

**From Educational aspirations of Immigrant Families
to the school careers of their children
in France: school success and disillusion**

Yaël Brinbaum* et Annick Kieffer**

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Abstract:

This paper provides an analysis of immigrant's educational expectations viewed in relation with their children's school careers. Using a rich longitudinal dataset (Ministry of Education 1995 Panel) we will compare parent's expectations with those of their children and the latter's school careers, taking into account the impact of social, ethnic and geographic origin. We point out higher educational expectations among immigrant parents, as compared with native parents of similar social background. In most cases, these high expectations are effectively transmitted to their offspring. We find clear evidence of specific behaviour among migrants of Portuguese and North African origin.

Immigrant's children experience specific handicap in elementary school. In secondary school (both lower and upper) the situation is somewhat different: careers are socially differentiated but children from the second generation experience better results than children from non immigrant families with similar working class origins (confirming Vallet, 1996). High expectations and consistent efforts turn out to be important elements of educational achievement. However some discrepancy is to be seen between parents' expectations, children's expectations and their observed school career. This is mostly obvious among young people of North African origin who happen to be frequently dissatisfied with their previous educational orientation in the vocational or technological track. Such discrepancy can be a source of frustration for parents as well as their children.

* Université de Bourgogne, IREDU et LASMAS
brinbaum@iresco.fr

** LASMAS-CNRS
kieffer@iresco.fr

Introduction

A traditional trend in sociology consists in giving account of differences in educational achievement by referring to pupils' social background (Girard, Bastide (1962); Bourdieu and Passeron (1970), Bourdieu (1974) etc.). Immigrant's children, whose parents are mostly of working-class origin, appear particularly disadvantaged from this point of view. Difficulties for immigrant's children are frequently emphasized, they cumulate a double handicap related to their social and foreign origins. These difficulties are mainly associated with parents' social background and with the distance between native and school culture among immigrant families. However, some studies seem to suggest that those performances are mainly due to their social background (Boulot et Fradet, 1988). More recently, Vallet and Caille (1996), using the *1989 Educational Longitudinal Study*, showed that immigrants' children are more successful in their secondary schooling than native French children from similar social background. Besides, few studies have shown unequal school success according to ethnic origin (Gibson, 1987; Clifton, Williams, Clancy, 1991; Lange and Rupp, 1992; Van't Hof and Dronkers, 1994; Alba, Handl et Müller, 1999). These outcomes lead to search for conditions of success, and for mechanisms used to facilitate children's achievement, as the identification of the groups who encounter some difficulties.

Better success at school among immigrants' children can be explained partly by families' higher educational expectations: they view school as a way towards integration and upward social mobility. The influence of social class on school aspirations has been demonstrated in sociology, as well as an increase and a wider diffusion of these aspirations along the process of educational democratization, among all social groups, working class families in particular, for boys and girls (see J.-P. Terrail, M. Duru-Bellat, P. Merle etc.). However, school performance has increased less than these aspirations.

This impact of migrants' educational aspirations on their offspring's school achievement, well documented in Anglo-Saxon research has been less studied in France (except for Caille and Vallet, 1996). Those higher expectations among immigrant families were confirmed at the beginning of the 1990s and appear as a key factor for their trajectory and their children's educational career. Besides, different logic appears according to national origins (Brinbaum, 1999, 2000). This confirms also results of international studies: for instance, in Australia, parents and children of Greek origin have higher aspirations than English-Australians and English parents (Clifton, Williams, Clancy, 1991; Marjoribanks, 1992); in America, Asian American are more ambitious for their child's educational future than Hispanics (Muller and Kerbow, 1993); in Germany, results oppose Italians and Turks to Greeks (Alba, Handl et Müller, 1999). The high expectations are transmitted across generations (Kao, Tienda, 1998).

We can assume that this high level of aspiration among families of foreign origin is somewhat related to the selectivity of these populations which having experienced a migration process, would organize their life around their children's schooling (Sayad, 1999 ; Zéroulou, 1988). In this perspective, the double characteristic of immigrants - at the same time, specific as immigrants compared to non immigrants and heterogeneous, according to their migratory process, their cultural, social and family history - must be taken into account. They come from countries where living conditions as well as school systems differ and experience various situations in France. These attributes are likely to influence the ambitions and further the educational investments of the various immigrant populations. Hence, there is a social process building over time and across generations. Aspirations, at the origin of migration, will have an influence on parents' investment, and therefore, an impact on young people children's careers at school and on the labour market

This paper proposes an analysis of immigrant's educational expectations viewed in relation with their children's school careers. It deals with the following questions: Controlling for social class, do immigrant families' aspirations for their children differ from native French families' aspirations? How do aspirations vary according to parent's social background, migratory and geographical origin? How are these characteristics reflected in the children's schooling careers? How are those expectations transmitted across generations according to experience – both objective and subjective – in the French school system?

We will compare parent's expectations with those of their children and the latter's effective school careers, taking into account the impact of social, ethnic and geographical origin. In this perspective, we need longitudinal data to analyse the whole process.

Data and variables

Data come from the *1995 French National Education Longitudinal Study* of the Ministry of Education, a cohort of pupils entering secondary school in 1995 and who are followed during the whole time spent in the school system. This survey was completed by a family survey in 1998, which contains indicators to identify the immigrant population and their children, and questions on parent's educational aspirations. Besides, young people (from the initial cohort) were interviewed in 2002 on the perception of their previous orientation, their educational and occupational perspectives. These longitudinal data make it possible, for the first time, to analyse the links between parents' trajectories, resources, educational aspirations, and the effective school careers of their children. This database contains information on the school performances (such as mark at the *Brevet des collèges*, a national certificate taken at the end of lower secondary school) and on the representations of the child's level, evaluated at this time by parents (in 1998) and retrospectively by children (in 2002).

The field of study is concerned with young people respondents in 2002, and whose parents participated in the family survey in 1998. The sample is then composed of 9 976 families.

Variables of migration

This survey allows us to identify rigorously immigrant populations, with variables concerning parents' place of birth (two items: France/outside France) and citizenship. Two main variables of migration have been built in order to test the effect of migration and national origin. The first one counts the number of immigrant parents within the couple: none, one –mixed coupled - or two immigrant parents. The second variable includes the first one but is more detailed and differentiates among immigrants: Portuguese, North-Africans -the most numerous groups in France- and other nationalities.¹

Variables of social background

An indicator approximates the social milieu of the family, based on occupations of both parents, their activity and their skill level. At the most aggregated level, it contains three categories: lower, intermediate and upper². The majority of immigrants belong to the lower categories, which include skilled and unskilled blue or white collar workers (table 1). For this reason, we will present results of lower categories, in order to compare immigrant families with native French families belonging to the same social milieu, and then, aspirations among migrants, according to their geographical origin. The whole population will be taken into account in the models, in order to test the detailed effect on social origin.

The first results concern the parents' educational aspirations for their children, followed by the expectation of the children themselves and then their school career, using longitudinal data.

1. Immigrants' higher educational aspirations

Interrogated in 1998, that is to say three years after entry into lower secondary school, about the secondary school certificate they expect for their children, 60% of all parents choose the *baccalauréat* (Bac, for short) - which is the upper secondary school certificate in France -; some prefer that their child should enter the labour market or apprenticeship at an earlier stage. However a quarter of them have no opinion. The majority mentions the 'general' (classical) baccalaureat (47%), approximately a quarter preferring a vocational diploma (CAP, BEP or vocational Baccalauréat³) or a technological Bac (4,5%). About half of the parents have integrated the objective fixed at the political level to lead

¹ We didn't distinguish here more origins because the frequencies of other nationalities were restricted.

² We can distinguish: Upper categories (homogeneous), Upper categories (heterogeneous), Intermediate Categories (homogeneous) Intermediate Categories (heterogeneous), Blue or white collar workers (skilled), Blue or white collar workers (unskilled). Those two last groups constitute the lower categories.

³ CAP and BEP are school vocational diploma see figure 1 in annex.

"80% of an age group to the Baccalauréat", which they interpret rather in a restrictive way like meaning the academic baccalauréat.

Parent's expectations are ranked on a hierarchical basis according to the social background and the prestige of the tracks (table 2). The upper category has a precise idea of the future schooling of their children, while the parents of other social background are more unlikely to be undecided (20 to 30%). In the same way, the upper category aims at the academic baccalaureat for their children in a very large majority, but less than half of the parents of intermediate category and less of the third of the lower categories make this choice. The latter wish more often to gear their children towards vocational and technological tracks (37%), especially when one of both parents is low-skilled. It's important to underline that the effective orientations are tightly linked with parent's expectations and demands (Duru-Bellat, 2003).

If we compare families of similar social background discrepancies appear between immigrants' and non-immigrants' expectations. Immigrant parents wish more often a general baccalaureat for their children, while non-immigrants prefer a vocational certification (a bac or a secondary vocational certificate). But differences are more clear-cut between national origins: Portuguese' choices, in favour of a vocational certificate, are similar to those of native French (except for the non answer rate which is higher for the first one), while North Africans prefer the general track (47%) and tertiary studies for their children (tables 3 and 4). They differ from the other groups by the importance they attach to the academic track. This confirms the tendencies observed at the beginning of the Nineties in the research based on the INSEE and INED ⁴ Survey " Families' educational efforts" (Brinbaum, 2000).

Differences by gender and national origin are observed, but North African parents are more likely to wish a general bac for their sons, as for their daughters, more than French families or Portuguese⁵.

Families' aspirations mirror the way they consider which certificates are useful in term of labour market integration⁶. Portuguese don't attach great value to higher education certificates and do not insist on the need for their child to pursue a general baccalaureate. This reflects a certain misunderstanding of the French educational system, which privileges general schooling and orients towards vocational training by default those who have failed the general track. For Portuguese parents, obtaining a vocational certificate is a sign of success. . Conversely, North Africans are very close to the intermediate category by the way they emphasize the importance attached to the general baccalaureat, by their confidence in the need of higher education degrees and by the way they trust

⁴ INSEE: French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies; INED: National Institute of Demographic Studies.

⁵ Differences according to gender are not detailed here, see Brinbaum, Kieffer, 2005.

⁶ The question is about "the highest diploma useful to find a job".

schooling as a path towards upper social mobility. In that sense, they are far apart from the lower categories they are part of.

Facing the changing relationship between occupational position and certification, French native working class parents are aware of the need for their children to access vocational training at a higher level than themselves. They tend to trust the vocational baccalaureate more than the lower vocational certificates (Cap-BEP) as a powerful key to the labour market.

The ambitious educational aspirations of immigrant parents, compared with those of French parents of similar social background refer to the assumption formulated above of selectivity of the immigrant populations. Moreover, the choice to migrate implies a motivation. So migrant populations intend to make a success of their migration in the host country, and that appears on the level of the projects concerning the schooling of their children and their aspirations for social mobility. For North-Africans the baccalaureat is a symbol of a successful integration and an opportunity to escape working class conditions. This aspiration to longer studies in academic track is reinforced among these parents who have experience unemployment more than others and which are confronted with the difficulties of their children on the labour market (Brinbaum, Werquin, 1998, 2004 ; Silberman, Fournier, 1999). Portuguese parents, like those of French origin, think of the efficiency of vocational certification on the labour market .

Models were built (table 9) in order to account for parental educational aspirations (Parent's hope for a academic baccalaureat) according to their socio-economic and migratory characteristics, the educational level of each parent and the sex of the pupil; and then successively, the school situation at the time of the survey (1997-1998), the school representations (child's school level evaluated by parents) – with the elementary education then with the lower secondary school – of their child,⁷. The objective is to measure the effect of these various factors on the aspirations and in particular the net effect related to migration. The aspiration concerning the academic baccalaureat is ranked from upper families to low-skilled white collars, social effect is very important once other variables are controlled (model 1 of Table 4). The parents' educational level plays also an important part regarding aspirations (more so among mothers). Parents have more ambition for their daughters than for their sons. Moreover, no matter their social or occupational - position nor their educational level, North-Africans express firmly their favour for the general baccalaureat.

If school performance tempers significantly this aspiration (model 2 of Table 9), North-Africans persevere despite of weaker results. While the working-class families persevere only if the school level

⁷ Other variables were tested: sibling, parents age of arrival in France, situation with regard to the activity and of the unemployment of the parents. They were not integrated in the models selected because their contributions were not or not very significant.

of their children is sufficiently high to ensure their success (Duru-Bellat, Jarousse, Mingat, 1993), the North-African families maintain their efforts and are less sensitive to the performances of their children (model 3). They seek to avoid vocational tracks which they feel likely to threaten their social mobility ambition⁸.

The choice of a technological track can become an alternative when school problems are met. It is then a question for them to ensure the continuation of schooling via the *baccalaureat* and the possibility to access higher education⁹.

2. Children's expectations at the end of the upper secondary education

We have evidenced different educational aspirations patterns among parents according to their different national origins. The panel keeps track of children during their whole schooling and interviews them on their own expectations.

Where are they seven years later?

The young people were questioned on their school aspirations in 2002, that is to say four years after families have been interviewed. Part of them had already left secondary education and begun their occupational life (9%, less than 2% for children of upper category and around 15% for those of lower category). However, immigrant's children don't leave school at an earlier stage than their peers with similar social background.

Seven years after entering secondary education, children of upper category usually arrive without repeating a year into their last year in general or technological *training* (70%). It is different for the children of lower category (only 28% are in general or technological *Terminale*). From this point of view, immigrants' children, in particular those of Portuguese origin, are in no way different from other children of similar social origin (see part 3 for more details).

⁸ These results are closely linked to elements which differentiate both populations: educational experience in country of origin, parents' social origin, family living conditions in France and differentiated transitions from school to work for young people. North African parents have been less educated than Portuguese. For the first group, school is invested of a mission of integration and viewed as a way toward social mobility, "the French pattern" is adopted, while the second group has the "working class pattern" like native French families belonging to the same social class. And these outcomes are related to respective social origins. Both populations differ also according to their relationship to the job market: mothers have opposite patterns in the country of origin, patterns which tend to become similar for the "second generation" in France. Moreover, North-African fathers are more frequently unemployed and are not able to use networks to help their children to find work as Portuguese fathers can. They project more frequently a negative image of work and stake on education, in arriving at more qualified job opportunities.

⁹ In the French educational system, the baccalauréat, is the last secondary school certificate (obtained by national exam). It allows pupils to enter University.

Strong expectations for children of immigrants

The majority of pupils still in secondary education in 2002 hope to pass a baccalaureat (table 5). Concerning their plans for higher education, the majority of the young people of lower category, of all national origin, plan to reach a level “baccalauréat +2 years” (the BTS diploma is the most chosen¹⁰). Most of them express the opinion that, neither the CAP or the BEP (school vocational diploma), nor even the professional baccalaureat are sufficient in order to access a skilled job. Like all young people, they are aware of the evolutions of the relationship between schooling and labour market.

As a whole, the choices of immigrant’s children are less dispersed, less various, than those of French origin. Their preference is expressed more often for studies in higher education than French of similar social background¹¹. They diverge however according to their origin for the track wished in the higher education (vocational track at the University for Portuguese children / versus licence or master for North African children). For them, the technological track of the secondary education is viewed like a possible alternative to reach the higher education and their vocational tracks

When social origin and level of education controlled for, the hope to attend higher education (for the pupils still in secondary education at the date of the survey), is significantly higher among young people of foreign origin as opposed to French natives (Table 10). The educational ambition is always higher among girls, whatever the social or geographical origin of the family (model 1, Tableau 6). It resists, slightly attenuated, among the young people of immigrant origin when pupils have failed during their schooling and especially if they are in vocational tracks (model 2).

Besides, the difference between immigrant’s children and native French are sharper once taken into account their judgement concerning their level in French and mathematics in lower secondary school (model 3). A diagnosis of very great difficulties in mathematics during the college (and beyond) is negatively correlated with a plan to continue studies in higher education, but this judgement affects less the projects of the second generation. Repeating a year does not have the same meaning for the native French where it is perceived as a sign of failure whereas for few immigrant children, in particular for those of North-African origin, it rather reflects an attention to be maintained in the school system and to continue studies.

We notice an important evolution of the school representations of the young people of working class, who were still extremely numerous, two decades ago, to leave the education system before obtaining a vocational diploma and also a certain homogenisation of the aspirations among them.

The comparison between parental aspirations and those of their children show little convergence, including higher ambitions of immigrant parents than their children, as compared to French native of

¹⁰ BTS “Brevet de technicien supérieur” is a vocational diploma in higher education (Baccalauréat + 2 years).

¹¹ The data do not enable us to interpret this report. Are they cultural differences, of differences in information on the higher educational system?

the same social class. These outcomes are linked with a more pronounced perseverance, given the same school performance. These higher aspirations are transmitted across generations. However, youth aspirations are more realistic. We again observe discrepancies according to geographical origin. Portuguese children choose more often a vocational diploma (at the University, especially the BTS) than young of North African origin, who favour longer studies at the University (in the prolongation of their parents). In Portuguese families, we observe a rupture across time and generations. In their majority, young people diverge from their parents by their aspiration to pursue studies in higher education, even if for part of them, the choice of the vocational track falls under a certain continuity (and represented a translation of the ambitions).

3. From aspirations to the school careers of second generation youth

Precocious difficulties in elementary schools

Social inequalities in education are precocious, they appear at the beginning of elementary education (even before); but children whose parents are immigrant encounter more disadvantage at this stage compared to those of French origin belonging to the lower categories. They arrive into lower secondary school with an age of entry, in average, higher than their schoolmates, which is a the consequence of their repeated years, their results in the national examination at the end of the first year of lower secondary education (6ème) are also weaker¹².

In 1998, when parents are interrogated about their aspirations, children of immigrants are indeed more numerous to have repeated at least one year (58% of the cohort have never failed). They are also frequently in segregated schools (van Zanten, 2001; Felouzis, 2003)¹³.

Perseverance and school success

In 2002, more than nine young people out of ten are still in secondary education; among them, a quarter is preparing the general baccalaureat. As previous studies have shown, the frequentation of the general track is related to social origin (table 6); school careers are socially differentiated.

The majority of children of lower categories are in the vocational track. This is true for immigrant's children whatever the origin (table 7). North African children are more numerous in the technological track, and this tendency is reinforced when they have encountered difficulties during their schooling).

The odds show that North African children have 1,5 times more chance to attend the “general Terminale” without repeating a year than native French with similar social origin (and almost 2 times

¹² Those performances are linked with the lack of resources of families; for instance, the parental school assistance varies significantly at the elementary level according to the migration: 36% of the immigrant mothers can't help their children against only 4% of the non immigrant. from the same social class (Brinbaum, 2002).

¹³ One out of three are in ZEP schools (against one out of ten for children of lower categories) . We plan to explore further the context effect on educational aspirations and careers.

more chances with repeated years). In this point of view, part of them have better careers in upper secondary education. More generally, this is true for immigrant's children in secondary education. Girls have better school performance, no matter what their origin. We confirm here previous studies (Vallet and Caille, 1996) using a new cohort – 1995 Panel-

This approach of the career can be compared by the performances of the pupils through marks obtained in French and mathematics at *the Brevet des collèges*, which can indicate the level of achievement at the end of lower secondary school. The school performances of the children of immigrants are as a whole lower than those of the French of origin, in particular for those of North African origin. A quarter of them obtain a note lower than 8 in French and in mathematics (more than the pupils of French or Portuguese origin) and another quarter more than 12 (much less than the others). The perception of their school performance is slightly shifted¹⁴. In French, the judgements of the immigrant children are comparable with the others. The appreciation is contrasted in mathematics. The young people of North African origin in particular, more often estimate to have encountered great difficulties, or on the contrary, to be excellent.

This discrepancy between their effective school performances and the representation they have a few years later goes in the direction of an over-estimation of their level. This feeling helps them to persevere in longer studies and to reach the higher education; one can also evoke a certain ignorance of the educational system and its mechanisms of selection, as the professional occupations to which the various tracks lead. Carried by an ambition of social mobility shared by their family – and transmitted to their children-, they reveal a perseverance to be maintained in the education system, in spite of social characteristics and family resources which would reduce their chances of success. Indeed, they live in families which have difficulties of helping them in their school work or more generally of investing in a concrete way the schooling of their children (Thin, 1998 ; van Zanten, 2001; Brinbaum, 2002).

A “bad” orientation as a source of frustration

The analysis of the refused wishes during the orientation (at the end of lower secondary education) provides a complementary information on this discrepancy between parental aspiration and children's careers. The school hierarchy of the training leads to orient towards a technological track the pupils with low (or average) level, even when the parents asked for an orientation towards the academic track. The families have a more or less good knowledge of these mechanisms.

According to the pupils, the wishes are more often refused to the immigrant's children: among the lower category (native French : 26 %, 33% for those of Portuguese origin and 39% for those of North African origin (table 8)). The young people generally accept the verdict but those of North

¹⁴It is a retrospective judgement, the question being posed in 2002, that is to say one to three years afterwards this class (3^{ème}), where they pass *the Brevet des collèges*.

African origin rather perceived it like an injustice, in particular when they are in vocational track, (42% of them, this proportion is much weaker among those of French or Portuguese origin (respectively 18,6% and 20%). This is also true when they are in technological track.

These feelings reveal their disappointment relative to their school careers ; like the other children of lower category, they are in majority in the vocational education, whereas they rather (like their parents) were in favour of following an academic track. In spite of this disappointment, they persist in their ambition and would like to reach the higher education.

Conclusion: from one generation to another, continuity and rupture

Immigrant parents express high educational expectations for their children with differences between Portuguese who prefer the vocational education and North African parents who are for long studies in general education. The comparison of parental aspirations with those of their children shows a certain number of convergence: more reduced ambitions in the working-class families and in their children; higher school ambitions in the immigrant families as in their children, with a more perseverance with similar schooling performance. Their ambitions are followed by such perseverance that they don't adapt their ambitions according to the school performances of their children, as native French do.

Despite of precocious difficulties in elementary schools, immigrant's children school career are finally better in secondary education than children from non immigrant families with similar social origin. It's particularly obvious for few North-African children. However, careers remain socially differentiated and immigrants' children as their peers with similar social background are more frequently in vocational -or technological- tracks. Portuguese children are more in agreement with family aspirations, while a part of North-African youths origin, following the vocational track, are in disagreement with family aspirations. The difficulties they have encountered during their schooling lead them to be oriented towards the vocational or technological track. They express more frequently their dissatisfaction with regard to this orientation which they perceived like an injustice. Such discrepancy can be a source of frustration which is amplified by their difficulties to access the labour market and with the discrimination they are confronted with when they look for a job.

So the frequent school careers in the technological and professional track and the desire of the children to continue in higher education show a continuity of aspirations across generations but also a "gap" between those aspirations and the effective school careers of their children.

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Table

Table 1: Populations according to national origin and socioeconomic categories

	Upper category		Intermediate category		Lower category				Total
	homogeneous	heterogeneous	homogeneous	heterogeneous	Skilled	Unskilled	One skilled, one unskilled	All	
Native French born in France	6,3	16	12,7	22,5	20,4	6,1	16	42,5	100
Native French born outside France	10,1	19,2	11	22,7	19,9	5	12,1	37	100
Portuguese immigrant	0,6	0,6	1,4	20,3	18,9	20,3	37,8	77	100
North-African immigrant	0	0,8	0,4	10,3	38,4	38,4	11,6	88	100
Others Immigrant	3,7	1,3	4,1	14,5	29,8	36,6	15,3	82	100
Mixed families	6,6	17,5	9,5	20,5	20,1	9,3	16,4	46	100
Total	6,1	15,1	11,3	21,5	21,5	8,7	15,8	46	100

Table 2: Type of Orientation and diploma wished by socioeconomic categories of parents in 1998

	Upper categories <i>homogeneous</i>	Upper categories <i>heterogeneous</i>	Intermediate Categories <i>homogeneous</i>	Intermediate Categories <i>heterogeneous</i>	Lower categories (skilled)	Lower categories (unskilled)	Lower categories <i>heterogeneous</i>	Total Lower category
In the labor force	0	0	0,2	0,5	0,4	0,5	0,6	
Apprenticeship	0,2	1,4	1,7	5,3	5,8	5,3	7,2	5,9
School vocational diploma (CAP or BEP)	0,6	1,1	9,5	15	16,9	14,9	19,6	18,9
Vocational Baccalaureat	1,6	3,7	9,8	10,7	10,3	10,7	10,7	9,7
Technological Baccalaureat	2,5	4	6,4	4,3	4	4,3	3,8	3,7
Academic Baccalaureat	83,4	71,2	45,5	33,9	30,6	33,9	24,6	28,8
Don't know	2,8	17,8	25,6	28,3	30,1	28,3	31,3	31,3
NR	1,1	0,8	1,3	2	1,9	2	2,1	1,6

**Table 3: Type of Orientation and diploma wished by parents in 1998 according to national origin
(Lower category)**

	Native French	Immigrant	Portuguese	North African
In the labor force	0,3	0,3	0	0,3
Apprenticeship	6,4	3,4	4,2	2,3
CAP or BEP	18,7	9,9	13,9	8,8
Vocational Bac	11,3	6,5	8,2	8,1
Technological Bac	3,8	4,1	7,5	3,6
academic Bac	28,6	35,1	25,4	47,1
Don't know	29,1	23,3	39,2	28,7
NR	1,9	1,8	1,5	1
Total	100	100	100	100

**Table 4: Useful Diploma to find a job according to national origin
(lower category)**

	Native French	Immigrant	Portuguese	North African
None	1.9	1.6	3.3	0.8
CAP or BEP	13.3	8.2	9.3	6.8
Vocational Bac	21.3	11.4	12.3	12.1
Academic Bac	1	14.5	14.9	14.7
Technological Bac	5.1	4.0	1.7	4.9
Tertiary diploma	19.4	28.3	11.1	33.7
Don't know	26.6	31.0	46	25.8
NR	2.4	1.0	1.2	1.2
Total	100	100	100	

Table 5: Level of education wished in higher education by youngsters in 2002

	Immigrant's children	Native French	Portuguese origin	North African origin
bac+1 year	3,2	2,4	3,9	2,6
bac+2 years (BTS, DUT DEUG)	46,9	45,3	47,2	44,1
bac+3 year licence	11,2	8,9	8,9	8,2
bac+4 years maîtrise	10,3	11,8	12,4	12,1
bac+5 years DESS, DEA	9,6	13,2	13,4	13,8
more	3,8	5,99	4,3	6,1
Don't know	14,3	11,5	9,9	11,8
Non answer	0,8	0,9	0	1,3

Table 6: School situation in 2002 according to social origin

	Upper categories (homogeneous)	Upper categories (heterogeneous)	Intermediate Categories (homogeneous)	Intermediate Categories (heterogeneous)	Lower categories	All
never failed						
- in academic track	66,6	51,8	42	29	16,4	30,4
- in technological track	3,7	6,1	9,8	8,9	8,4	8,1
failed						
- in academic track	17,3	18,1	10,3	9,6	7,1	11,1
- in technological track	6,4	10,9	10,1	12,9	11,1	11,1
in vocational track	5,1	10,2	21	29,8	41,9	30
dropped out	1,7	2,8	3,8	7,2	14,7	9,3

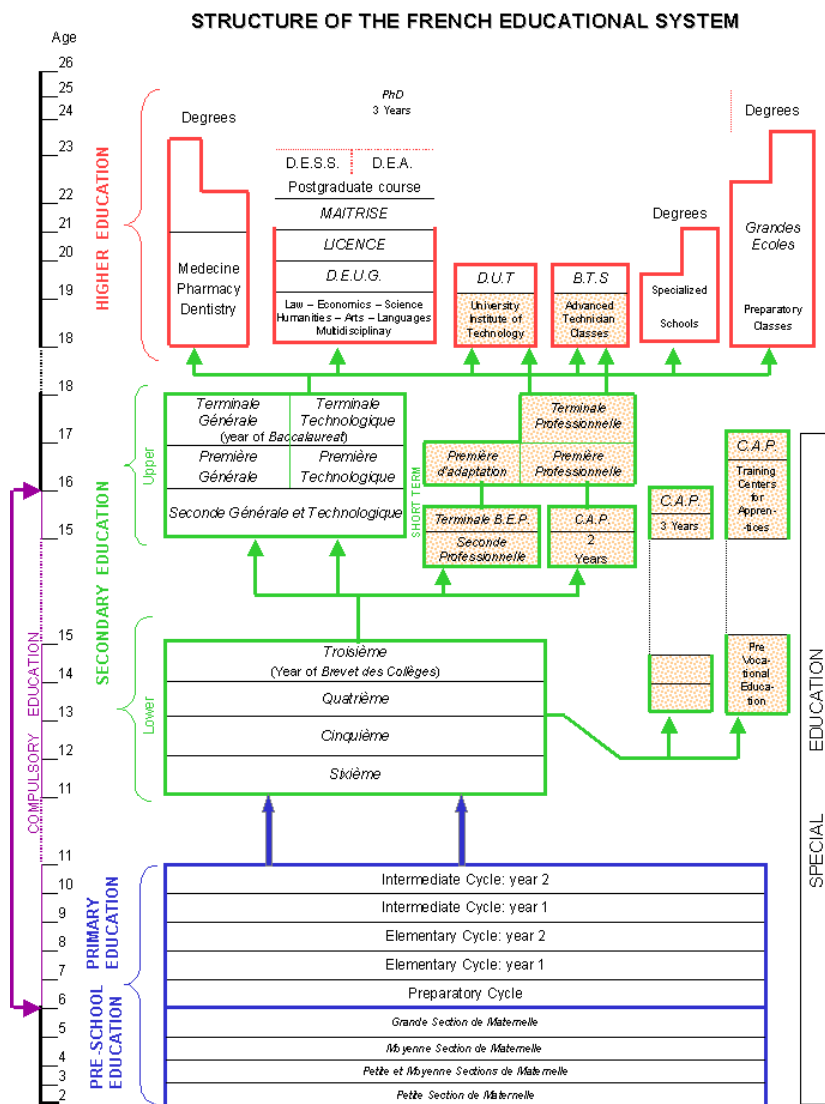
Table 7: School situation in 2002 according to national origin (Lower categories)

	Immigrant's children	Native French	Portuguese origin	North African origin
never failed				
- in academic track	17.1	15,9	17,6	17.9
- in technological track	11.6	8	9,1	13.2
failed				
- in academic track	5.6	7,3	10,7	4.9
- in technological track	12.3	10,9	10,1	13.4
in vocational track	37.9	43,8	37,3	39.5
dropped out	15.4	14	15,2	11

Table 8: Conditions of orientation perceived in 2002

	Native French	Portuguese origin	North-African origin	All
Injustice perceived during the school's orientation (%)				
Yes	17,5	17	25	19
No	80	83	74	79
Among pupils in vocational track				
	18.6	20	42	
Orientation refused (%)				
Yes	26	33	39	28

Figure 1: The French Educational System



Courtesy of the Ministry of Education

Note: Shaded areas indicate professional studies.

Assefa, A. Mariam. France: A Study of the Educational System of France and a Guide to the Academic Placement of Students in Educational Institutions of the United States. World Education Services: New York, 1988

Note: Compulsory secondary education begins in the *Collège*, the only institution admitting all pupils for the first four years of secondary education. *Collèges* are institutions of lower secondary education that take pupils at the end of primary schooling, at the latest in their twelfth year. The educational cycle lasts four years, corresponding to the 6th, 5th, 4th and 3rd classes. This comprehensive type of lower secondary school for all pupils, known as the "*Collège unique*", was created by the law of 11 July 1975.

The curriculum remains common to all pupils but optional courses are offered to them. The guidance cycle, in the 3rd class, completes the knowledge of pupils and prepares them for their transition to the *Lycée*. During their years in a *Collège*, pupils are assessed in ways that will determine their future orientation. Finally, the pupil's results in the 4th and 3rd classes are noted on a school report card which is taken into account for the award of the national certificate (*diplôme national du brevet*). This is a general education certificate and does not determine the pupil's future orientation. The certificate is awarded on the basis of marks achieved in the examination at the end of the 3rd class and of the results during the 4th and 3rd classes.

The 3rd class and the final year of *Collège* constitute the key period in guidance. Two options are possible:

- the 2nd general or technological class which leads to a general or technological *Baccalauréat*;
- the 2nd vocational class, the first year of preparation for a vocational studies certificate (*brevet d'études professionnelles*) or to the vocational aptitude certificate (*certificat d'aptitude professionnelle*). After obtaining this first vocational qualification, students can prepare for a vocational or technological baccalauréat.

The Class Council proposes an option based on the wishes expressed by the pupil and his or her family. The proposal is submitted to the family which can accept it or appeal to a committee.

Post-secondary education is dispensed in **Lycées**: general and technological *Lycées* or vocational *Lycées*. General or technological *Lycées* are coeducational secondary schools which prepare pupils in three years (2nd, 1st and terminal classes) for the following certificates: the general *Baccalauréat*, the technological *Baccalauréat*, and the technical certificate (*brevet de technicien*). The general or technological *baccalauréat* is a national school-leaving certificate that gives access to higher education. To obtain them it is necessary to pass anonymous exams, which are identical for everyone and administered at the end of the terminal class.

The 2nd class is the cycle in which pupils choose the type of *baccalauréat* they wish to work towards.

Studies completed in *Lycées* of general and/or technological education lead to a general or technological *Baccalauréat* examination.

The ***Baccalauréat*** is the first university qualification. It gives access to higher education. Pupils who do not pass the *Baccalauréat* examination but have on average received marks equivalent to at least 8/20 can obtain a secondary school leaving certificate (*certificat de fin d'études secondaires*). This certificate, awarded by the *recteur*, states that the pupil has completed secondary education in its entirety, but it does not entitle the pupil to enter higher education.

The **vocational *Lycées*** prepare for national vocational examinations at level V such as the vocational aptitude certificate (CAP) and the vocational studies certificate (BEP), as well as those at level IV such as the vocational *Baccalauréat*. The vocational *Lycées* allow young people to continue their general education and to benefit from vocational training leading to a first qualification certificate. Preparation for these certificates, which always includes a period of in-company training, can be organized along the lines of an apprenticeship, which is a form of alternating initial vocational training subject to an employment contract. It combines the acquisition of know-how in a firm with theoretical education in an apprentice training centre (*centre de formation d'apprentis* - CFA) and leads to a certificate of vocational or technological education or another recognized certificate.

Pupils holding a BEP can either enter working life or continue their studies in preparation for a vocational or technological *Baccalauréat*, which requires two further years of schooling (1st and terminal classes). In the case of the technological *Baccalauréat*, holders of a BEP can improve their chances of success in technological studies at *Baccalauréat* level and beyond by following an "adapted" 1st class (*première d'adaptation*) beforehand. Unlike the technological *Baccalauréat*, the vocational *Baccalauréat* is primarily a vocational integration certificate leading directly to the exercise of an occupation, although it also entitles holders to enter university studies.

Source : Cedefop, 1999.

Table 10: Children's hope for studies in higher education		Model 1	p	ME	Model 2	p	ME	Model 3	p	ME
intercept		0,98 ***	72,7		3,50 ***	97,1		1,51 ***	81,9	
Parent's Socioeconomic characteristics <i>(skilled or unskilled worker)</i>	Upper category	0,89 **	86,6	13,9	0,44	98,1		0,89 **	91,7	9,8
	Upper categories (heterogenous)	0,69 ***	84,2	11,4	0,26	97,7		0,61 ***	89,3	7,4
	Intermediate Categories (homogeneous)	0,48 ***	81,2	8,4	0,30 *	97,8	0,7	0,36 **	86,6	4,7
	Intermediate Categories (heterogenous)	0,42 ***	80,2	7,5	0,26 **	97,7	0,7	0,36 ***	86,6	4,7
	Blue or white collar workers (skilled)	0,12			0,05	97,2		0,07		
	Blue or white collar workers (unskilled)	-0,16			0,06	97,2		-0,15		
National origin <i>Parents French born in France</i>	French native born outside France	0,09			-0,04	97,0		0,07		
	Two parents Portuguese	1,05 ***	88,4	15,7	0,93 ***	98,8	1,8	1,17 ***	93,6	11,7
	Two parents North African	0,90 ***	86,8	14,1	0,69 ***	98,5	1,4	0,94 ***	92,1	10,2
	Two parents other origin	0,56 **	82,3	9,6	0,46 *	98,1	1,1	0,59 **	89,1	7,2
	Heterogeneous family	0,41 **	80,1	7,3	0,43 **	98,1	1,0	0,49 ***	88,1	6,2
Gender: male	female	0,80 ***	85,6	12,9	0,49 ***	98,2	1,1	0,88 ***	91,6	9,7
Father's educational level <i>CAP</i>	Never attending school	0,02			0,18 **	97,5	0,5	0,00		
	Elementary or lower secondary	-0,17			-0,04	97,0		-0,15		
	Lower secondary diploma	0,10			0,03	97,2		0,07		
	Upper secondary diploma	0,60 ***	82,9	10,2	0,42 **	98,1	1,0	0,58 ***	89,0	7,1
	Tertiary level	1,03 ***	88,2	15,5	0,56 ***	98,3	1,2	0,94 ***	92,1	10,2
Mother's educational level <i>CAP</i>	Never attending school	0,04			0,34 **	97,9	0,8	0,09		
	Elementary or lower secondary	-0,18 *	69,0	-3,7	-0,03 *	97,0	-0,1	-0,24 **	78,1	-3,8
	Lower secondary diploma	-0,12			-0,22 *	96,4	-0,7	-0,17		
	Upper secondary diploma	0,38 ***	79,6	6,9	-0,01	97,1		0,27 *	85,6	3,7
	Tertiary level	0,91 ***	86,9	14,2	0,41 **	98,0	1,0	0,80 ***	91,0	9,1
School situation in 2001-2002 <i>Academic track (never failed)</i>	Technological track never failed				-0,78 ***	93,8	-3,2			
	Academic track failed at least once				-1,45 ***	88,6	-8,5			
	Technological track failed at least once				-1,55 ***	87,6	-9,5			
	Vocational and apprenticeship				-3,52 ***	49,6	-47,5			
	other				-3,36 ***	53,5	-43,5			
Pupil's judgement upon his (her) performance: in French <i>average</i>	difficulties							-0,53 ***	72,7	-9,2
	Some difficulties							-0,42 ***	74,8	-7,1
	Very good							0,36 **	86,6	4,7
	No answer							0,14	83,9	2,0
-mathematics <i>average</i>	difficulties							-1,17 ***	58,4	-23,5
	Some difficulties							-0,60 ***	71,3	-10,6
	Very good							0,51 ***	88,3	6,4
	No answer							0,56	88,8	6,9
G2		5479			4350			5189		
Df n		24	8435		29			32		