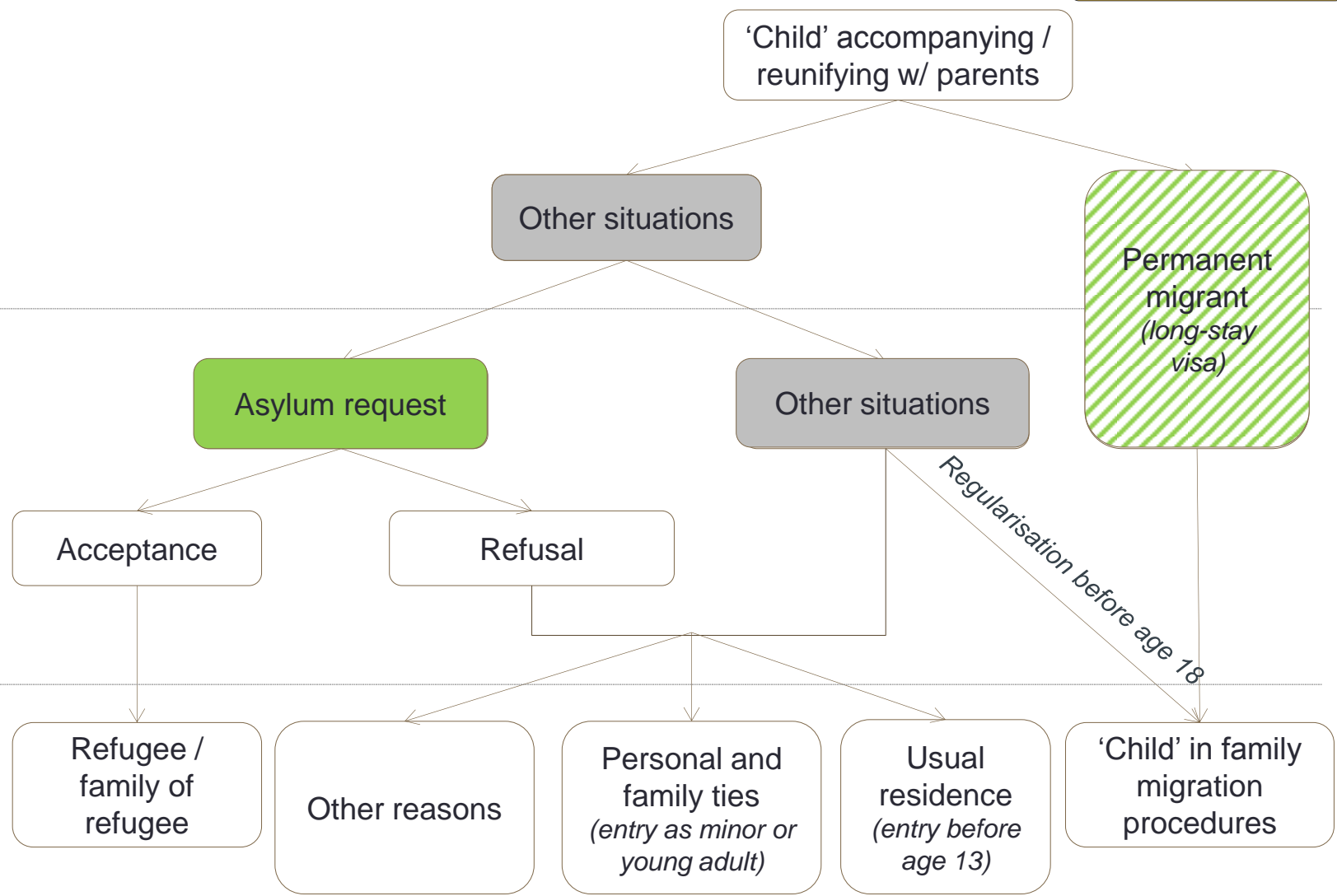
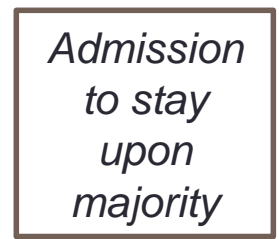
Refugee / family of refugee

Other reasons

Personal and family ties (entry as minor or young adult)

Usual residence (entry before age 13)

'Child' in family migration procedures





# 1) ENTRIES: children entering France via different legal procedures, 2010-2015

Year	Long-stay visas					Minors accompanying asylum seekers	Other situations	Total
	Family reunification	Family of refugees	Accompanying family	Child of French	Total			
2010	5 389	2 937	1 402	857	10 585	11 143	-	21 728
2011	4 741	2 110	1 502	782	9 135	11 683	-	20 818
2012	4 799	1 863	1 497	703	8 862	14 001	-	22 863
2013	4 719	2 373	1 216	618	8 926	14 536	-	23 462
2014	5 175	2 482	1 260	731	9 648	13 859	-	23 507
2015	4 674	2 341	1 264	626	8 905	15 133	-	24 038
<b>Total</b>	29 497	14 106	8 141	4 317	56 061	80 355	-	136 416
<b>% row</b>	21,6	10,3	6,0	3,2	41,1	58,9	-	100,0

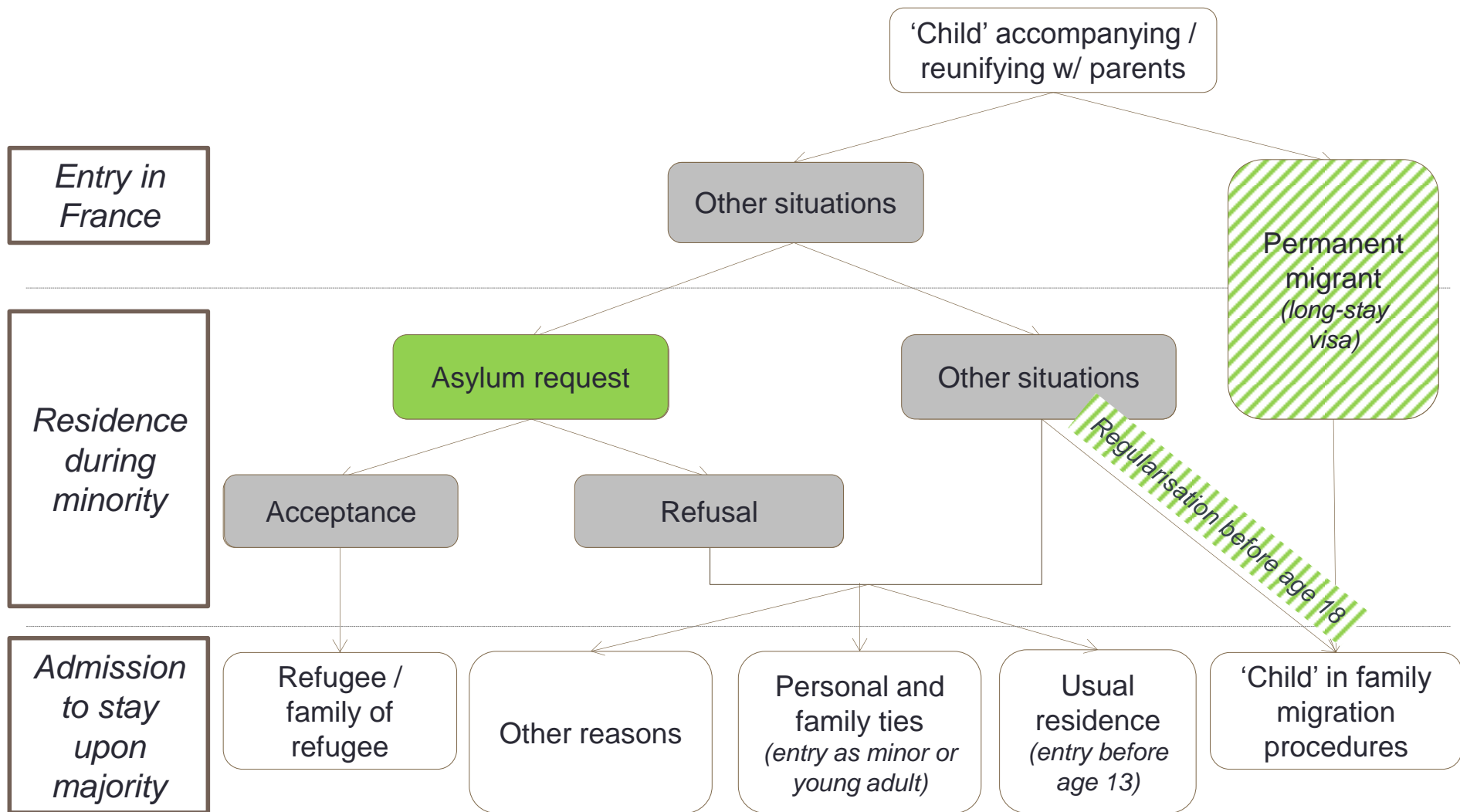
Source: DSED (Long-stay visas). OFPRA (Minors accompanying asylum seekers).

# 2) Data on RESIDENCE DURING MINORITY

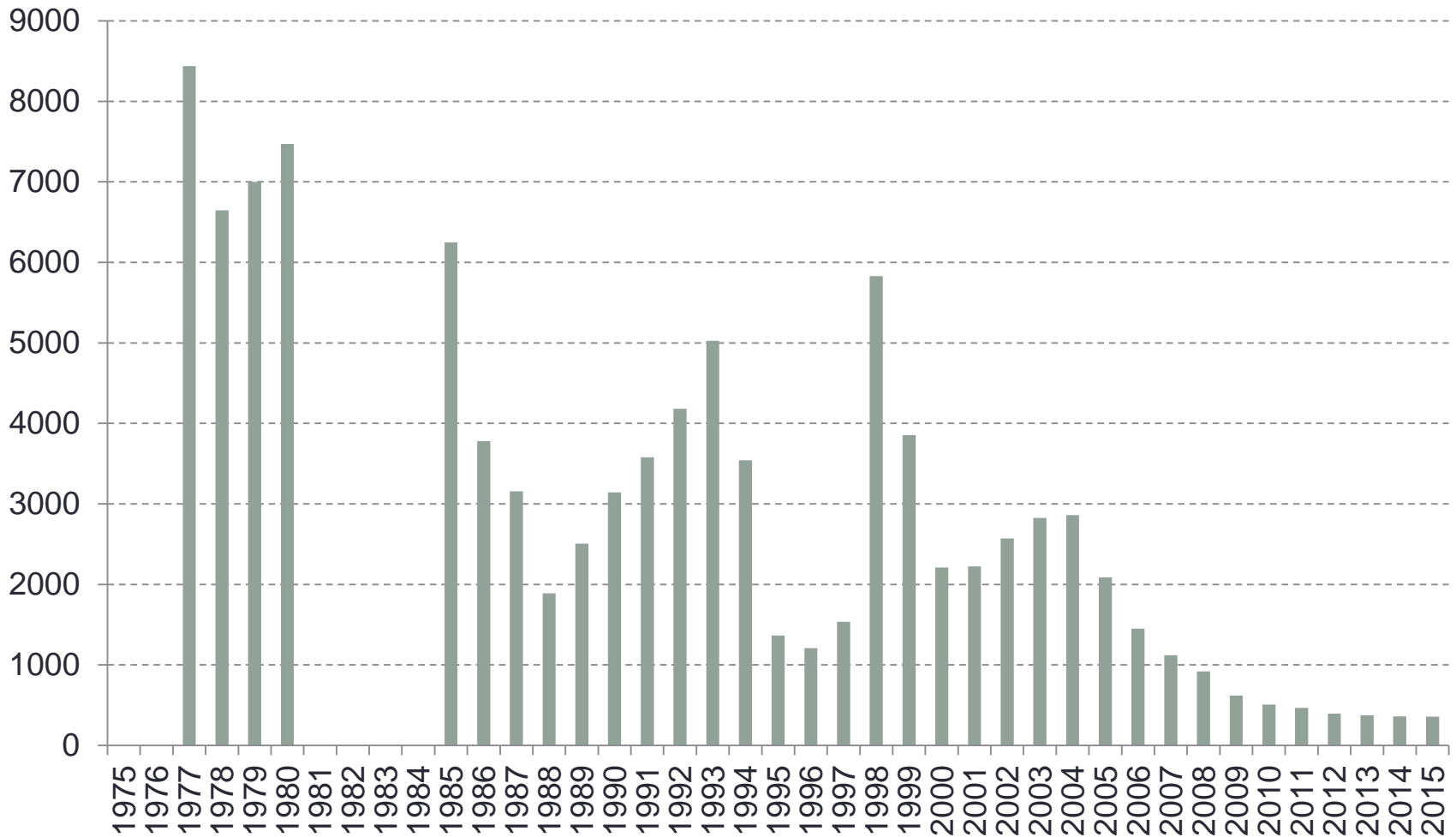
Available

Not available / non-existent

Alternative data



## 2) Children regularized during minority: children admitted in the family reunification procedure while already residing in France, 1975-2015



Source: ONI, OMI, OFII. Third country nationals.

# 2) Data on RESIDENCE DURING MINORITY

Available

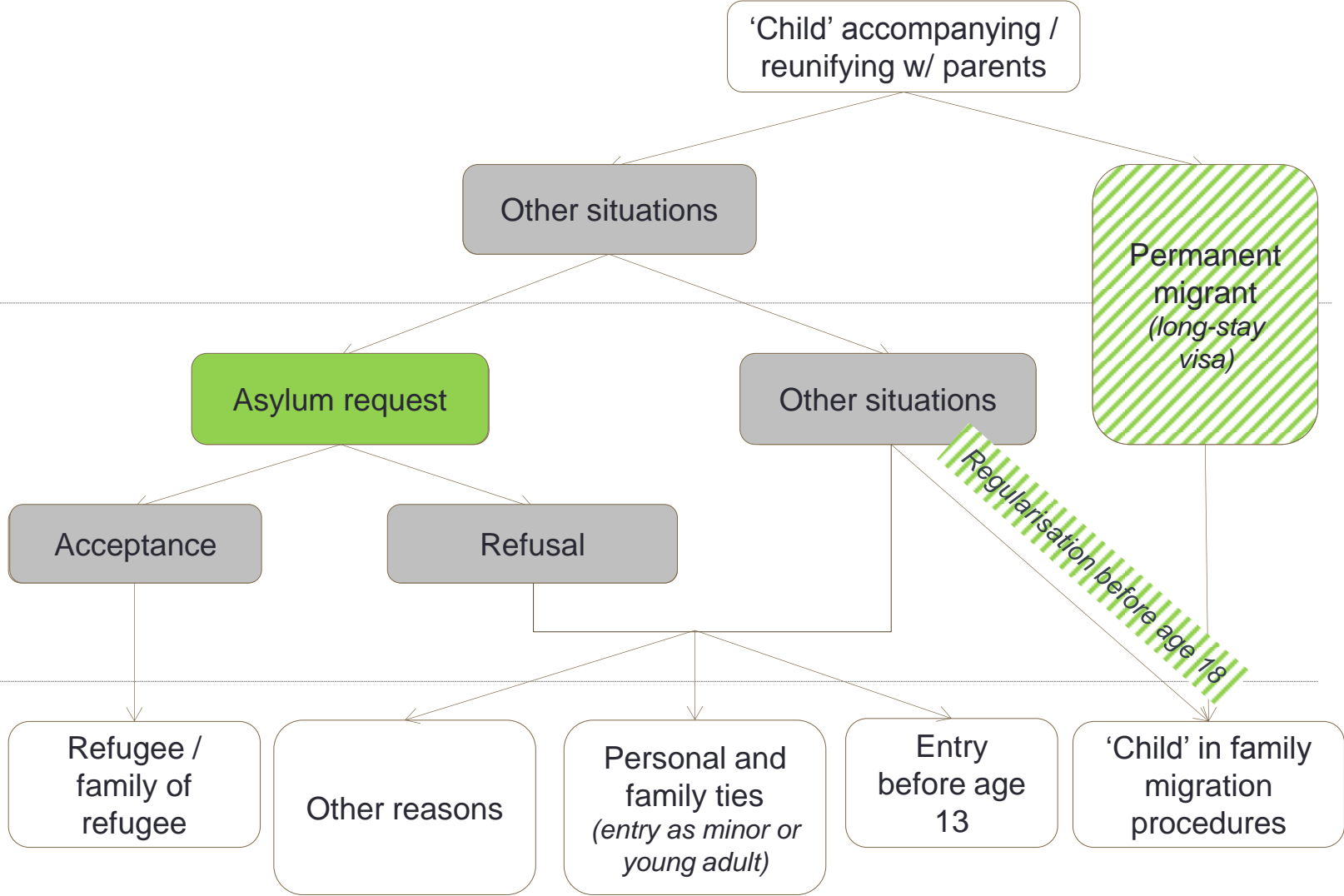
Not available / non-existent

Alternative data

Entry in France

Residence during minority

Admission to stay upon majority



## 2) Children experiencing parents' legal status changes during minority (Elipa)

### Parent perspective

- 37% of newly admitted migrants lived with at least one child (36 000 persons)
- Most of the parents lived with children born before they had acquired a permanent legal status
  - 37% with a child born abroad
  - 37% with a child born in France before admission
  - 26% with a child born in France after admission

### Child perspective

#### Respondent parent's administrative trajectory

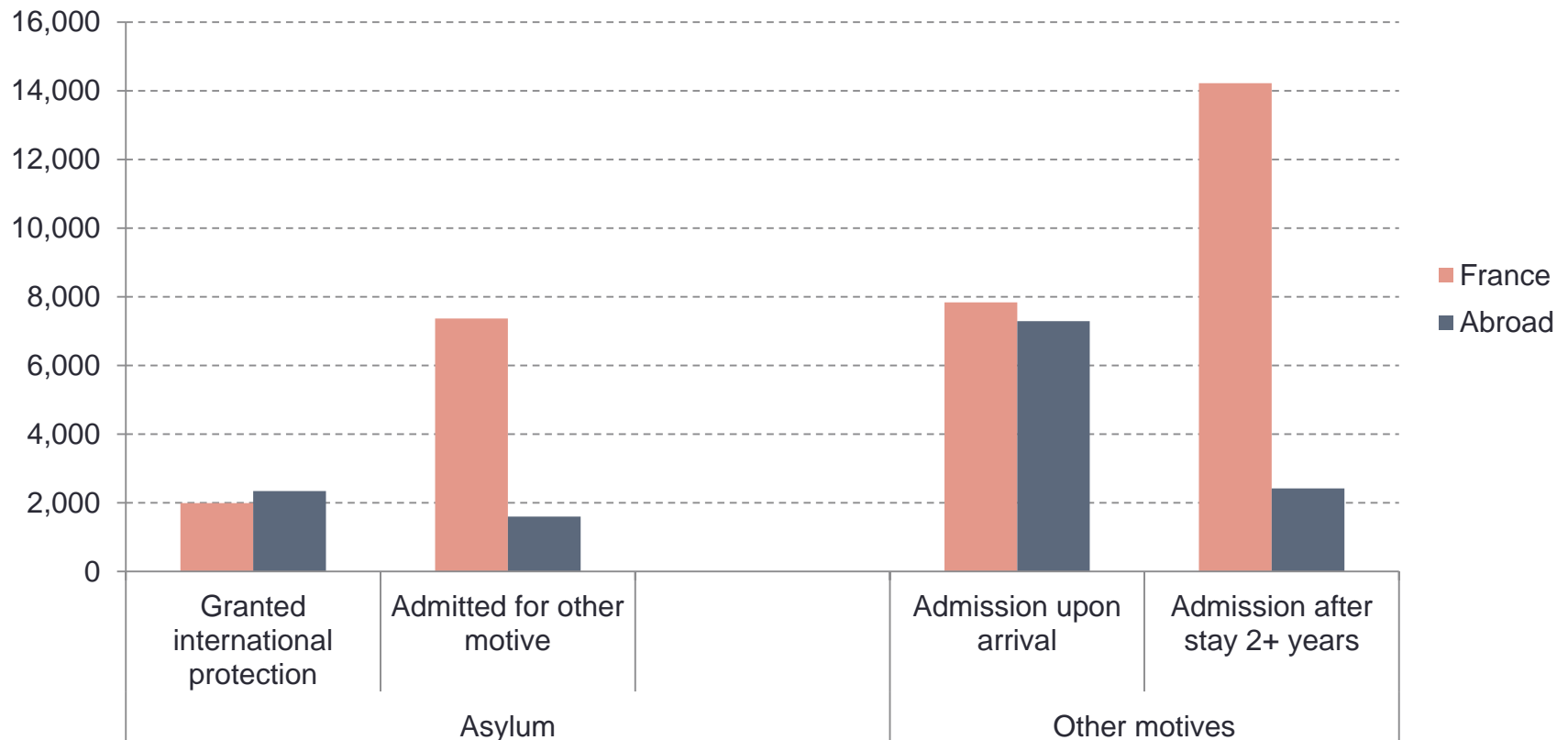
	Number	% col
Asylum seekers	13 500	30
Granted international protection	4 500	10
Admitted for other motive	9 000	20
Other motives	32 000	71
Admission upon arrival	15 000	33
Admission after stay 2+ years	16 500	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>45 000</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: ELIPA, DSED. Minor children born before admission cohabiting with respondent. Child-specific weights calculated by author.

Source: ELIPA, DSED. All respondents. Individual weights.

## 2) Children experiencing parents' legal status changes during minority (Elipa)

Children's place of birth  
by respondent parent's administrative trajectory



Source: ELIPA, DSED. Minor children born before admission cohabiting with respondent. Child-specific weights calculated by author.

# 3) Data on ADMISSIONS TO STAY UPON MAJORITY

Available

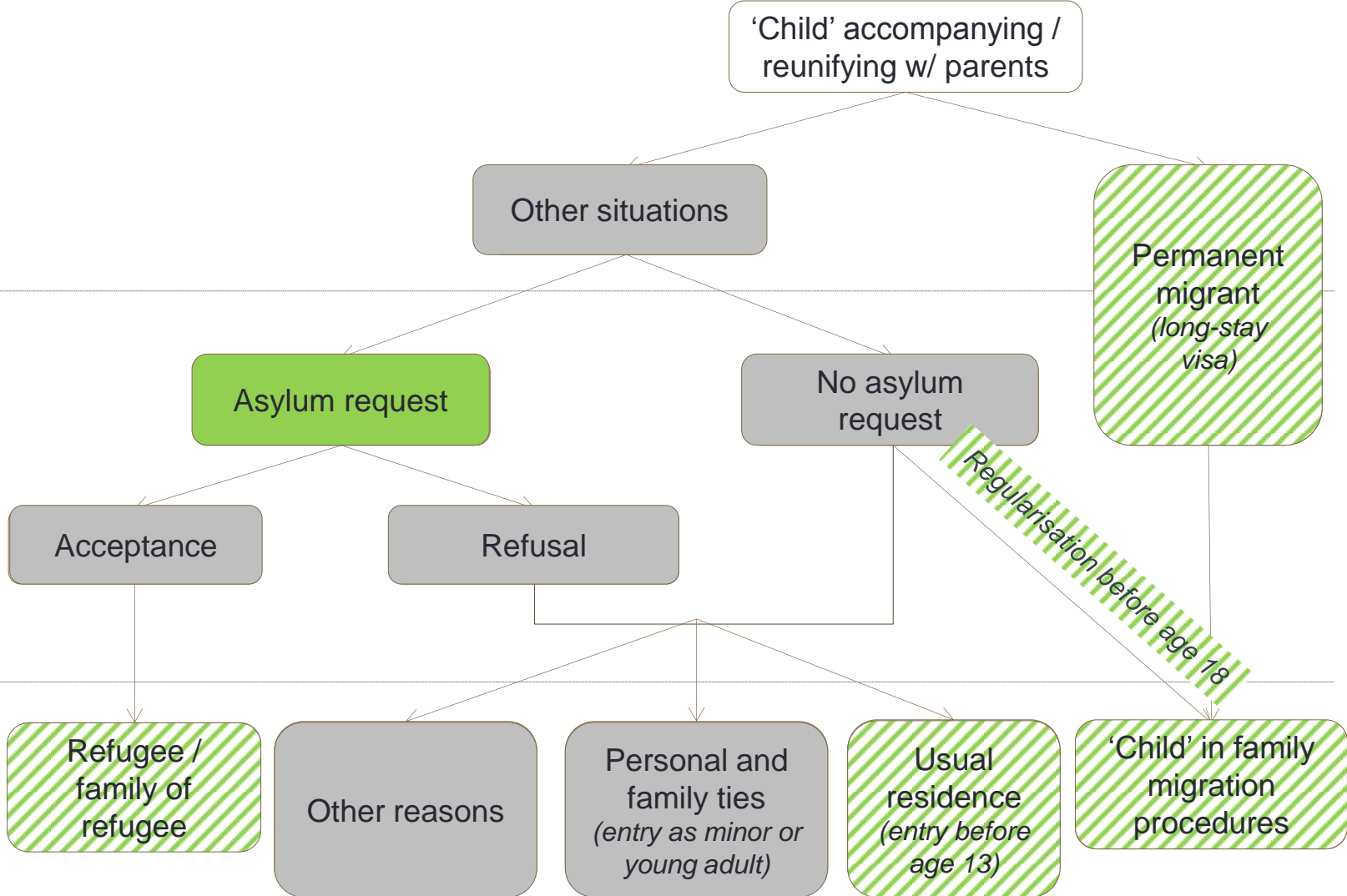
Not available / non-existent

Alternative data

Entry in France

Residence during minority

Admission to stay upon majority



### 3) Residence permits issued in “child / youth” categories

Year	Refugee / family of refugee *	Other motives	Personal and family ties	Usual residence	‘Child’ in family migration procedures			Total
					Family reunification	Family of French	Family of refugee	
1999		-	-	1 602	1 069	520	371	3 562
2000		-	-	2 306	1 361	727	520	4 914
2001		-	-	1 853	1 591	794	633	4 871
2002		-	-	1 770	1 892	885	612	5 159
2003		-	-	1 763	1 940	940	565	5 208
2004		-	-	2 798	1 884	743	684	6 109
2005		-	-	2 822	1 509	678	665	5 674
2006		-	-	3 002	1 294	672	679	5 647
2007		-	-	2 839	1 140	517	730	5 226
2008		-	-	2 725	1 073	544	978	5 320
2009		-	-	2 811	824	555	746	4 936
2010		-	-	3 043	888	638	745	5 314
2011		-	-	3 642	925	641	752	5 960
2012		-	-	4 010	905	656	758	6 329

45% (row)

64% (row)



# 3) Data on ADMISSIONS TO STAY UPON MAJORITY

Available

Not available / non-existent

Alternative data

Entry in France

'Child' accompanying / reunifying w/ parents

Other situation

Permanent migrant (long-stay visa)

Residence during minority

Asylum request

No asylum request

Acceptance

Refusal

Regularisation before age 18

Admission to stay upon majority

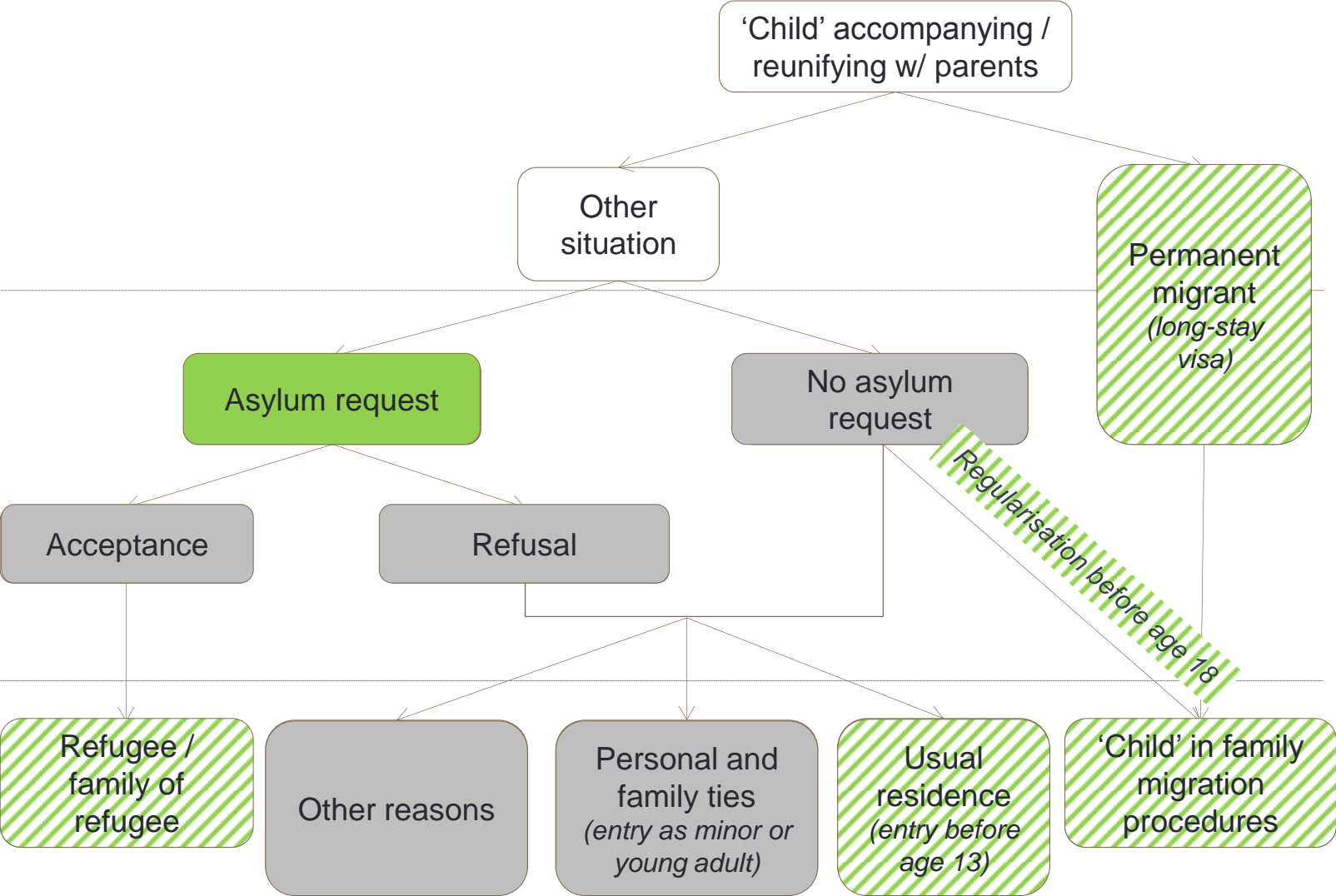
Refugee / family of refugee

Other reasons

Personal and family ties (entry as minor or young adult)

Usual residence (entry before age 13)

'Child' in family migration procedures

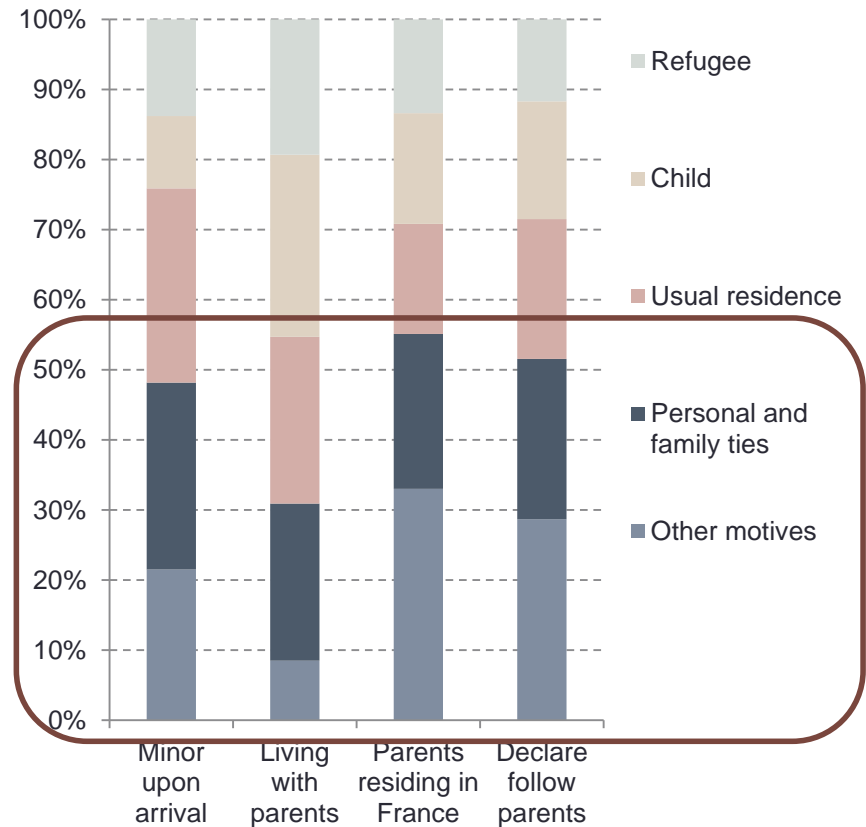


### 3) Residence permits: identifying child / youth among newly admitted migrants (Elipa)

Child / youth among holders of first “permanent” residence permit according to different definitions

	Number	% of total
Legal category: child / usual residence	4 500	4,6
Age at arrival: Minor	8 500	8,6
Cohabitation with parents	7 000	7,3
Presence of parents in France	13 000	13,3
Declared motive: follow parents	8 000	8,2

Admission categories (%) of child / youth migrants defined as...



# Discussion: child migrants' legal trajectories

Questions raised in this session: **Can existing data sources address their experiences and needs? YES (partly)**

The combination of different administrative data sources and statistical surveys allows to identify the numbers of children following different legal pathways:

- Important proportion of child 'family' migrants come **outside of legal family migration channels**
- **Fewer possibilities for regularization** of child migrants when they are still minors. Have to "wait" until they reach majority to obtain legal status
- Are **indirectly affected by immigration and asylum policies** – low recognition rates, regularization – and changes in their parents' situations
- Many situations are only **indirectly observed** through alternative data sources

What are the costs of these evolutions: well-being of children and their families? Social and economic costs for the reception societies?

# Discussion: data issues

**It is children with the most precarious legal trajectories, those in the most vulnerable situations that are missing / difficult to observe in existing statistics**

**How can we improve existing data sources?** Different solutions depending on data source and current data situation

- What is hidden in the data *versus* what is behind the data

## **ADMINISTRATIVE DATA**

- **Improve existing statistics:** minors accompanying asylum seekers, long-stay visas:
  - better documentation, more detailed statistics, facilitate accessibility
- **Produce new statistics:** decisions on asylum applications, residence permit
  - Systematically distinguish / count “children” and “youth” in statistics using different approaches: age at arrival, detailed categories, link to other persons in database

## **STATISTICAL SURVEYS**

- Include **questions capturing child and youth migrants’ experiences**
  - Parents’ migration history and legal status
  - Questions to evaluate impact of precarious legal status on children: school enrolment, friendship networks, life projects...
- **Adapt sampling techniques** to capture child and youth migrants
  - Over-represent these sub-groups
  - Alternative sampling datasets including child and youth migrants

Thank you for your attention !

*Questions or comments?*