



POWERst Project

**First-generation Students and the
academia : results form a comparative
survey**

Authors: Marie Annézo, Vincent Tiberj*

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This report presents the main findings of three surveys carried out as part of the European EmPOWERing first generation STudents (POWERst) project involving VU Amsterdam, Stuttgart University and Sciences Po Bordeaux.

The aim of the project is to understand the challenges faced by First-Generation Students in their university careers and to identify the levers for action that will enable these students to succeed in their studies. It will also help to promote a university that is more inclusive and open to diversity.

Inequalities are observed here across a broad spectrum, depending on the context in which students live and grow up.

We are interested not only in the difficulties encountered during university studies but also in all aspects of student life.

The aim of these surveys is to observe the position of First-generation students at different points in their university career, from their entry into higher education to their graduation.

Following these objectives, a comparative analysis will be carried out in order to identify the specific characteristics of each institution, but also their common points. The aim is to improve the study conditions of these first-generation students.

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ABOUT THE SURVEYS

The POWERst team designed a common questionnaire asking students about their social and family background, their previous education, their living and study conditions and their ambitions for their career. Each institution then administered the questionnaire online during the 2021/2022 academic year.

The response rate for this type of research design is generally low, and varies from one university to another. 597 out of 2,100 students took part in the survey at Sciences Po Bordeaux, 496 out of nearly 27,000 at the University of Stuttgart and 92 at the University of Amsterdam.

These differences can be explained by a subjective competence bias: some students feel more legitimate than others to take part in these surveys. These are social biases that differ according to the respondent's gender, social background or geographical location. Students' attachment to their school or university also has an impact on their participation.

Sciences Po Bordeaux is a small institution where students are very present and involved in the school's abundant community life, which fosters links with the community. In addition, the school regularly asks its students about their living and studying conditions, which encourages their participation in the surveys.

We can assume that medical students in Amsterdam have a timetable that made it more difficult for them to respond to the questionnaire, and that students at Stuttgart University, whose fields of study are very broad, tend to be attached to their respective departments rather than to the institution as a whole.

What's more, students at Stuttgart University, the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam medical school and Sciences Po Bordeaux are quite different in terms of their social and geographical backgrounds, but also in terms of the male/female ratio. This survey therefore raises the issue of the comparability of the samples studied on the one hand and the questionnaires on the other.

ENTRANCE TO HIGHER EDUCATION: A FIRST TEST

Sciences Po Bordeaux: a school for elites?

The French education system has several tiers, with universities that are relatively non-selective and the grandes écoles that often attract students from privileged social classes or students with excellent academic records.

Despite a long-term commitment to opening up its student body socially^[1], Sciences Po Bordeaux remains very attractive (more than 4,300 applicants for 275 places) and the selection process remains particularly demanding: 97% of those admitted in 2023 have obtained a very good distinction in their baccalaureate.

With these high stakes, Sciences Po Bordeaux is confronted with the phenomenon of self-censorship among applicants: many good students from the middle and working classes do not dare to apply to the IEP.

The sample reflects this social distortion: 75% of respondents have at least one parent with a higher education qualification, whereas they represent only 40% of the overall French population. 7% of students have parents with no qualifications (compared with 18% for the French population as a whole), and 8% have a secondary education qualification (compared with 24%).

In terms of social background, it is the upper classes that are most often represented. 63% of respondents had a parent in a higher intellectual profession, compared with only 10% of children of white-collar workers and 3% of children of blue-collar workers. Furthermore, when pupils were asked to describe their background, 82% said they came from a privileged environment (39% of whom completely agreed).

There is one final point that draws attention to the specific characteristics of the students: 15% say that they have a Sciences Po Bordeaux graduate among their family or friends. Given that the Sciences Po Bordeaux alumni community includes nearly 12,000 former students, this proportion is particularly high.

However, there is no gender bias: the programme has become much more feminised in 20 years, to the extent that nearly 7 out of 10 students are now women. They represent 72.5% of respondents.

Finally, Sciences Po Bordeaux's appeal is national: only 36% come from the Nouvelle Aquitaine region, while 13% have parents living abroad.

[1] For example, the pioneering JPPJV programme was founded in 2005 and consists of an agreement with some forty high schools. The aim is to identify high-potential students, give them confidence and help them prepare for entry to Sciences Po Bordeaux.

Defining the public of interest for Sciences Po Bordeaux

Using the strict definition of first-generation students, only 12% of students at Sciences Po Bordeaux have neither parent in higher education.

73.5% have two parents with higher education qualifications. However, the statistical representativeness and reliability of the results remain questionable, given the number of responses (69 respondents). The solution would be to take other factors into account to refine the analysis. For example, students who have only one parent with a higher education qualification, as well as those from working class backgrounds, or those in receipt of a grant based on social criteria. Social origins are defined by the socio-professional category of the reference parent.

We consider as 'working-class' those individuals whose reference parent works as an employee, a manual worker or is self-employed. Similarly, nearly half of *First-Generation Students* come from a working-class background, as do 35% of respondents, with only one parent had attended higher education. 64% of *First-Generation Students* receive a state grant, and 44% of those with only parent has a higher education qualification.

Level of confidence in the Sciences Po Bordeaux entrance exams

	Not confident at all	Not confident	Confident
No parent with sup edu	29.5 %	44 %	26.5 %
One parent with sup edu	22.5 %	49 %	28.5 %
Two parents with sup edu	16.5 %	41.5 %	41.5 %
No scholarship	15.5 %	44.5 %	40 %
Scholarship	26 %	41.5 %	32.5 %
Low social origin	22.5 %	43.5 %	34 %
Middle social origin	22.5 %	41 %	36.5 %
High social origin	15 %	46 %	39 %
Man	11.5 %	39 %	49.5 %
Woman	22.5 %	45 %	32.5 %
Whole sample	19 %	43.5 %	37.5 %

Reading: 37.5% of students were confident when applying to the entrance exams for Sciences Po Bordeaux.

The entrance exams for Sciences Po Bordeaux are particularly selective, and the success rate is quite low, at around 6% in 2022. This makes it all the more important for candidates to feel confident and legitimate in applying.

However, even though the survey concerns applicants who have actually succeeded and are now students, there is evidence of self-censorship.

When Sciences Po Bordeaux students were asked how confident they were when they applied, 37.5% felt confident.

This was particularly the case if both parents were higher education graduates (41.5%), and especially if they were men (49.5%). In contrast, the respondents who doubted themselves the most (19%) were more likely to be women (22.5%) than men (11.5%), scholarship holders (26%) and First Generation Students (29.5%). There are two sides to this phenomenon: on the one hand, men from privileged backgrounds who doubt themselves less often, and on the other, women and people from working-class backgrounds who do not feel legitimate.

Moreover, the factors of gender and social origin are cumulative, as demonstrated by the multinomial logistic regression below.

	Not confident at all	Not confident
No parent with sup edu	2.33**	1.74*
One parent with sup edu	1.79**	1.79**
Two parents with sup edu (ref.)		
No scholarship (ref.)		
Scholarship	1.75**	1.00
Man (ref.)		
Woman	3.23***	1.82***
Cons	0.14***	0.65**

In particular, it shows that these two factors have a significant impact on lack of self-confidence and self-worth. The levers for action available to higher education institutions remain limited, given the social and gender distinctions that have persisted since secondary education.

Entering to Stuttgart University

Defining the public of interest for Stuttgart University

The German POWERst sample (452 responses) remains relatively small compared to the overall student population.

This can be explained by several factors, in particular a more diffuse sense of belonging due to the size of the institution. In addition, the method of conducting the survey may also have an impact on the response rate. The results obtained should therefore be treated with caution, as this sample is undoubtedly not representative in the conventional statistical sense.

Nevertheless, this survey does allow us to count a significant proportion of First-Generation Students: 56.5% of respondents have no parent with a higher education qualification, 20% have one parent with a higher education qualification and 23.5% have both parents.

This distribution therefore allows a correct analysis of the phenomenon.

For ease of understanding, it will be analysed alongside gender and the immigrant or non-immigrant origin of the respondents. These three variables are likely to measure the feeling of incompetence and any difficulties encountered during their university studies.

The situation of Stuttgart University is very different from that of Sciences Po Bordeaux. A university with an excellent reputation, as demonstrated by its results in international rankings, it is distinguished first and foremost by its size. It has nearly 27,000 students, including 13,000 undergraduates. It is also relatively accessible, with an acceptance rate of 71%.

As a result, students are more confident in their ability to get into this university than their counterparts at Sciences Po Bordeaux.

37.5% of French students were confident of success, compared with 83.5% of German students (51% of whom were even 'very confident'). Despite this gap in confidence, there are differences according to social characteristics, indicating that inequalities persist.

Level of confidence in admission to the University of Stuttgart

	Not confident	Confident	Very confident
No parent with sup edu	18.5 %	34 %	47.5 %
One parent with sup edu	16 %	32 %	52 %
Two parents with sup edu	13 %	27.5 %	59.5 %
Immigrant origin	19 %	39 %	42 %
Not immigrant origin	16 %	29.5 %	54.5 %
Man	14.5 %	27.5 %	58 %
Woman	18.5 %	35.5 %	46 %
Whole sample	16.5 %	31.5 %	52 %

Reading: 18.5% of women were not confident about their admission to the University of Stuttgart.

Whether according to gender, immigrant background or being a *First-Generation student*, there are differences in the level of confidence of students, particularly in the high levels of confidence. Among very confident students, there is a 12-point difference between *First-Generation Students* and those whose parents both have got university degrees (47.5% and 59.5%), between women (46%) and men (58%), and between respondents of immigrant origin (54.5%) and those of non-immigrant origin (42%). This may be an effect of familiarity with the German education system: those whose family and friends are most familiar with it are more confident, unlike *First-Generation Students* or respondents of immigrant origin, who do not have all the keys and knowledge they need to feel confident about starting university.

It may also be a question of legitimacy and confidence in one's own qualities and abilities. This would explain the differences between men and women, as in France. Partly, this is a compositional effect, as women are more likely to be *First-Generation Students* (55% compared with 43% among respondents with two parents with higher education qualifications), but this explanation is not enough.

Here again, the factors add up significantly when analysed using multinomial logistic regression.

	Not confident	Very confident
No parent with sup edu	1.11	0.65*
One parent with sup edu	1.20	0.73
Two parents with sup edu (ref.)		
Immigrant origin		
Not immigrant origin (ref.)	0.80	0.53**
Man (ref.)		
Woman	0.97	0.62**
cons	0.52*	3.42**

Gender, the number of parents with higher education qualifications and immigrant background all contribute significantly and cumulatively to being less often 'very confident'. If we use the probabilities predicted by the model, a man whose parents both have higher education qualifications has a 65% chance of being very confident in his ability to get into Stuttgart University.

This figure decreases to 56% for a woman from the same background, 54% for a male First-Generation Student and 44% for a female First-Generation Student.

Once again, the university cannot influence the way in which social and gendered socialisation leads to these more or less frequent feelings of illegitimacy.

But knowledge of this phenomenon can enable institutions to adapt by developing appropriate programmes and thus try to remedy the situation, to a certain extent.

The VU Amsterdam medical school

The survey for VU Amsterdam did not include enough respondents to make a reliable analysis. Nevertheless, we can see that the 72 women who took part in the survey had a slightly lower level of self-confidence than the 19 men. Moreover, 21 respondents had little or no self-confidence, 20 of whom were women. None of these uncomfortable respondents had a parent with a university degree, but 6 had a parent with a primary school education and 6 with a secondary school education.

We can reasonably conclude that the same phenomena affect all three schools.

KEEPING UP IN YOUR STUDIES AND DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS

At Sciences Po Bordeaux

Studies are among the most important years in terms of secondary socialisation and the professional and personal development of individuals.

Many students come to Sciences Po Bordeaux directly from secondary school, spend a mobility year there, and then spend their entire degree course within the walls of the institute.

In addition, thanks to the large 'Sciences Po Bordeaux community', many students will develop an esprit de corps and a strong sense of belonging, making the institution more than just a place to study. This sense of community can encourage students to forge particularly strong links between themselves, particularly through their own community life and through festive events. This makes sense because this ability to socialise is a key skill in their future careers, federated in particular around the Alumni network. Several indicators are used to measure students' sense of integration, both among peers and within the institution.

When it comes to relations with their promotion, the results are very positive overall: 68% of respondents feel well integrated and 21% totally integrated.

It seems that social background has little to do with the feeling of integration. First-generation students seem to be slightly less likely to feel very integrated, as do students from working-class backgrounds, but the differences with the most advantaged remain relatively small (around 6 to 7 percentage points). The feeling of being integrated is dominant among them: 63% of First-Generation Students feel integrated (and 16% 'totally'), while 71% of students from working-class backgrounds say the same (and 18% 'totally').

However, a paradox emerges around gender issues: although women represent more than two thirds of the student body, it is the men who feel by far the best integrated into their class. Only 16% of women said they were fully integrated, compared with 34.5% of men, while 35% of women said they were little or not at all integrated, compared with 24% of men.

Feel integrate in one's promotion

	Yes totally	Rather yes	Rather no	Not at all
No parent with sup edu	16 %	47 %	29.5 %	7 %
One parent with sup edu	18.5 %	45 %	27.5 %	9 %
Two parents with sup edu	22.5 %	48 %	22.5 %	7 %
No scholarship	21.5 %	46.5 %	23.5 %	8.5 %
Scholarship	20 %	48 %	26 %	6 %
Low social origin	18 %	53 %	25.5 %	3.5 %
Middle social origin	18.5 %	49 %	26 %	6.5 %
High social origin	25.5 %	46 %	21 %	7.5 %
Man	34.5 %	41.5 %	21 %	3 %
Woman	16 %	49 %	26 %	9 %
Whole sample	21 %	47 %	24.5 %	7.5 %

Reading: 21% of respondents feel completely integrated into their promotion.

The second question covers a slightly different dimension, since it looks at the relationship with the institution as a whole (this does not, however, distinguish between the various actors - teachers or the administration, for example). The results were rather negative, with only a minority of students feeling completely at home at Sciences Po Bordeaux (21%).

On the other hand, a third of students often feel that they do not belong. These results vary according to the students' year of study. Students in their fourth and fifth years of study tend to feel that they belong more often than students in their first and particularly second years. This is both a career effect and a schooling effect: second-year students are in a mobility year abroad, while first-year students are still discovering the institute with its rules and codes.

Feel not at her/his place in Sciences Po Bordeaux

	Never	Sometimes	Often
No parent with sup edu	13 %	43.5 %	43.5 %
One parent with sup edu	19.5 %	43.5 %	37 %
Two parents with sup edu	22 %	46.5 %	31.5 %
No scholarship	21.5 %	43.5 %	35 %
Scholarship	19 %	48 %	33 %
Low social origin	13.5 %	49 %	37.5 %
Middle social origin	20 %	38.5 %	41.5 %
High social origin	24 %	46.5 %	29.5 %
Man	34.5 %	45.5 %	20 %
Woman	16 %	45 %	39 %
Whole sample	21 %	45 %	33.5 %

Reading: 33% of scholarship students often feel out of place at the IEP.

Feeling 'out of place' is particularly common among First-Generation Students (43.5%), although students whose 2 parents are university graduates are also affected (31.5%). We find a similar phenomenon if we look at social origins. There is a 10-point difference between students from working-class backgrounds and those from well-off backgrounds in terms of never "feeling out of place". Once again, gender differences are significant: men feel this way half as often as women (20% compared to 39%). 34.5% of men felt they belonged, compared with 16% of women.

These results may put into perspective the feeling of legitimacy and self-confidence in the ability to succeed in the Sciences Po Bordeaux entrance exams. It may also be explained by the imposter syndrome produced by gendered socialisation that is unfavourable to girls. In this case, this process has been ingrained in students for a long time, and the institute has little leverage to counter it. Finally, there is the hypothesis of a continuation of a "Sciences Po" culture, on the part of an institution that until the beginning of the 21st century still attracted a majority of male students. No doubt part of the teaching model is still marked by exercises and postures that appeal more to men than to women (for example, oral presentations or public speaking).

The questionnaire covers various aspects of student life, enabling us to identify those that are most likely to cause students discomfort. These are of different kinds, both educational and extra-curricular. This analysis shows that this feeling of illegitimacy goes beyond the strict framework of schooling.

Moments during which respondent felt uneasy

	During teaching	While interacting with teachers	During associative events	During discussion with pairs
No parent with sup edu	59.5 %	37.5 %	20 %	49 %
One parent with sup edu	54 %	31 %	15 %	49.5 %
Two parents with sup edu	50 %	24 %	15.5 %	41 %
No scholarship	52 %	26.5 %	16.5 %	41 %
Scholarship	51 %	29 %	14 %	49.5 %
Low social origin	59 %	34 %	21.5 %	50 %
Middle social origin	51 %	29.5 %	15 %	47 %
High social origin	51 %	26 %	14.5 %	40 %
Man	33.5 %	20 %	14 %	38.5 %
Woman	58.5 %	30.5 %	16 %	46 %
Whole sample	51.5 %	28 %	15.5 %	44 %

Reading: 51.5% of respondents feel out of place at least one time.

The best endowed students, because they come from the upper classes or because their parents both have higher education qualifications, are the least likely to feel uncomfortable interacting with teachers or in discussions with their peers. On the other hand, pupils from modest backgrounds are more likely to have difficulty interacting with teachers (37.5% of *First Generation Students*), and even sometimes with peers. Once again, we find differences between men and women, particularly during lessons (15 point difference) or in interaction with teachers (10 point difference). On the other hand, there was little difference when it came to associative events.

At Stuttgart University

	Integrated in one's promotion	Not at her/his place in Stuttgart University
No parent with sup edu	70 %	59.5 %
One parent with sup edu	83 %	57 %
Two parents with sup edu	75 %	52 %
Immigrant origin	64.5 %	57.5 %
Not immigrant origin	77.5 %	56.5 %
Man	76 %	50 %
Woman	74.5 %	61.5 %
Whole sample	75 %	56 %

Reading: 75% of respondents feel integrated, and 56% feel they belong at Stuttgart University.

The German questionnaire asks different questions about integration into the student body or the feeling of not fitting in. Nevertheless, we can draw several conclusions from the results.

Firstly, First-Generation Students differ little from students whose parents both have higher education qualifications. However, the results are more nuanced when it comes to gender and immigrant origin. Women feel just as integrated in their promotion as men, but they are more likely to feel out of place at university (+11.5 points).

Respondents from immigrant backgrounds were no different from others when it came to the institution, but seemed to suffer from difficulties integrating into their year (13 points difference), even though a large majority of them feel integrated.

Moments during which respondent felt uneasy

	During seminar	While interacting with teachers	During associative events	During discussion with pairs
No parent with sup edu	32.5 %	30.5 %	26. %	37 %
One parent with sup edu	15 %	20.5 %	22.5 %	28.5 %
Two parents with sup edu	35.5 %	23 %	19.5 %	37.5 %
Immigrant origin	27 %	30.5 %	27 %	46 %
Not immigrant origin	30 %	26 %	24.5 %	33 %
Man	24 %	21 %	22 %	30.5 %
Woman	34 %	34 %	25.5 %	38.5 %
Whole sample	29.5 %	28.5 %	24 %	35 %

Reading: 29.5% of respondents feel out of place at seminars.

The results cannot be compared directly with the French survey. In the French survey, all respondents were able to state that they had felt uncomfortable, whereas in the German survey, only those who had previously stated that they had felt uncomfortable were tested to find out when this had occurred.

The difficulties experienced by students from a migrant background are confirmed when it comes to discussions between peers. In this case, 46% felt uncomfortable, compared with 33% of students with no connection to immigration. On the other hand, there was no difference between these students when it came to teachers or community activities.

The gender effect is similar to that in France. There are no differences when it comes to community events, but the gap rises to 8 points for interactions between peers, 10 points for seminars and 14 points for interactions with professors and teachers, all of which suggests that it is more difficult for women. This should raise questions, especially as it is a multidimensional phenomenon. It may be the result of the way in which women speak at seminars, or of specific difficulties in interacting with the teaching staff. Attention must therefore be paid to gender effects and interactions.

On the other hand, the differences between First-Generation Students and the others are relatively small and do not indicate a systemic problem.

At Amsterdam University

Only 6 out of 91 respondents said they did not feel part of their promotion. The respondents therefore seem at ease with their fellow students. It should be noted, however, that these 6 respondents were all women and all First-Generation Students.

On the other hand, there were more respondents who felt 'out of place': 27 out of 91, including 23 who said they felt this way very often. Here again, gender and social background are explanatory variables. Of these 27 'uncomfortable' students, 22 were women and 19 were First-Generation students. Of course, the children of higher education graduates and men sometimes feel this way, but it's much rarer.

TAKING PART IN COMMUNITY LIFE

At Sciences Po Bordeaux

Sciences Po Bordeaux actively supports student community and cultural life, which is an important factor in attracting applicants. Many students get involved, leaving aside participation in traditional associations outside the school. This can be seen as a form of self-involvement, typical of the French grandes écoles, but it enables students to develop their skills (setting up projects, collective decision-making) and their networking.

There are also effects due to the characteristics of the school's curriculum: the classes that are most involved in the associations are the 1st, 3rd and 4th years, while the 2nd years are less involved because they are on mobility abroad, as are the 5th years, who do long work internships in companies. But even after controlling for the effects of schooling, there are significant effects of social background and gender.

Student members of associations at Sciences Po Bordeaux

	Member of none	Member of one	Member of several
No parent with sup edu	37.5 %	27.5 %	35 %
One parent with sup edu	39.5 %	25 %	35.5 %
Two parents with sup edu	23.5 %	32.5%	44 %
No scholarship	25 %	31 %	44 %
Scholarship	35.5 %	28.5 %	36 %
Low social origin	38.5 %	20.5 %	41 %
Middle social origin	27 %	33 %	40 %
High social origin	24.5 %	33 %	42.5 %
Man	25 %	25 %	50 %
Woman	30 %	32.5 %	37.5 %
Whole sample	29 %	30 %	41 %

Lecture : 71 % des étudiants de Sciences Po Bordeaux sont membres d'une association

There is undoubtedly a particular relationship with studies that is expressed in the differences in community involvement. Men take more regular advantage of these opportunities, while women tend to limit their involvement, particularly because of the demands of their studies. In the case of First-Generation-students, scholarship holders and students from working-class backgrounds, the differences in involvement can be interpreted in several ways: A more serious relationship with their studies, given the financial difficulties they face, which leaves less time for associations; the hypothesis of a lesser sense of belonging, which leads to less investment in extra-curricular activities; a lack of awareness of the benefits of this commitment in terms of skills development.

After calculating a logistic regression model of non-membership and predicted probabilities[1], it appears that women with no or one parent with a higher education qualification are 40% more likely not to join an association. Men from similar backgrounds are around 33% more likely not to join. Conversely, men with 2 parents with higher education have only a 20% chance of not joining any association.

[1] Given the problems of numbers, this method is more reliable than using a multi-dimensional table.

At Stuttgart University



Direct comparisons between samples should be treated with caution, but membership of associations seems to be less common at Stuttgart than at Sciences Po Bordeaux.

Student members of associations at Sciences Po Bordeaux

	Member of none	Member of one	Member of several
No parent with sup edu	64.5 %	26.5 %	9 %
One parent with sup edu	67.5 %	19.5 %	13 %
Two parents with sup edu	64 %	25.5 %	10.5 %
Immigrant origin	74 %	22.5 %	3.5 %
Not immigrant origin	63 %	25.5 %	11.5 %
Man	67.5 %	22.5 %	9.5 %
Woman	63 %	26.5 %	10.5 %
Whole sample	65.5 %	10 %	24.5 %

Reading: 34.5% of respondents at the University of Stuttgart are members of one or more associations.

These results show that there are very few differences between First-Generation Students and other students, or between genders. The only reservation to be made concerns the lower level of associative activity among students of immigrant origin. This 10-point difference in non-participation comes on top of the feeling that they are less often well integrated into the classes or that they are sometimes uncomfortable in discussions with other students. There is no doubt that a special effort needs to be made to improve the integration of these students.

At Amsterdam University

34 respondents were members of at least one association, which brings this sample closer to the German situation. There was no noticeable difference between First-Generation students and others. On the other hand, women seemed to join associations more often than men.

CONCLUSION

The three POWERst surveys demonstrate the importance of measuring student behaviour and feelings. It is necessary to understand the integration of students in a broad approach, making it possible to distinguish the school career before entering higher education, the university curriculum, during and outside teaching. This will enable us to produce indicators that can be reproduced in the future and used to evaluate the policies put in place to welcome and support students.

It is important to stress that survey methods need to be improved and standardised, taking inspiration from the major European surveys, for example. The questionnaire, which varied from one institution to another, did not allow for optimal comparison between institutions. In addition, the sampling method used prior to the survey needs to be stabilised. Remaining with self-administered questionnaires on a voluntary basis is likely to result in underestimating the students who are furthest from the institutions or overestimating certain profiles rather than others. The solution might be to establish quota targets to ensure that respondents are more representative. In addition, discrepancies in participation rates highlight the need to rethink sample sizes and adopt a more detailed approach to target groups and their needs. This is all the more true given that these surveys show that the issues of integration and student well-being need to be tackled using a multidimensional approach.

The results obtained have enabled us to understand the impact of social background (measured by the fact of being First-Generation Students or by parents' occupations) on students' career paths. Alongside these characteristics, our surveys also demonstrate the need to take into account other dimensions such as gender or immigrant origin. All these dimensions need to be analysed simultaneously in order to make higher education in general and our institutions in particular as inclusive as possible.



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Sciences Po Bordeaux - June 2023