

Mathieu Ichou, a Sciences Po PhD

THE CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS ARE NOT DOOMED TO FAILURE

[INED](#) research officer and [Nuffield College](#) (Oxford) associate member Mathieu Ichou wrote his doctoral thesis on the origins of educational inequalities and of the academic paths of the children of immigrants in France and in England within the [OSC](#), and was then awarded a postdoctoral research fellowship at [Oxford](#).

Mathieu Ichou, Sciences Po PhD, INED researcher

I wrote my thesis, which was supervised by Agnès van Zanten, of Sciences Po's OSC, and by Anthony Heath, of Oxford, on the academic paths of the children of immigrants in France and in England. I had the impression, and still do, that I was hearing many falsehoods. In particular, immigrants are constantly associated with a social problem, and the children of immigrants are constantly associated with academic failure. And that is partly why I wanted to study the topic in greater detail. Generally speaking, children of immigrants do better in the British school system than in the French system. The next question is "why?". The most important reason is the fact that their parents are from more advantaged social environments in their country of origin. And that might partially be attributable to the greater selectivity of British migration policies, which were established earlier.

The OSC, the laboratory where I pursued my thesis, fostered socialization and exchanges with PhD students and researchers – this was both nice and academically useful. I also benefitted from financial support from the OSC and Doctoral School, enabling my participation in several international conferences. Also, thanks to the Oxpo program, Oxford University's department of sociology hosted me for a year, allowing me to make significant progress on the British portion of my research.

After my thesis I was fortunate to be hired as a post-doc at Oxford University's Nuffield College, and then to be hired as a researcher at the French National institute for Demographic Studies, INED, where I currently work.

