

Teacher shortage or rather a shortage of teachers of color?

The causes and implications of the lack of ethnic
diversity among teachers in Flanders

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Abstract

While the younger members of Flemish society have been becoming increasingly diverse in both quantity and quality, and will continue to do so in years to come, Flemish teachers remain predominantly White, autochthonous and middle class. Previous international research has shown that this growing cultural mismatch between secondary school students and their teachers has detrimental effects on the motivation, performance, well-being and even future socio-economic status of students with a migration background. In addition to training and inspiring current (preservice) teachers to work *in* and *for* diversity, an important strategy for narrowing the ethnic achievement gap in education consists of diversifying the teaching force.

The approach in this study was inspired by the principles that shaped many teacher diversity efforts in the United States. For teachers of color, being able to help children and students in their community has proved to be a decisive factor. In order to attract more ethnically diverse students to teach, this could be a starting point for targeted campaigns. Rather than blindly copying strategies that came into being in a completely different cultural and historical context, however, this research investigates Flemish migrant students' views on cultural identity, the achievement gap, cultural representation in education, their professional aspirations, and the teaching profession. Over 500 secondary school students from varying cultural, social, linguistic and regional backgrounds have participated in the survey inquiring after these views.

Adjacent to unveiling students' perceptions of the abovementioned topics, the survey revealed a general lack of awareness about the achievement gap among those that suffer from it. This finding, consequentially, has given way to the recommendation that the target audience be informed that a) there is an ethnic achievement gap in education; b) it negatively impacts migrant students' future; c) it is primarily caused by an ethnically homogeneous teaching force; and d) change is in their hands – becoming a teacher will contribute to fair education.

Introduction

Working in an IT start-up, I first experienced how the notion of (cultural) representation was exploited, not out of a sense of solidarity, but merely out of a desire for company growth. Our website showed a group of people representing us, the team, and depicted women and people of color. I can tell you that no women or people of color were part of the team. In the world of business-to-customer commerce, selling things or services to as many customers as possible is priority. They had realized the target audience could be finding it hard to identify. If you do not want to exclude a significant part of your potential customers in advance, it seems relevant to display a world that feels recognizable to a broad and diverse audience. Hiring only White males, I am afraid I cannot really blame them for discrimination or hypocrisy (as I do not know who applied for a job), nor can I praise their commitment to pursue fair or balanced (cultural, gender) representation.

Either it was an upcoming trend, or I just started to pay more attention to it. Children's books, advertisements, TV soaps and other narratives started to depict a world that was more representative of reality, and I felt they were increasingly expected to. I started expecting it. I became very observant, made it a sport: "Why is *everyone* in this soap pretty, healthy and happy?", "Why are there only straight couples here?", "Stefanie, Frank, Bert, Tine... Where is Haroun?" When they did include minorities, they often only introduced one ideally-behaving Moroccan proving the audience "not all were bad".

This is the part of the introduction where I would say it did not take long before I started noticing how Flemish teachers' rooms were not representative of the population at all. But, in hindsight, I have to say it *did* take long: only after I had started the teacher's education, did I observe this major lack of diversity among education's staff. Being part of the majority group, I never questioned my teachers' ethnicity as a student.

If cultural representation had been turning into such an important target for private, public and creative organisations, why then was education dragging behind? Education, where knowledge and skills are passed on to new generations to develop themselves, should be first, not last, to carry out progressive ideas benefiting everyone. This research was inspired by education's lateness and, after exposing the state of affairs and its implications, will make suggestions for an overtaking manoeuvre.

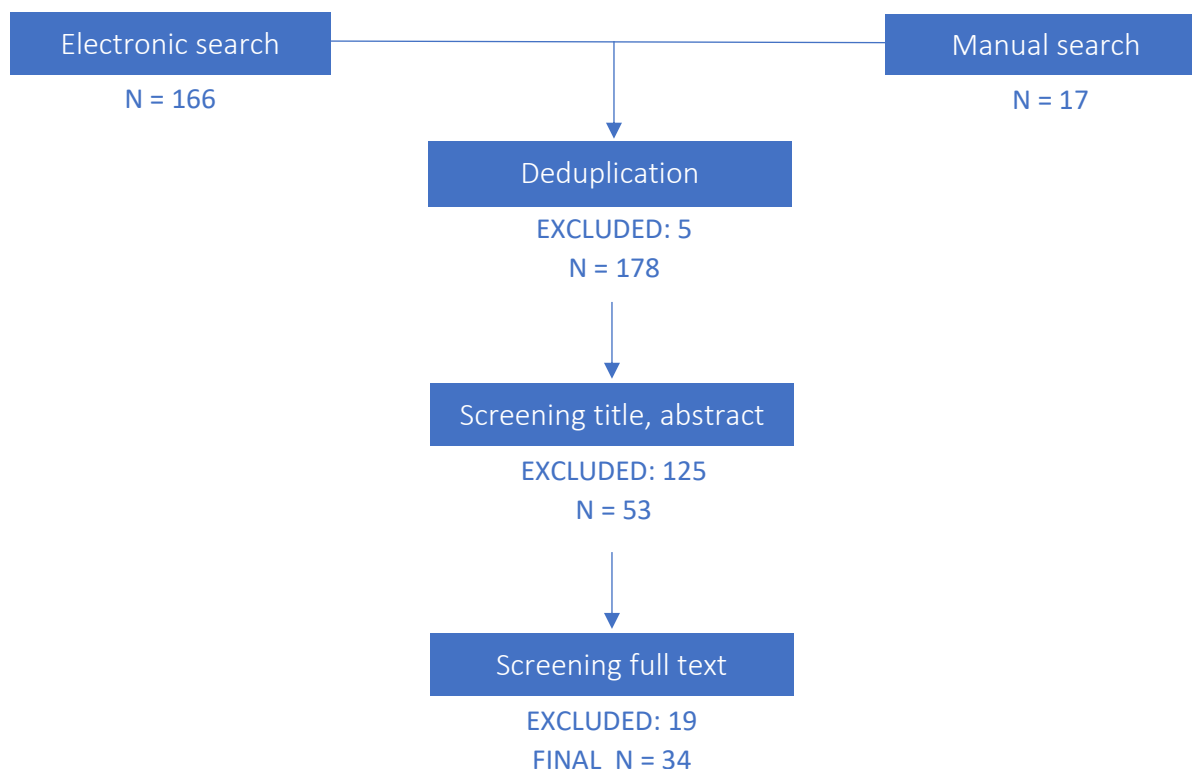
Problem definition and theoretical framework

Methodology of the literature review

The literature overview in this section is based on a systematic search of the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) database that was conducted in January and February of 2022. All articles that revolved around **(tackling the lack of) (ethnic) diversity in a teaching force or in education programs** (= the topic) qualified for analysis. The following searches were executed, and generated the number of results as shown on the right:

Title=(diversiteit ¹);	0
Title=(diversity AND Belgium);	0
Title=(“ethnic minorit*” AND Belgium);	2
Title=(diversity AND teacher) AND All Text=(increase);	52
Title=(diversity) AND All Text=(“teaching force”);	31
Title=(“ethnic minorit*” AND teach);	75
Title=(color OR colour) AND Title=(teach* AND more).	6

In total, the electronic search produced 166 articles. A supplementary manual search yielded an additional 17 results. After deduplication, 178 unique articles were singled out. A screening assessed the relevancy of these articles with regard to the chosen topic against the criteria of inclusion, based on their title and abstract. If it was unclear whether the article would dwell on the topic as described above, its full text was screened instead. After the screening phases, 34 of the 178 deduplicated articles remained. The following simple flow chart visualizes the article selection procedure.



¹ Dutch for “diversity”

A minority teacher shortage in Flanders

The Flemish teaching force does not represent the social and cultural backgrounds of the continuously (ethnically) diversifying student population (Vanhoeck, 2022; Agirdag, 2020; Wetenschap Centraal, 2022; UCSIA Antwerp, 2022). The contrast is most striking in majority-minority cities such as Brussels, Genk and Antwerp. A homogeneous and predominantly White teaching force leads to a structural underestimation and underutilization of the capacities of students with a migration background (Gershenson, 2021; Hrabowski et al., 2015; Coley et al., 1995; Rancifer, 1993; Agirdag, 2020; Wetenschap Centraal, 2022; UCSIA Antwerp, 2022). This underestimation and underutilization are two of the main factors contributing to the so-called *achievement gap* in education (Gershenson, 2021; Hrabowski et al., 2015; Agirdag, 2020) PISA-results of 2018 reveal that the region of Flanders, if a country, would be among the top five OECD countries where ethnic minority students perform significantly lower than their autochthonous peers. For reading skills, even after adjusting for socio-economic status (SES), the latter scored 44 PISA points higher than the former, on average (PISA-team UGent, 2019), which can be interpreted as the minority students experiencing a one-year delay in developing academic skills.

Interestingly, at the same time, education across Belgium is struggling with a teacher shortage. At the start of the school year in September 2021, more than 1500 teaching positions were left unoccupied, which was enough for a national record (Bleus, 2021). Subject to an ageing and shrinking teacher population and an alarming outflow (37.2%) of young teachers under 25, Belgium seems to find it increasingly difficult to provide high quality education to its students. This may be leading to a vicious cycle, as the task of teaching may start to become too demanding in some schools, therefore less attractive. Given the state of affairs as mentioned above and its consequences, it could be argued that the current teacher shortage is, essentially, a *minority teacher shortage*. The design of this study, therefore, is rooted in this belief, and explores a possible strategy aiming to increase the number of teachers with a migration background.

No exact numbers that demonstrate the current discrepancy between the Flemish student and teacher population with regard to their cultural background have been collected, shared or agreed upon. What hinders consensus, and possibly leads to an underestimation of the problem due to a too optimistic interpretation of ‘migration background’ – including those from neighboring countries – is the fact that ‘migration background’ is not so much a measurable feature as it is an abstract construct. In his book on educational inequality, Agirdag (2020) debunks the validity of frequently used indicators of migration background. First, nationality as a differentiator does not suffice, as many migrants have obtained Belgian nationality. Skin color, as often used in North-American literature dealing with the issue at hand, is not an adequate discriminating factor as many migrants in Belgium are White. Mother tongues other than Dutch cannot separate those with a migration background from autochthonous inhabitants as many foreign language speakers in Flanders speak French (an official language in Belgium), while French cannot be included as a native language because, for example, some Moroccan migrants speak French. Even though there is no unequivocal definition of ‘people with a migration background’, in the following paragraph, some numbers about the distribution of ethnic minorities in the teaching force on the one hand and the student population on the other, are presented.

Some sources state that only five percent of Flemish teachers have a migration background (Wetenschap Centraal, 2022; UCSIA Antwerp, 2022). Moreover, the majority of these ethnically “diverse” teachers are said to have a migration background that relates to Belgium’s neighboring countries, France and the Netherlands, leaving only one percent of all teachers non-White. Another source points out that just 2.7 percent of those enrolled in teacher education have a foreign

nationality, and that 3.2 percent of Flemish teachers have a non-EU migration background (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020). In any case, these numbers would be less problematic if they provided a representative view of the student population. In Flanders' three majority minority cities, however, more than half of the student population belongs to an ethnic minority group (Agirdag, 2020; Wetenschap Centraal, 2022). In secondary education, 17.5 percent of students are said to speak a language other than Dutch at home (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020) – a common, though not watertight indicator of migration background. This ratio is bound to increase over the following years, as one in four toddlers in Flemish kindergartens is raised in a foreign language.

One of several recurrent causes for the imbalance that is often put forward is the limited or reduced access to higher education for those with a migration background, leading to a vicious cycle of not being represented by teachers – thus not being given equal chances – and consequently not participating in higher (teacher) education ('t Sas, J., personal communication, 2021, November 18; Hrabowski et al., 2015). Another reason entails that those who do pursue higher education are inclined to opt for studies that open doors to more prestigious and financially promising careers, as should be understood following the “striving for upward mobility” (Lacante et al., 2007, p. 19), as is (logically) common among people with a lower SES. This preference for more prestigious positions may partly stem from a fear that is sparked by what is known as the Stereotype Threat Theory (Wetenschap Centraal, 2022), which defines “Stereotype threat” as “being at risk of confirming, as a self-characteristic, a negative stereotype about one’s group” (Steele & Aronson, 1995). In this context, the negative stereotype they so wish to undermine would be the idea that people with a migration background are less professionally capable and thus get jobs that require less intelligence or skill.

In addition, this striving seemed present in their parents, too. It is yet unclear whether this striving is *actually* shared by parents and children, or that it is mostly imposed by the former on the latter: in an interview with education magazine *Klasse*, Teach for Belgium’s director De Cartier stated that often, “adolescents have to challenge their families’ expectations if they suddenly choose teaching over engineering” (Frederix & De Wilde, 2022).

Implications

The consequences of the achievement gap should not be taken lightly. When educators and schools structurally undervalue the efforts and performances of students in minority groups – which, though often unconsciously, they do (Agirdag, 2020) – these students will experience a more difficult trajectory in general secondary education (Du. ASO), technical secondary education (Du. TSO) and higher education (Lacante et al., 2007; Wetenschap Centraal, 2022). In addition, Lacante and her team (2007) found that initially, students with a migration background are not inferior to their autochthonous peers when it comes to school motivation, even though their more difficult trajectories are likely to harm that degree of motivation.

Participation and success in Flemish and Brussels’ higher education partly depends on reaching a certain initial academic profile. Negative advice leading to drop-down or grade retention for Flemish students with a migration background does not facilitate reaching that profile, and are partly caused by (unconsciously acquired) negative preconceptions and low expectations from a predominantly White teaching force (Lacante et al., 2007; Agirdag, 2020). As a result, these students will find it much more difficult to qualify for jobs that require higher degrees. They will therefore more rarely enjoy the financial, social and personal benefits (e.g. flexibility in work-life balance, opportunities for self-development, more paid holidays, ...) that come with these jobs. Ultimately, the social, cultural and economic inequality between people with and without a migration background are fed by the

achievement gap (Gersheson, 2021, Agirdag, 2020; Wetenschap Centraal, 2022). The fact that origin impacts school results is unacceptable.

As described above, limiting the students' chances often happens unconsciously. Language *deficiency* (for Dutch) is singled out as the primary cause for educational inequality by 78% of Flemish teachers (Agirdag, 2020). It is customary, perhaps with the best intentions, that foreign languages are banned from the classroom, which is unfair for those who need these (language) skills as a didactic tool². As a result of structurally lower expectations regarding minority students, these students may develop performance anxiety, causing them to fear making errors or confirming the bias – thereby unwillingly underperforming and confirming the bias (Claassen, 2021). Not being represented in authoritative school personnel may lead to them feeling misunderstood and unwelcome in the school environment (Claassen 2021; Chichi, K., personal communication, 2022, May 17). Likewise, students with a migration background remain on their own when it occurs that White, autochthonous teachers react less disapproving to in-class racist remarks or behavior than they should. Furthermore, the homogeneity has an adverse effect on minority parents' participation in school activities and in decisive consultation about problems and school trajectories (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020). Non-White students are disproportionately more reprovved than their peers (Chichi, K., personal communication, 2022, May 17), and the mismatch between the predominantly white, middle class, elitarian culture and minority students' cultures may lead to cultural opposition, resistance, demotivation, and, ultimately, self-elimination (Agirdag, 2020).

The broad range and the size of the impact of these implications are not the object of this study. It seems safe to argue that, in certain ways, an ethnically homogeneous teaching force contributes to educational inequality for students with a migration background.

Previous and current efforts

Globally

A literature review as part of this study made clear that research about the topic is almost exclusively limited to the United States. Though in a unique and different context, they seem to have been facing and tackling the consequences of teacher homogeneity over the past three decades. In 2010, Arne Duncan, then national Secretary of Education, announced a nation-wide effort to attract more men and people of color into education, sparked by the growing ethnic mismatch between the teaching force and U.S.' pupils (Center for American Progress, 2011). Clearly hotter a topic than in Western Europe, representation of skin color (as opposed to the more nuanced or cautious 'representation of ethnicity') has driven more policymakers to discuss and researchers to publish about it. Already in '70s California, a group of "progressive teacher educators" (Enchandia et al., 2007, pp. 9, 22-23) founded an academic program specifically aimed at educating "low-income and culturally and linguistically diverse" minorities to become teachers for that same audience, and to become "change agents actively working towards social justice". The Multilingual/Multicultural Teacher Preparation Center (M/M Center), as the program was called, had been successfully operating for 30 years, training minority students into teachers and sending them into the field. In 1988, the learning impact of having minority teachers teach was researched and it was concluded that the cultural synchronicity between teachers of color and students of color had a positive impact on the latter's academic performance (Irvine, 1988). "Working with students of color and improving their educational outcomes and

² <https://diversiteitleren.be/themas/meertaligheid>

personal lives” (Villegas & Irvine, 2010, p. 12) were two of the most important factors for preservice teachers of color to choose teaching as their future profession. Likewise, a tendency of American preservice teachers of color to display a “richer multicultural knowledge base, and greater commitment to multicultural teaching, [and] social justice”, was highlighted by Sleeter and Thao (2007, p. 7).

In 2011, the Center for American Progress (CAP) published an article in which five successful diversity-increasing initiatives were presented and dug into, to serve as examples for new local and national programs. Teach For America, The New Teacher Project, Urban Teacher Enhancement Program, North-Carolina Teaching Fellows Scholarship Program, Teach Tomorrow and other initiatives all faced a certain amount of competition with other, more prestigious alternatives: especially in the United States, where college tuition is high and most students pay for their education using loans, a better return-on-investment may be preferred. It is therefore not surprising that students (of color) who do have the opportunity to go to college choose professions that are more lucrative than teaching (Center for American Progress, 2011; Lacante et al., 2007). Still, these and more initiatives have proven to succeed in drawing the target audience’s attention and in fulfilling the objective. Confirming above-mentioned U.S. research conclusions, CAP mentions successful programs “have attempted to seize upon the interest of students seeking opportunities to enter the public service field and ‘give back’”, and that this approach may be especially effective for minorities who attended schools with a homogeneously White teacher workforce (2011, p. 25).

Yet, however widespread and numerous they may be, Burns Thomas (2020) recently criticized the diversity efforts as being rooted in ‘interest convergence’, a term questioning the moral nature of (governmental) concessions toward African Americans, asserting that only when White people benefit from certain (political) actions, *too*, African Americans are granted progressive steps toward social equality (Bell, 1980). Through a case study in the non-urban area of Clifton, New York, she illustrated how diversity efforts merely focus on a gradual increase of diversity, giving the impression that something is being done for minorities, but, in fact, “serve to reinforce the status quo” (p. 217). Furthermore, diversity efforts were said to be *supplementary* in nature, in that they are only added to an existing mechanism and do not undermine this very mechanism that is making the teaching profession and educational environment unwelcoming to minorities in the first place.

Based on converging interests or not, diversity efforts, the literature tells us, are more commonplace in the U.S. than anywhere else in Western societies. Additionally, it can be concluded that in the U.S., **the knowledge of being able to have positive social impact on fellow minorities** – as opposed to rather superficial motivating factors such as ‘loving to work with adolescents’ – has convinced many young people of color to engage in teacher education. This, of course, implies that this knowledge is *present* among the secondary-school adolescents who are in the process of giving shape to their professional ambitions, to begin with. The presence of this knowledge, or lack of this knowledge, lies on the basis of the research questions described farther below in this study.

Locally

The challenge described has been drawing increasing attention in recent years in Flanders, too. Previous and current efforts with regard to this objective include several bottom-up initiatives, often supported by government funds. In 2020, *Commissie Diversiteit* (Diversity Committee) of *SERV* (Social-Economical Council of Flanders) drafted an advice for the Flemish Minister of Education. ‘Concrete’ suggestions include 1) collecting data for baseline measurements and monitoring, 2) lowering thresholds for non-native speakers of Dutch with a foreign teacher degree, and 3) working towards a vigorous approach to tackle employment discrimination (Commissie Diversiteit, 2020). In December

2021, the Flemish government announced a total of 19 short- and long-term measures to tackle the (general) teacher shortage, of which only *one* mentioned the notion of diversity: “Specific attention with regard to recruiting students in secondary education for teacher education programmes goes to diversity.”³ Unfortunately, the announcement does not specify which concrete actions the government had in mind.

*Teach for Belgium*⁴ (TFB), moved by the fact that social injustice is nourished by the current educational system, offers a five-week preparation program for holders of a Master’s degree with a migration background in order to introduce them to and prepare them for a career in teaching in secondary schools with a high proportion of socially and economically vulnerable students (Frederix & De Wilde, 2022). The organisation then intensively coaches and trains these candidates over a two-year period, while encouraging them to simultaneously obtain their official teaching degree. Potential candidates are sought after via their social media platform, job fairs and pitch sessions at various colleges (Vandewerken, D., personal communication, 2022, April 5). Currently, five recruiters are active, of whom two have a migration background. TFB believes most recruiters being autochthonous Belgians not to cause an issue regarding the credibility of their story, as they thoroughly grasp and support the organisation’s mission, and are able to convey the challenges and barriers very well. TFB finds, through sharing questionnaires with new participants, that what attracts these participants is not so much the act of teaching itself, but rather the belief that by teaching, they can make a difference for local adolescents with a (similar) migration background or low SES. Since 2013, TFB has trained over 300 young adults with a migration background into teaching. It is estimated that 80% of them are still teaching today (Vandewerken, D., personal communication, 2022, April 5). Most of the participants have a specialization in science or technology. Interestingly, despite the many (well-paid) job opportunities these students have, many seem to value the potential social impact they could have as a teacher higher than a prestigious position. It is, however, unclear to what extent the knowledge of this potential impact was present *before* deciding to participate (and before learning about TFB – thus leading them to TFB in the first place), or that it was transferred to them *by* TFB and therefore used as a means to convince them to participate. If this belief was *not* fully developed before interaction with TFB, this could mean that effectively sharing this belief would lead to increased participation of the target audience in teacher education.

Orbit vzw (Orbit) is an organization that supports initiatives concerning superdiversity and migration through offering training courses and advice⁵. Education is one of several themes that receives particular attention. Orbit has a representative visiting secondary education classrooms and youth organizations in Antwerp to engage into dialogue with students with a migration background, regarding their views of the teaching profession and of their own professional ambitions. The focus is on identifying factors for and against pursuing a teaching career, as well as on convincing students through displaying inspiring testimonies. So far, reasons against teaching can be clustered into convictions such as “the school environment feels unwelcoming to me”, “students are becoming increasingly difficult to manage”, “other career paths offer more prestige”, or “the financial compensation is not in proportion to the (intensity of the) tasks” (Ndombe, J., personal communication, 2022, April 4). On the other hand, reasons in favor are mostly ‘superficial’, in the sense that they revolve around concrete aspects of teaching like “working with adolescents”, and not around possibly having social impact. Since 2020, five adolescents out of the 200 that were reached have agreed to participate in the program and are now being coached to persist and take further steps

³ <https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/nieuws/extra-maatregelen-in-de-strijd-tegen-het-lerarentekort>

⁴ <https://teachforbelgium.be/nl/over-ons/>

⁵ <https://www.orbitvzw.be/over-orbit/missie-en-doelstellingen/>

into becoming a teacher. Seven coaches are active, of whom only two have a migration background. Orbit acknowledges that by having autochthonous people coach, some credibility may be lost – but emphasizes that coaching experience outweighs ethnic identity (Ndombe, J., personal communication, 2022, April 4). A question that remained unanswered after the interview with Orbit’s coordinator Ndombe, is whether or not students are fully aware of the social impact they could potentially have by becoming a teacher – which would, of course, be required in order for them to consider this impact to be a motivating factor for becoming a teacher.

Currently, narrowing the achievement gap has been attempted through actions that can be divided into two clusters of strategies. One cluster focuses on diversifying the teaching force, whereas the other seeks to train and inspire current teachers to work in a way that is more sensitive and appreciative of diversity. Whether the ratio of ethnic minority teachers will increase over the following years or not, it will remain important that, in the meantime, the current teaching force undergoes a shift in mindset and teaching style (Chichi, K., personal communication, 2022, May 17). Only around 17 percent of Flemish teachers feel competent enough to teach in a school with great ethnic diversity (Agirdag, 2020). Still, it is the teacher who will have to make the first step. Explicitly valuing and leveraging multilingualism and multiculturalism can go a long way⁶. Also, introducing, discussing and offering support for multiple perspectives to events, texts or statements is said to enhance motivation and participation among students with ethnically diverse backgrounds (Smits et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the process of increasing sensitivity regarding diversity among current teachers is a slow one, requiring a second set (or cluster) of actions to be set into motion. And who are better at introducing norm-deviating perspectives than teachers with deviating backgrounds?

Some actions for increasing teacher diversity are being taken already. In Belgium, pre-discussed initiatives like *Teach for Belgium* and *Orbit vzw* have set strong examples to attract more young adults with migration backgrounds to teach. In their official advice for the Flemish Minister of Education, Commissie Diversiteit suggests investing in targeted career guidance for students in secondary schools, and recruiting them for education (2020). As of the end of March 2022, a television campaign⁷ titled “*Lesgeven is alles geven*” (“Teaching is giving all you got”) has been launched by the Flemish government that “challenges people who want to make a difference through becoming a teacher”. In the 30-second clip, several teachers can be observed, passionately excelling in what they do. One of them, though out of focus, clearly has origins that lay outside of Belgium – presumably in North-Africa. Whether this will convince the target audience is yet unclear, but perhaps having someone wear a head scarf, and allowing it across Belgian secondary schools, would give a more inclusive impression. According to Chichi, coordinator of the Antwerp-based feminist rights group *Girls In The City*, the head scarf ban has been keeping many Muslim women from entering the teaching force (personal communication, 2022, May 17).

⁶ <https://diversiteitenleren.be/themas/meertaligheid>

⁷ <https://overheid.vlaanderen.be/lesgeven-is-alles-geven>



Figure 1. Screenshot from the Flemish government's campaign video "Lesgeven is alles geven"

A skewed knowledge distribution

The specific approach in this study, as will be described in the section below, was inspired by the seemingly unequal distribution of knowledge about the implications of the underrepresentation – whether it actually *is* unequal or *not* is the primary focus of this research. In the U.S., having the opportunity to be “raising the race” (Villegas & Irvine, 2010, p. 186), to become “change agents” (Enchandia et al., 2007, p. 9), or to answer to a calling to contribute to lift fellow minorities (Casey, 1993), all have been drawing many adolescents of color to participate in teacher education. A similar tendency has not yet been demonstrated in Flanders (or elsewhere, for that matter). Ironically, it may foremost or exclusively be the highly educated, often autochthonous educational policy makers and involved academics who share knowledge of the implications. The idea is that, if the target audience knew what *they* know, motivation to join the teaching force within the target audience would rise and eventually start to set in motion a series of events that may solve the issue of underrepresentation. Identifying this lack of knowledge would pave the way for a bottom-up approach of educating the target audience as a means of increasing diversity in teacher education. Of course, this approach can only be considered valid when this knowledge is lacking indeed.

Alternatively, if knowledge about the implications of a too homogeneous teaching force proves not exclusive to those outside of and (socially, economically) distanced from the target audience, but is instead widely and actively present in the target audience, this study could allow policy makers and academics to cross out this lack of knowledge as a cause for underrepresentation. Actions aimed at narrowing the representation gap therefore could fully focus on overcoming other barriers or even deploy resources to throw a different tack to fight social injustice through educational policy, for example by training the current teaching force to adjust their teaching to the diverse student population. Either way, this research can allow for better optimization of deployment of resources and funds toward the challenge at hand.

Research questions and methodology

Research questions

This study aims to determine the extent to which students with a migration background are aware of:

- the achievement gap in Flanders;
- the homogeneity of the Flemish teaching force;
- the link between the homogeneity of the teaching force and the achievement gap, and;
- the potential positive impact on school performance caused by a more diverse teaching force.

Moreover, the factors that determine study choice in general and choice for and against pursuing a career in education in particular form key concerns in this study. Empirical data regarding all these factors is required to finally answer the following specific research questions (RQ):

RQ 1: Are Flemish students with a migration background aware of the achievement gap and the lack of ethnic diversity among Flemish teachers?

RQ 2: Do these students realize that a more diverse teaching force could positively impact their school results and, consequentially, their (future) socioeconomic status?

RQ 3: To what extent do these students already feel compelled to be “change agents” and to become teachers?

Together, these questions raise the overarching research question:

What will it take for students with a migration background to choose the teaching profession more often?

Methodology

Internet-based survey

A survey seemed appropriate because it provides flexibility in question and answer type and can collect standardized information that, if careful (probabilistic) and quantitatively sufficient sampling is applied, may allow for generalization (Morrison, 1993; Cohen et al., 2013). Since the target audience's computer skills are well-developed and it is suited for gathering data on beliefs, preferences and opinions (Witte et al., 1999; Weisberg et al., 1996), an internet-based survey seemed the preferred method to efficiently gather valuable data from the target audience. This study aims to collect data through a combination of multiple-choice, Likert-scale and open-ended questions.

Research population

The research population comprises all students with a migration background in the third grade of general and technical secondary mainstream education in Flanders. In order for comparative analysis to be attainable, data is also gathered from their autochthonous peers in the same grade – whenever relevant and applicable. While the problematic situation that inspired this study may be most tangible in Belgium's majority-minority cities and other urban areas, practical reasons have led to the expansion of the research population to students attending school in non-urban areas, too. Students in vocational secondary education are excluded from the population because for these students, advancement to higher education and teacher education in particular, is much less likely. Because of the survey's guarantee to respondent anonymity and the fact that all respondents from the target audience are older than fourteen, no parental permission or explicit informed consent is required (Cohen et al., 2013).

Sample

A minimum of 30 respondents for each of the possible values of the following three binary variables is required for ensuring reliability and for examining relationships between the subgroups (Gorard, 2003; Cohen et al., 2013):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a) Migration background | (yes or no); |
| b) Secondary school education type | (general or technical); and |
| c) Form | (5 th or 6 th) |

This results in a minimum sample size of 240 (30 x 3 x 2 x 2). The two major subgroups of those either having or *not* having a migration background therefore have a minimum of 120 cases each, which exceeds the minimum of 100 cases per major subgroup, as described by Borg and Gall (1979). The following table provides an overview of the **minimum intended sample size** per major subgroup (those with and without migration background) and minor subgroup (5th General, 5th Technical, 6th General and 6th Technical secondary education). For practical reasons the following abbreviations will be applied: General Secondary Education: GSE; Technical Secondary Education: TSE.

<i>Form and education type</i>	Number of cases with a migration background (minimum)	Number of cases without a migration background (minimum)
5 th , GSE	30	30
6 th , GSE	30	30
5 th , TSE	30	30
6 th , TSE	30	30
Total	120	120

Table 1. Minimum intended sample size per major and minor subgroup

Information of interest

In order to answer the research questions, the following sections and elements were singled out as necessary to be inquired after through the survey:

- a) General
 - a. Form
 - b. Education type
 - c. School zip-code
 - d. Specific migration background (if applicable)
 - e. SES (through parents' highest educational degree)
- b) Identity
 - a. Perceived cultural identification (integration, separation or assimilation)
 - b. Perceived connection with people with a similar migration background
 - c. Perceived importance of (personal and collective) upward social mobility
- c) Awareness
 - a. Awareness of the homogeneity of the Flemish teaching force
 - b. Awareness of the achievement gap and of social (ethnic) inequality
 - c. Awareness of the (personal and social) potential of a more diverse teaching force
- d) Choice of study or profession
 - a. Perceived social impact of several common professions vs teaching
 - b. Material/financial determining factors
 - c. Social (profiling: prestige, family expectations) determining factors
 - d. Social (altruistic: helping others) determining factors
 - e. Personal determining factors
 - f. Pros and cons of the teaching profession

Finding respondents

A brief explanation of the research objectives and a request to share the survey with their students was sent to several school boards in the Antwerp area. Expecting a decent initial response rate following a belief that the research objectives would be perceived as important or possibly beneficial to society, the disappointment was all the greater after it turned out the schools had very little interest in participating. Fifteen of the sixteen schools that were contacted did not react to the request. *"We are swamped by requests from (student) researchers to let our students fill in surveys. We give priority to our ex-students"* was the response from the sixteenth school. As access to schools seemed difficult, a different strategy was needed in which personal networks, rather than formal ones, played a role.

Acquaintances who teach in third grade, fellow student teachers at the University of Antwerp and involved non-profit organizations were kindly asked to make a contribution and to distribute the survey to those in the target audience and/or to others who could pass the survey on to the target audience. This "snowball sampling" approach (Cohen et al., 2013, pp. 116, 211) is a non-probabilistic sampling strategy that does not allow for generalization, though made it possible to have just over 500 students partake in five weeks' time at the cost of a handful of coffees.

Teachers and student teachers who volunteered were employed or were doing an internship at the following secondary schools, among others:

- Sint-Annacollege, Antwerp;

- Mater Dei, Brasschaat;
- Scheppersinstituut, Deurne;
- Stedelijke Humaniora Dilsen;
- Technische Scholen Mechelen;
- Lucernacollege, Merksem; and
- Atheneum Merksem.

Organizations that helped distributing the survey to their network of adolescents are:

- Atlas Antwerp;
- Orbit vzw;
- Onderwijsnetwerk Antwerpen (Education Network Antwerp);
- Girls In The City vzw;
- PEP vzw; and
- Teach for Belgium vzw.

Participation happened voluntarily by clicking the survey link that was given to the students by the cooperating teachers or involved organizations.

The respondents

The survey was filled in in March and April of 2022 by a total of 502 students in 5th and 6th form of general (Du. ASO) and technical (Du. TSO) secondary education in Flanders. Students with a migration background (MB students) represent nearly half of the respondent group (44%). Consequentially, the other 56% are students without a migration background (non-MB students). In each of the four possible minor subgroups of grade and type, more than 30 respondents *with* a migration background participated, thus meeting the predetermined quota for all minor and major subgroups. An overview of the respondents' profile can be found in Figure 2. As explained to the respondents within the survey, this research uses the VESOC⁸ definition for 'having a migration background':



[having a] current or birth nationality from a country outside the EU15⁹, or [having] at least one parent or both grandparents who have a birth nationality from a country outside the EU15. (Commissie Diversiteit, 2019, p. 8)

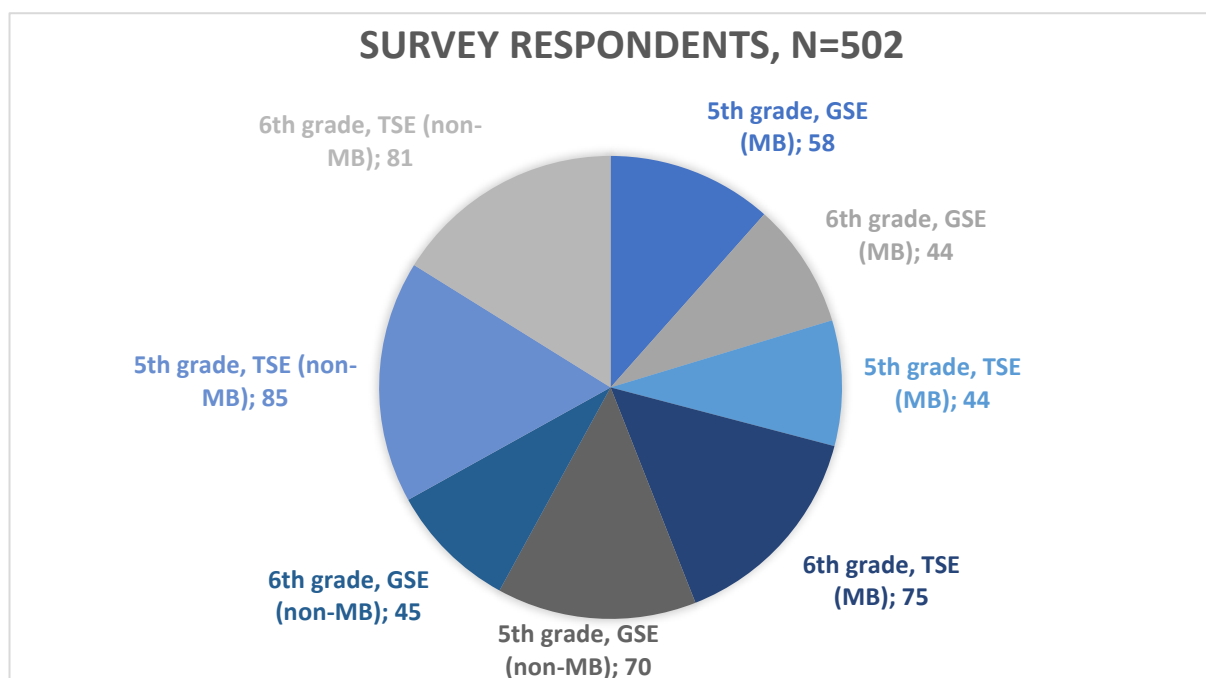


Figure 2. Form and education type for the survey respondents

Of the 221 students who indicated they have a migration background, 28 are themselves born outside the EU15 (as becomes apparent in Table 2). Students with one or both parents born outside the EU15 sum up to 71 and 110, respectively. Thirteen students indicated to have a single grandparent born outside the EU15, compared to 100 students having two or more grandparents born outside the EU15. Note that MB specifications are not mutually exclusive and that some students may have selected multiple answers. In this context, the notion of having a MB as opposed to not having one, apart from its specificities, is what matters most. The observed overlap should be attributed to the fact that those who have one or both parents born outside the EU15, supposedly also have two or more grandparents born there (rather than to the fact that those who have both parents born outside the EU15, by definition also have one parent born there).

⁸ Vlaams Economisch-Sociaal Overlegcomité (Flemish economic-social discussion committee)

⁹ The EU15 consists of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

<i>Specific migration background (VESOC)</i>	Number of respondents	Part of total (MB)
<i>No migration background</i>	281	N/A
<i>Born outside the EU15 (1st gen.)</i>	28	13%
<i>One parent born outside the EU15 (2nd gen.)</i>	71	32%
<i>Both parents born outside the EU15 (2nd gen.)</i>	110	50%
<i>One grandparent born outside the EU15 (3rd gen.)</i>	13	6%
<i>Two or more grandparents born outside the EU15 (3rd gen.)</i>	100	45%

Table 2. Specific migration backgrounds

The MB students were inquired after their country of origin. Again, multiple answers per student are possible. Within the group of students who indicated they had a migration background, 74 said to have roots in Morocco, followed by 29 in Turkey, eleven in Russia, eight in Afghanistan, seven in Poland, six in Nigeria, five in the Republic of the Philippines, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and also in Armenia, and three in Albania, Brazil, China, Iraq, North Macedonia, Romania and Sierra Leone (see Table 3). Countries with less than three representatives are omitted from the table. They are Angola, Australia, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Liberia, Pakistan, Somalia, South Korea, Sudan, Suriname, Switzerland, Syria, Tibet, Tunisia, Venezuela, and the United States. Even though approximately a third of the MB students in the sample have Moroccan origins, the superdiversity (Geldof, 2019) in Flemish classrooms is clearly illustrated by this wide distribution.

<i>Country of origin for MB students (from most to least common)</i>	Number of respondents	Part of total (MB)
<i>Morocco</i>	74	33%
<i>Turkey</i>	29	13%
<i>Russia (incl. Chechen Republic)</i>	11 (incl. 4)	5%
<i>Afghanistan</i>	8	4%
<i>Poland</i>	7	3%
<i>Nigeria</i>	6	3%
<i>Republic of the Philippines</i>	5	2%
<i>Democratic Republic of the Congo</i>	5	2%
<i>Armenia</i>	5	2%
<i>Albania</i>	3	1.4%
<i>Brazil</i>	3	1.4%
<i>China</i>	3	1.4%
<i>Iraq</i>	3	1.4%
<i>North Macedonia</i>	3	1.4%
<i>Romania</i>	3	1.4%
<i>Sierra Leone</i>	3	1.4%

Table 3. Countries of origin for MB students

Through the retrieval of their school's ZIP code, an idea of the demographic situations of the areas the respondents attend school in can be formed (see Table 4). It can serve as a framing perspective to interpret the survey results. Most respondents go to school in Mechelen, a relatively thinly populated city (1 321 persons/km²) with a population of 86 911¹⁰, of which just over a third have a migration background¹¹. Coming second, Dilsen-Stokkem is a village of 20 681 inhabitants and has the second lowest population density (313 persons/km²) of all school regions involved in this research¹². Just over 12% of the inhabitants have a migration background, which, compared to the other rural areas in this study, is a fair share. Of its 72 respondents, nearly half are MB students. Third, Linkeroever (Antwerp) is where 58 respondents attend school. Lying across the river Schelde from Antwerp's centre, it is home to 16 964 people of whom half have a migration background¹³. Being so close to the city centre, one could say it is thinly populated (1 704 persons/km²). Other urban areas in which a large part of the respondents go to school are Deurne, Berchem and Merksem. Immigrant ratios in these places are relatively high, ranging from 41 to 55%¹⁴. More non-urban areas schooling respondents include Kontich, Borsbeek, Malle, Bornem and Brasschaat, all home to relatively few immigrants (less than ten percent of the population). Regions with less than ten respondents are Antwerp's centre regions (2000, 2020, 2030, 2060), Borgerhout (2140), Burcht (2070), Hoboken (2660), Maasmechelen (3630) and Olen (2250). They are omitted from the table.

<i>School region</i>	Total respondents	MB respondents	Population	Population /km²	Immigrant ratio¹⁵
<i>Mechelen (2800)</i>	128	36	86 911	1 321	35%
<i>Dilsen-Stokkem (3650)</i>	72	34	20 681	313	12%
<i>Linkeroever (2050)</i>	58	41	16 964	1 704	50%
<i>Deurne (2100)</i>	43	40	81 044	6 219	55%
<i>Kontich (2550)</i>	35	12	20 631	872	3%
<i>Borsbeek (2150)</i>	28	10	10 235	2 612	7%
<i>Berchem (2600)</i>	25	12	43 084	7 557	41%
<i>Malle (2390)</i>	22	5	14 645	282	4%
<i>Bornem (2880)</i>	20	2	20 739	453	2%
<i>Merksem (2170)</i>	19	17	45 243	5375	51%
<i>Brasschaat (2930)</i>	16	1	37 256	968	9%
<i>Flemish region¹⁶</i>	N/A	N/A	6 653 062	488	33%¹⁷

Table 4. Respondents' school regions

¹⁰ <https://mechelen.incijfers.be/dashboard/dashboard/demografie>

¹¹ <https://bestat.statbel.fgov.be/>

¹² <https://www.commune-gemeente.be/nl/gemeente-dilsen-stokkem.html#demography>

¹³ <https://stadincijfers.antwerpen.be/databank/info/Bevolking.html>

¹⁴ <https://bestat.statbel.fgov.be/>

¹⁵ Regional immigrant ratios follow a definition of 'having a migration background' very similar to the suggested VESOC definition (<https://stadincijfers.antwerpen.be/databank/>)

¹⁶ <https://statbel.fgov.be/nl/nieuws/kerncijfers-2021>

¹⁷ This percentage includes Belgian immigrants from neighbouring and other EU15-countries. The proportion of immigrants with roots outside the EU15 is much lower.

Finally, a representation of the respondents' SES was constructed through mapping and comparing their parents' highest educational degree (see Table 5):

- "Lower 2ndary" refers to the first three years in secondary education and means they have not finished secondary education;
- "Higher 2ndary" means they have finished secondary education;
- "Higher edu" means they have finished higher education.

The 'N'-column lists the number of respondents for each grade and was used to calculate the percentages in the other columns. A large discrepancy can be observed between the levels of education from MB students' parents on the one hand and non-MB students' parents on the other. For example, 40% of the mothers of the MB students in general education have finished higher education, compared to 85% of the mothers of the non-MB students in general education. Likewise, 28% compared to only 10% of respectively MB and non-MB students' fathers have *not* finished secondary education.

<i>Parents' highest educational degree</i>	Mother: lower 2ndary	Father: lower 2ndary	Mother: higher 2ndary	Father: higher 2ndary	Mother: higher edu	Father: higher edu	N
MB students							
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	11 19%	15 26%	22 39%	23 40%	24 42%	18 32%	57 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	13 31%	11 26%	16 38%	13 31%	16 38%	19 45%	42 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	24 24%	26 26%	38 38%	36 36%	40 40%	37 37%	99 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	7 17%	10 24%	10 24%	15 36%	25 60%	17 40%	42 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	21 29%	24 33%	32 44%	34 47%	20 27%	14 19%	73 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	28 24%	34 30%	42 37%	49 43%	45 39%	31 27%	115 100%
Total (MB students)	52 24%	60 28%	80 37%	85 40%	85 40%	68 32%	214 100%
Non-MB students							
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	2 3%	2 3%	6 9%	24 35%	61 88%	42 61%	69 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	0 0%	1 2%	9 21%	12 28%	34 79%	31 72%	43 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	2 2%	3 3%	15 13%	36 32%	95 85%	73 65%	112 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	11 13%	15 18%	22 26%	42 50%	51 61%	27 32%	84 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	6 8%	10 13%	23 29%	32 41%	50 63%	35 44%	79 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	17 10%	25 15%	45 28%	74 45%	101 62%	62 38%	163 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	19 7%	28 10%	60 22%	110 44%	196 71%	135 49%	275 100%
Total	71 15%	88 18%	140 29%	195 40%	281 57%	203 42%	489 100%

Table 5. An overview of the MB respondents' parents' highest educational degree

Results

The survey results are presented below in these different topics or sections:

- MB students' (cultural) identification
- Cultural representation in Flemish education
- The achievement gap
- Professional aspirations
- Impactful professions
- The teaching profession

All percentages are rounded as a higher degree of precision is excessive in this context. When statistical tests were performed, the exact percentages were used.

MB students' identification

In this section, the ways in which the participating MB students culturally identify are illustrated. Non-MB students are thus excluded here.

First, approximately half of the respondents agree on identifying as Belgian, be it a third only agrees 'slightly' (as becomes apparent in Figure 3).

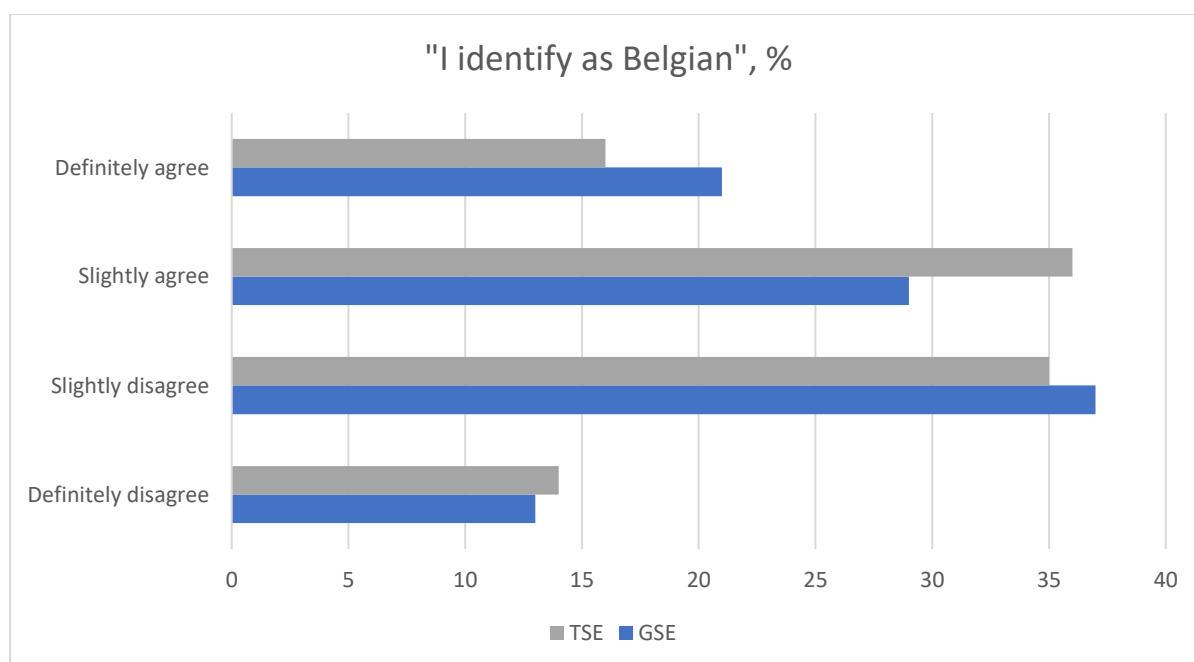


Figure 3. The extent to which MB students identify as Belgian

Three out of four MB students indicated that their roots form an important aspect of their cultural identity by stating they identify as 'foreign Belgian' (as shown in Figure 4). The proportion of those who 'definitely' agreed is almost as high as the proportion of those who 'slightly' agreed, which points to a high level of confidence for agreement with the statement. A small difference between students in general and technical education can be noted, with the former being somewhat more inclined to identify as 'foreign' Belgian, though the difference is not significant ($p=.53$), with an alpha level of 5%, as is used with the other tests below.

More or less the same positive attitude can be observed regarding the presence of a sense of connection MB students might feel with those who share a similar migration background (see Figure 5).

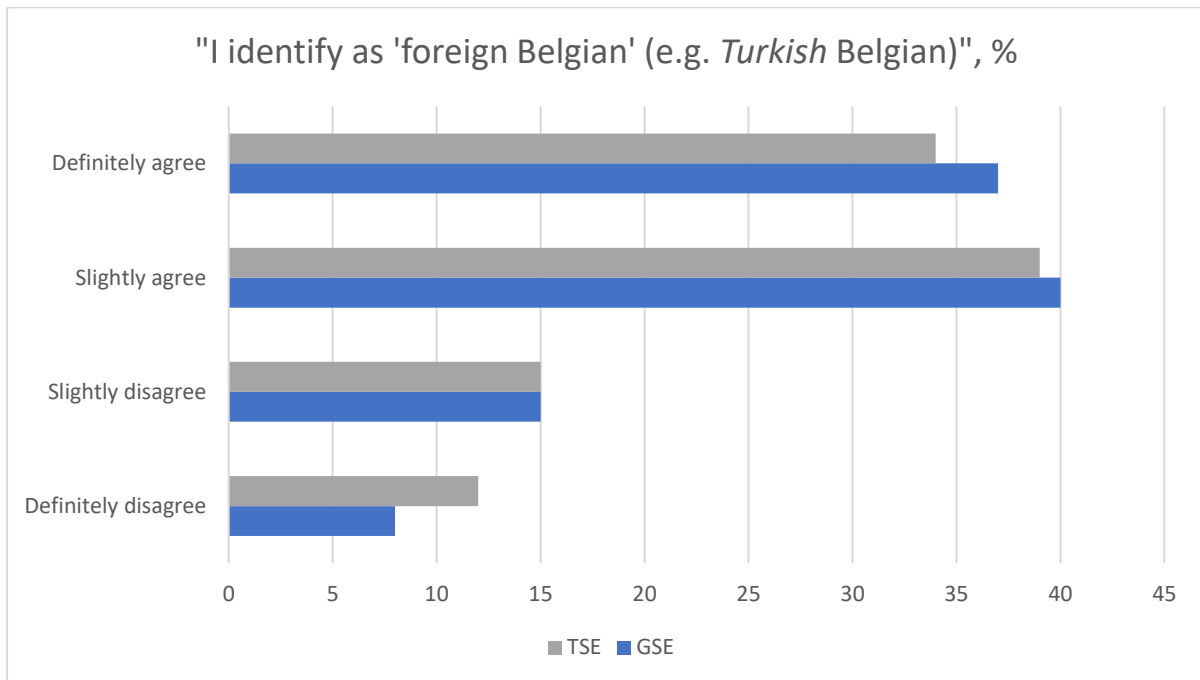


Figure 4. The extent to which MB students identify as 'foreign Belgian'

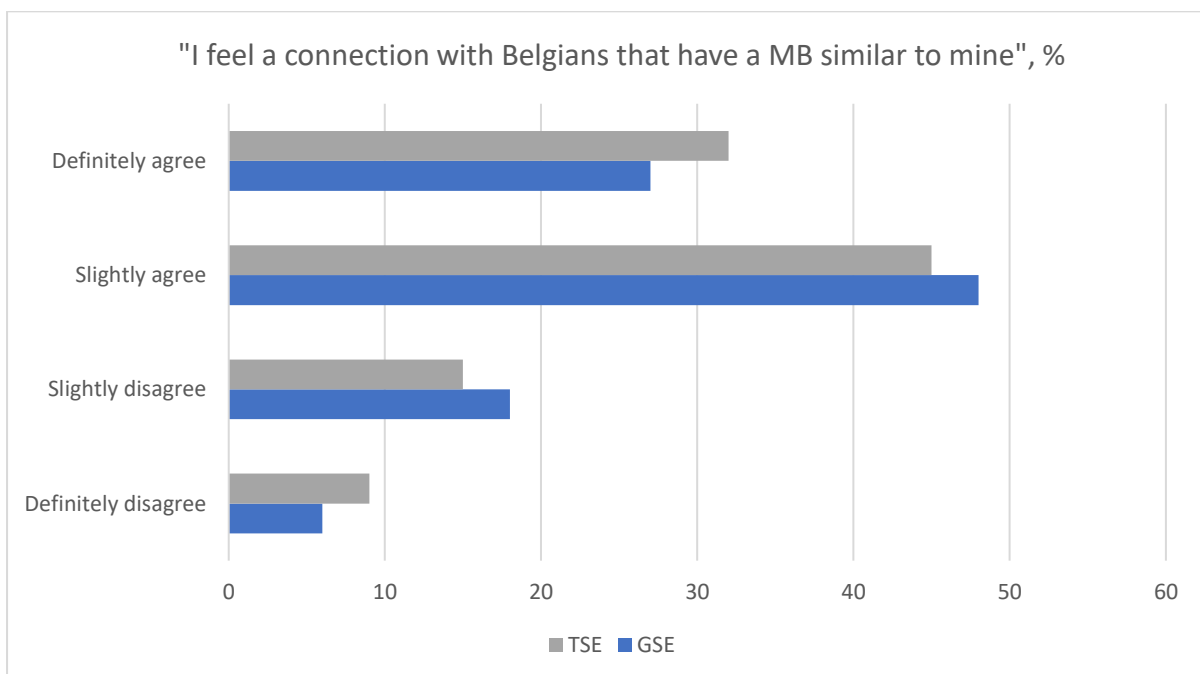


Figure 5. The extent to which MB students feel a connection with Belgians that share a similar migration background

When the MB students were asked whether they felt to be part of a Belgian community of people with a similar migration background, 64% agreed (see Figure 6). Even though those in general education seemed to acknowledge their migration roots as a part of their identity a bit more (see Figure 4), now an opposite tendency can be noticed, as those in technical education have a higher agreement rate to being part of a community. Again, however, it should be mentioned the difference is not statistically significant ($p=.37$). The 130 MB students who agreed (either slightly or definitely) form an important subgroup in this study. Rooted in the assumption that being able to help those in one's community can function as a motivator to become a teacher, this specific group of students is the primary target audience for diversifying the Flemish teaching force. Later in the survey, only *they* have been asked which professions can be perceived as 'impactful' (see section 'Impactful professions' below).

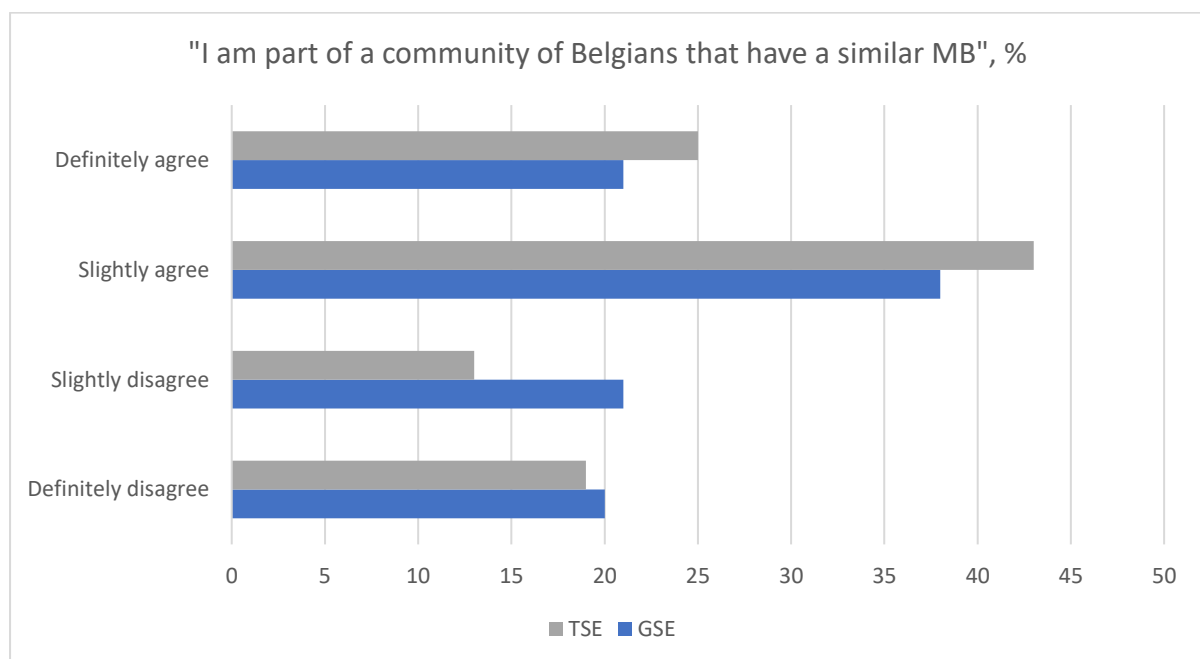


Figure 6. The extent to which MB students feel they are part of a community of Belgians that share a similar migration background

Cultural representation

All respondents were given statements to gauge their views regarding cultural representation in education. The top left corner in each of the tables displays the statement to which they reacted.

Both MB and non-MB students express the homogeneity of the teaching force in their school, as respectively 87% and 89% *disagree* to the statement whether their school has many MB teachers (see Table 6).

<i>“My school has a lot of teachers with a migration background”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	27 53%	19 37%	3 6%	2 4%	51 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	19 48%	18 45%	3 8%	0 0%	40 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	46 51%	37 41%	6 7%	2 8%	91 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	12 29%	26 62%	4 10%	0 0%	42 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	16 23%	41 59%	10 14%	3 4%	70 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	28 25%	67 60%	14 13%	3 3%	112 100%
Total (MB students)	74 36%	104 51%	20 10%	5 2%	203 100%
Non-MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	33 51%	28 43%	3 5%	1 2%	65 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	24 57%	15 35%	2 5%	1 2%	42 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	57 53%	43 40%	5 5%	2 2%	107 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	14 17%	54 67%	11 14%	2 2%	81 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	10 13%	60 75%	6 8%	4 5%	80 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	24 15%	114 71%	17 11%	6 4%	161 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	81 30%	157 59%	22 8%	8 3%	268 100%
Total	155 33%	261 55%	42 9%	13 3%	471 100%

Table 6. The extent to which students think there are many teachers with a migration background in their school

In addition, a 69% majority of MB students, compared to 50% of the non-MB students, does not believe the Flemish teaching force to be culturally representative of the student population (see Table 7). More than one in four MB respondents disagrees strongly, compared to only one in ten non-MB students.

<i>“In all of Flanders, the teachers have the same cultural backgrounds as the students”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	14 27%	19 37%	14 27%	4 8%	51 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	12 30%	24 60%	4 10%	0 0%	40 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	26 29%	43 47%	18 20%	4 4%	91 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	8 19%	15 36%	18 43%	1 2%	42 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	18 26%	30 43%	18 26%	4 6%	70 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	26 23%	45 40%	36 32%	5 4%	112 100%
Total (MB students)	52 26%	88 43%	54 27%	9 4%	203 100%
Non-MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	4 6%	32 49%	27 42%	2 3%	65 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	9 21%	14 33%	18 43%	1 2%	42 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	13 12%	46 43%	45 42%	3 3%	107 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	5 6%	31 38%	43 53%	2 2%	81 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	8 10%	31 39%	39 49%	1 1%	79 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	13 8%	62 39%	82 51%	3 2%	160 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	26 10%	108 40%	127 48%	6 2%	267 100%
Total	78 17%	196 42%	181 39%	15 9%	470 100%

Table 7. The extent to which students think that in all of Flanders, the teachers' cultural backgrounds are the same those of the students

Toward the statement that their teachers know and understand their world, MB and non-MB students indicated a 37% and 52% agreement rate, respectively (see Table 8). A two-tailed z test presents this difference as statistically significant ($p < .00001$).

<i>“The teachers in my school know and understand my world”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	10 20%	19 37%	18 35%	4 8%	51 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	7 18%	22 55%	8 20%	3 8%	40 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	17 19%	41 45%	26 29%	7 8%	91 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	9 21%	15 36%	14 33%	4 10%	42 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	19 28%	26 38%	20 29%	3 4%	68 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	28 25%	41 37%	34 31%	7 6%	110 100%
Total (MB students)	45 22%	82 41%	60 30%	14 7%	201 100%
Non-MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	3 5%	23 35%	28 42%	12 18%	66 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	1 2%	17 40%	20 48%	4 10%	42 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	4 4%	40 37%	48 44%	16 15%	108 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	16 20%	31 38%	31 38%	4 5%	82 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	16 20%	23 29%	34 43%	7 9%	80 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	32 20%	54 33%	65 40%	11 7%	162 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	36 13%	94 35%	113 42%	27 10%	270 100%
Total	81 17%	176 37%	173 37%	41 9%	471 100%

Table 8. The extent to which the students believe their teachers know and understand the students' worlds

The achievement gap

In this section, MB and non-MB students' views regarding the existence and severity of (consequences of) an ethnic achievement gap in education are explored.

Most MB students (69%) *disagreed* to the statement that, on average, MB students get lower grades than non-MB students (see Table 9). This can be interpreted as 69% of the MB students not being aware of the achievement gap. Non-MB students disagreed slightly *less* (65% disagreement). A remarkable though insignificant difference ($p=.05614$) can be viewed between MB students in general (75% disagreement) and technical education (62% disagreement).

<i>“MB students, on average, get lower grades than non-MB students”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	14 27%	26 51%	5 10%	6 12%	51 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	19 46%	10 24%	9 22%	3 7%	41 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	33 36%	36 39%	14 15%	9 10%	92 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	10 24%	15 36%	17 40%	0 0%	42 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	19 28%	24 36%	22 33%	2 3%	67 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	29 27%	39 36%	39 36%	2 2%	109 100%
Total (MB students)	62 31%	75 37%	53 26%	11 5%	201 100%
Non-MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	11 16%	30 45%	20 30%	6 9%	67 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	9 24%	17 46%	11 30%	0 0%	37 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	20 19%	47 45%	31 30%	6 6%	104 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	19 24%	34 43%	23 29%	4 5%	80 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	14 18%	34 44%	25 32%	4 5%	77 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	33 21%	68 43%	48 31%	8 5%	157 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	53 20%	115 44%	79 30%	14 5%	261 100%
Total	115 25%	190 41%	132 29%	25 5%	462 100%

Table 9. The extent to which students believe MB students get lower grades than non-MB students

When it comes to being motivated for school tasks, both major subgroups seem to largely comply with the idea that MB students should not be inferior to their autochthonous peers: respectively 22% and 27% object that MB students are less motivated for school tasks (see Table 10).

<i>“MB students are less motivated for school than non-MB students”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	22 43%	19 37%	7 14%	3 6%	51 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	21 53%	15 38%	4 10%	0 0%	40 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	43 47%	34 37%	11 12%	3 3%	91 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	14 33%	22 52%	6 14%	0 0%	42 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	19 28%	24 36%	21 31%	3 4%	67 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	33 30%	46 42%	27 25%	3 3%	109 100%
Total (MB students)	76 38%	80 40%	38 19%	6 3%	200 100%
Non-MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	17 52%	33 49%	14 21%	3 4%	67 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	16 42%	17 45%	5 13%	0 0%	38 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	33 31%	50 48%	19 18%	3 3%	105 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	24 30%	34 43%	19 24%	3 4%	80 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	22 29%	30 39%	21 27%	4 5%	77 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	46 29%	64 41%	40 25%	7 4%	157 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	79 30%	114 44%	59 23%	10 4%	262 100%
Total	155 34%	194 42%	97 21%	16 3%	462 100%

Table 10. The extent to which students believe MB students are less motivated for school than non-MB students

At the same time, a significant difference ($p=0.0008$) between MB and non-MB students can be observed, as the former largely tend to agree (62%), whereas the latter are more doubtful (44%) regarding the statement that autochthonous students have an easier time at school (see Table 11). Moreover, a majority (58%) of MB students is convinced that autochthonous students in Belgium are having an easier life (see Table 12).

<i>“Non-MB students are having an easier time at school”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	8 16%	12 24%	23 45%	8 16%	51 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	4 10%	11 28%	19 48%	6 15%	40 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	12 13%	23 25%	42 46%	14 15%	91 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	2 5%	9 21%	22 52%	9 21%	42 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	7 10%	24 36%	29 43%	7 10%	67 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	9 8%	33 30%	51 47%	16 15%	109 100%
Total (MB students)	21 11%	56 28%	93 47%	30 15%	200 100%
Non-MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	3 4%	30 45%	30 45%	4 6%	67 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	8 21%	11 29%	18 47%	1 3%	38 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	11 10%	41 39%	48 46%	5 5%	105 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	13 16%	34 43%	28 35%	5 6%	80 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	12 16%	35 45%	26 34%	4 5%	77 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	25 16%	69 44%	54 34%	9 6%	157 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	36 14%	110 42%	102 39%	14 5%	262 100%
Total	57 12%	166 36%	195 42%	44 10%	462 100%

Table 11. The extent to which students believe non-MB students are having an easier time at school than MB students

<i>“Non-MB students’ lives are easier”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>MB students</i>					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	6 12%	15 29%	18 35%	12 24%	51 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	8 21%	8 21%	19 49%	4 10%	39 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	14 16%	23 26%	37 41%	16 18%	90 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	3 7%	16 38%	16 38%	7 17%	42 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	8 12%	23 35%	25 38%	10 15%	66 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	11 10%	39 36%	41 38%	17 16%	108 100%
<i>Total (MB students)</i>	25 13%	62 31%	78 39%	33 17%	198 100%
<i>Non-MB students</i>					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	7 10%	14 21%	39 58%	7 10%	67 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	5 14%	13 35%	16 43%	3 8%	37 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	12 12%	27 26%	55 53%	10 10%	104 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	17 21%	32 40%	25 31%	6 8%	80 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	13 17%	33 42%	28 36%	4 5%	78 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	30 19%	65 41%	53 34%	10 6%	158 100%
<i>Total (Non-MB students)</i>	42 16%	92 35%	108 41%	20 8%	262 100%
<i>Total</i>	67 15%	154 33%	186 40%	53 12%	460 100%

Table 12. The extent to which students believe non-MB students are having an easier life than MB students

Professional aspirations

This section elaborates on the students' (and their parents') professional aspirations.

A significant difference ($p < .00001$) can be examined between the major subgroups when it comes to looking to find prestige in their future professions. Four out of five MB students, compared to about three out of five non-MB students claim to value their profession to be regarded as prestigious. Within the group of MB students, this desire seems more common (83% vs 78%) among the students in technical education (see Table 13), even though it can be said that general rather than technical education could pave the way to such professions.

<i>"I find it important to choose a job with prestige"</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	2 4%	9 17%	24 46%	17 33%	52 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	0 0%	10 24%	19 46%	12 29%	41 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	2 2%	19 20%	43 46%	29 31%	93 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	0 0%	8 19%	23 55%	11 26%	42 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	1 1%	10 14%	37 53%	22 31%	70 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	1 1%	18 16%	60 54%	33 29%	112 100%
Total (MB students)	3 1%	37 18%	103 50%	62 30%	205 100%
Non-MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	4 6%	25 37%	30 44%	9 13%	68 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	3 7%	17 40%	17 40%	5 12%	42 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	7 6%	42 38%	47 43%	14 13%	110 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	8 10%	25 30%	37 45%	12 15%	82 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	4 5%	18 23%	30 38%	28 35%	80 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	12 7%	43 27%	67 41%	40 25%	162 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	19 7%	85 31%	114 42%	54 20%	272 100%
Total	22 5%	122 26%	217 45%	116 24%	477 100%

Table 13. The extent to which the students prioritize their future job being regarded as prestigious

In addition to valuing professional prestige highly, MB students (and non-MB students, too) attach importance to being able to help others through their job, with seven out of ten at least slightly agreeing to the statement (see Figure 7).

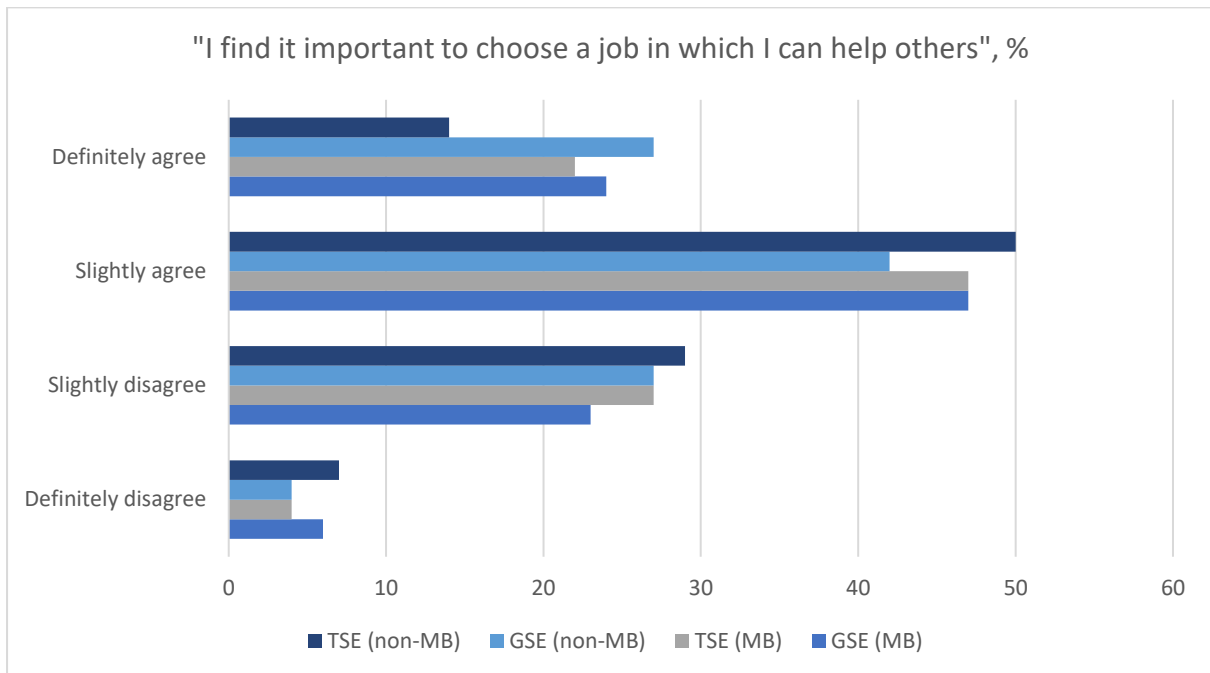


Figure 7. The extent to which the students prioritize being able to help others with their future job

Nearly half (46%) of the subgroup of MB students who said to be part of a cultural community indicated it is important for them to be able to *specifically* help those in their community through their job (see Figure 8). The desire is strongest for those in technical education, with 19% (opposing 6% for those in general education) 'definitely' agreeing.

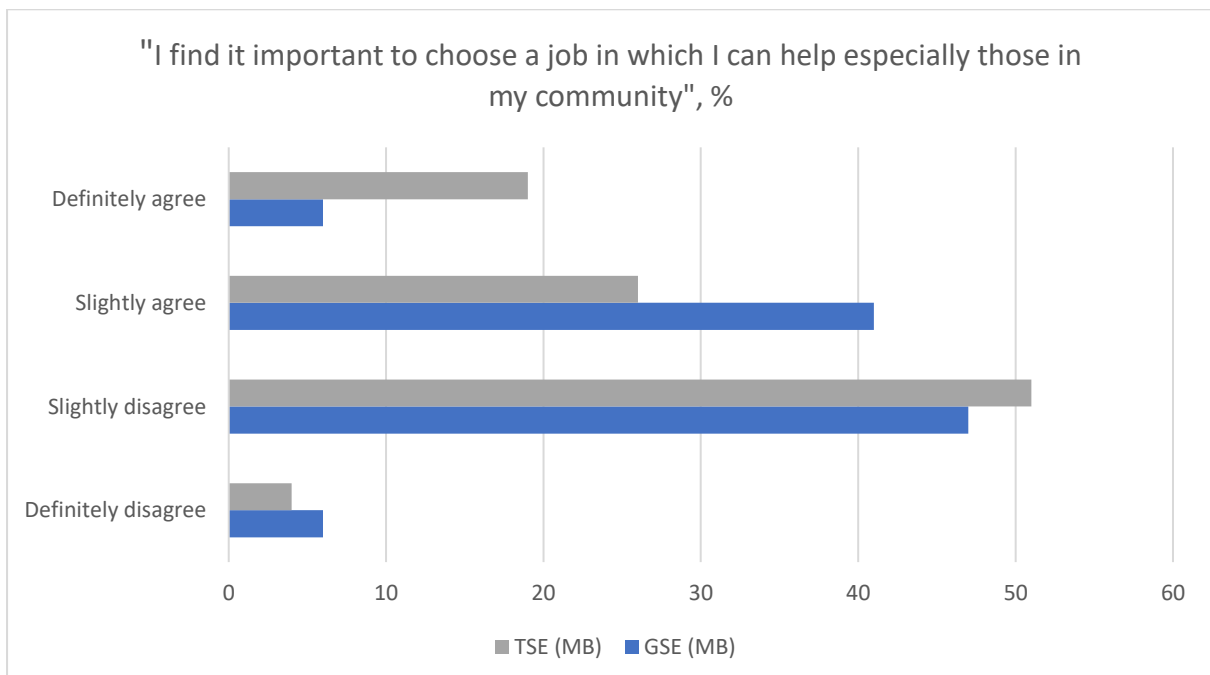


Figure 8. The extent to which, in choosing a job, MB students prioritize being able to help the people in their community

Among all of the subgroups, there is a strong general consensus that a profession ought to be very profitable: 90% of MB student and 85% of non-MB students agreed (see Table 14).

<i>"I find it important to choose a job that makes me earn a lot of money"</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
MB students					
5 th grade, GSE	0 0%	4 8%	21 40%	27 52%	52 100%
6 th grade, GSE	2 5%	4 10%	20 49%	15 37%	41 100%
GSE total	2 2%	8 9%	41 44%	42 45%	93 100%
5 th grade, TSE	0 0%	3 7%	20 48%	19 45%	42 100%
6 th grade, TSE	0 0%	7 10%	27 39%	36 51%	70 100%
TSE total	0 0%	10 9%	47 42%	55 49%	112 100%
Total (MB students)	2 1%	18 9%	88 43%	97 47%	205 100%
Non-MB students					
5 th grade, GSE	0 0%	7 10%	41 60%	20 29%	68 100%
6 th grade, GSE	0 0%	9 21%	24 57%	9 21%	42 100%
GSE total	0 0%	16 15%	65 59%	29 26%	110 100%
5 th grade, TSE	3 4%	12 15%	43 52%	24 29%	82 100%
6 th grade, TSE	3 4%	8 10%	38 48%	30 38%	79 100%
TSE total	6 4%	20 12%	81 50%	54 34%	161 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	6 2%	36 13%	146 54%	83 31%	271 100%
Total	8 2%	54 11%	234 49%	180 38%	476 100%

Table 14. The extent to which, in choosing a job, the students prioritize earning a lot of money

The MB students (72%), significantly more so than their non-MB peers (59%), inform that their parents value their (the students’) future professions to be regarded as prestigious (see Table 15). In both major subgroups (MB vs non-MB), this tendency is more pronounced within the group of technical education students than in the group of general education students.

<i>“My parents find it important for me to choose a prestigious job”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	5 10%	13 26%	20 40%	13 26%	51 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	2 5%	9 23%	21 53%	8 20%	40 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	7 8%	22 24%	41 45%	21 23%	91 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	0 0%	13 31%	23 55%	6 14%	42 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	2 3%	14 20%	38 54%	17 24%	71 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	2 2%	27 24%	61 54%	23 20%	113 100%
Total (MB students)	9 4%	49 24%	102 50%	44 22%	204 100%
Non-MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	7 10%	24 35%	29 43%	8 12%	68 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	10 24%	20 48%	10 24%	2 5%	42 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	17 15%	44 40%	39 35%	10 9%	110 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	15 18%	27 33%	32 39%	8 10%	82 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	15 19%	19 24%	25 31%	21 26%	80 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	30 19%	46 28%	57 35%	29 18%	162 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	47 17%	90 33%	96 35%	39 14%	272 100%
Total	56 12%	139 29%	198 42%	83 17%	476 100%

Table 15. The extent to which the students think their parents find it important for them to choose a job that is regarded as prestigious

When observing three subgroups of MB students, based on their SES (derived from the students' mother's highest educational degree), it is visible that students with lowest SES are more inclined toward agreeing to whether they think their parents value prestige in their future jobs highly (see Table 16). Respectively 81% and 67% of those with lowest and highest SES agree to the statement. The difference is, however, not significant ($p=.09894$). Additionally, a chi-square test of independence showed that there was no significant association between SES and parents' desire for a prestigious job ($\chi^2(2, N = 201) = 2.74, p=.2544$).

<i>“My parents find it important for me to choose a prestigious job”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>MB students</i>					
<i>Mother: lower secondary education</i>	2 4%	7 15%	26 57%	11 24%	46 100%
<i>Mother: higher secondary education</i>	4 5%	17 23%	35 47%	18 24%	74 100%
<i>Mother: higher education</i>	3 4%	24 30%	41 51%	13 16%	81 100%

Table 16. The extent to which MB students with a different SES agree to their parents finding it important for them to choose a prestigious job

Impactful professions

The students were asked to what extent they thought they could have social impact on the people in their community given them hypothetically executing different professions. As the statements that were used revolve around the potential impact on those in their community, only MB students who indicated to be part of such a community (see Figure 6) are included in this section (n=130).

As a result of this inquiry, the professions listed below are ranked from most impactful to least impactful, based on the following formula that gives weights to the degrees of agreement:

$$\text{Score} = (-2 * \# \text{'Definitely disagree'}) + (-1 * \# \text{'Slightly disagree'}) + (1 * \# \text{'Slightly agree'}) + (2 * \# \text{'Definitely agree'})$$

A detailed account of the data for each profession can be found in the attachments. In summary, based on their supposed potential to have social impact, the ten professions were ranked as follows:

1. Doctor/nurse	Score: 105
2. Psychologist	Score: 83
3. Lawyer	Score: 76
4. Teacher	Score: 71
5. Social worker	Score: 65
6. Politician	Score: 56
7. Police officer	Score: 43
8. Entrepreneur	Score: 33
9. Crafts(wo)man	Score: -32
10. Shop assistant	Score: -102

In fourth place, the teaching profession has earned 71 points (see Table 17). A non-significant difference ($p=.0784$) can be observed between those in TSE (77% agreement) and GSE (64% agreement).

<i>"By becoming a TEACHER, I can improve the lives of those in my community"</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	3 12%	5 19%	11 42%	7 27%	26 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	3 13%	7 29%	12 50%	2 8%	24 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	6 12%	12 24%	23 46%	9 18%	50 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	2 8%	5 20%	11 44%	7 28%	25 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	2 4%	8 16%	28 57%	11 22%	49 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	4 5%	13 18%	39 53%	18 24%	74 100%
Total (MB students)	10 8%	25 20%	62 50%	27 22%	124 100%
Score	-20	-25	62	54	71

Table 17. The extent to which MB students who feel as part of a community believe they could impact their community through becoming a teacher

When only considering the subgroup of MB students who, when considering a profession, indicated they seek to help others in general, or those in their community specifically, no significantly different standpoints toward the potential social impact of teaching can be noted (see Table 18).

<i>“By becoming a TEACHER, I can improve the lives of those in my community”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>MB students who seek to help others in their job</i>					
<i>Total</i>	6 7%	18 21%	46 53%	14 16%	84 100%
<i>MB students who seek to help specifically their community members in their job</i>					
<i>Total</i>	3 5%	12 21%	26 46%	15 17%	57 100%

Table 18. The extent to which MB students who seek to help others & specifically those in their community through their job, believe they could impact their community through becoming a teacher

The teaching profession

Unsurprisingly, a large majority of the students does not have teaching in mind for their future career (see Figure 9). The proportion of MB students who could see themselves become a teacher one day is lower than the proportion of non-MB students with the same opinion. It should however be noted that the difference is not significant ($p=.06724$).

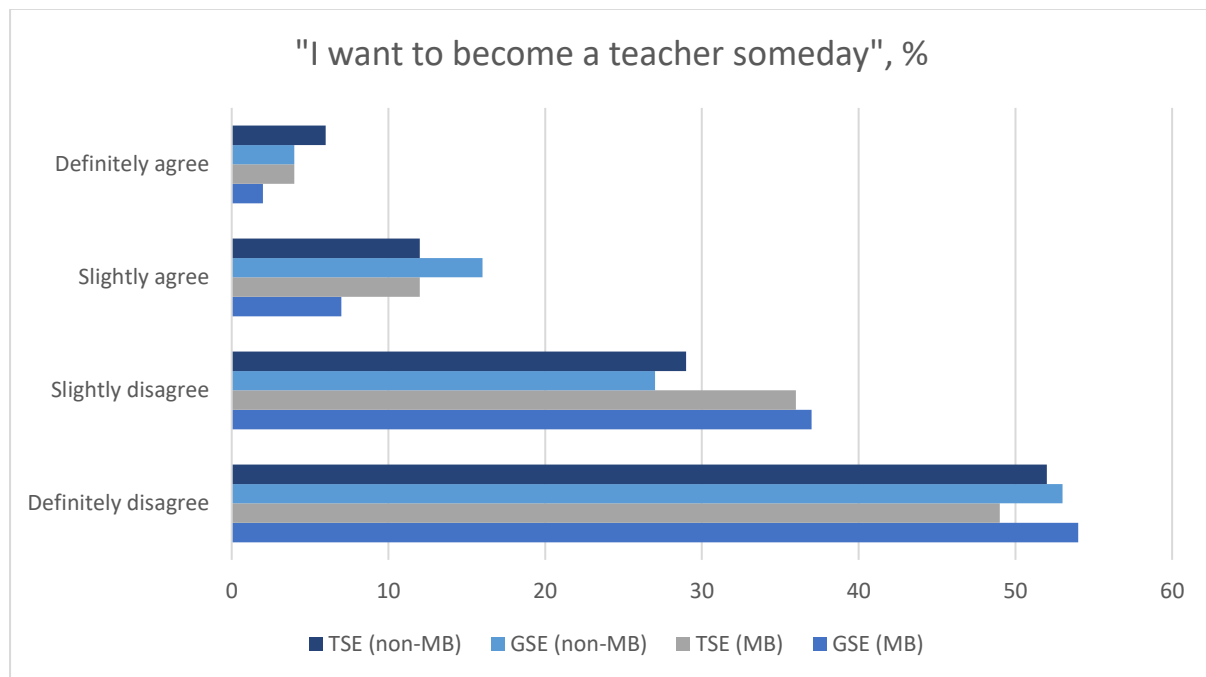


Figure 9. The extent to which the students agree to wanting to become a teacher someday

Six reasons *not* to become a teacher were presented to the respondents. They were asked to tick off the reason(s) that applied to them and to suggest other reasons if applicable. Ranked from most to least common among all respondents, the reasons are:

1. "I have other plans or ambitions"
2. "I dislike the school environment"
3. "It is financially not attractive"
4. "I don't like working with adolescents"
5. "Teaching is not a prestigious profession"
6. "I would not be able to help those in my community"

The major subgroups (MB and non-MB students) have placed the reasons *against* choosing the teaching profession in the same order (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Disliking the school environment, a major reason for both subgroups, has been selected more often by non-MB students than by MB students. The idea that teaching is financially unattractive is more common among MB students (39%) than among non-MB students (28%), though not significantly ($p=.25014$).

An extra option allowed respondents to give free text input. Most answers can be grouped as follows (unique reasons were omitted):

- "I dislike speaking in front of a group" (9)
- "It seems boring work" (7)
- "Teachers do not receive enough respect from students" (4)

- **"The head scarf ban would not allow me to teach" (3)**
- "I am not good at providing explanations" (2)

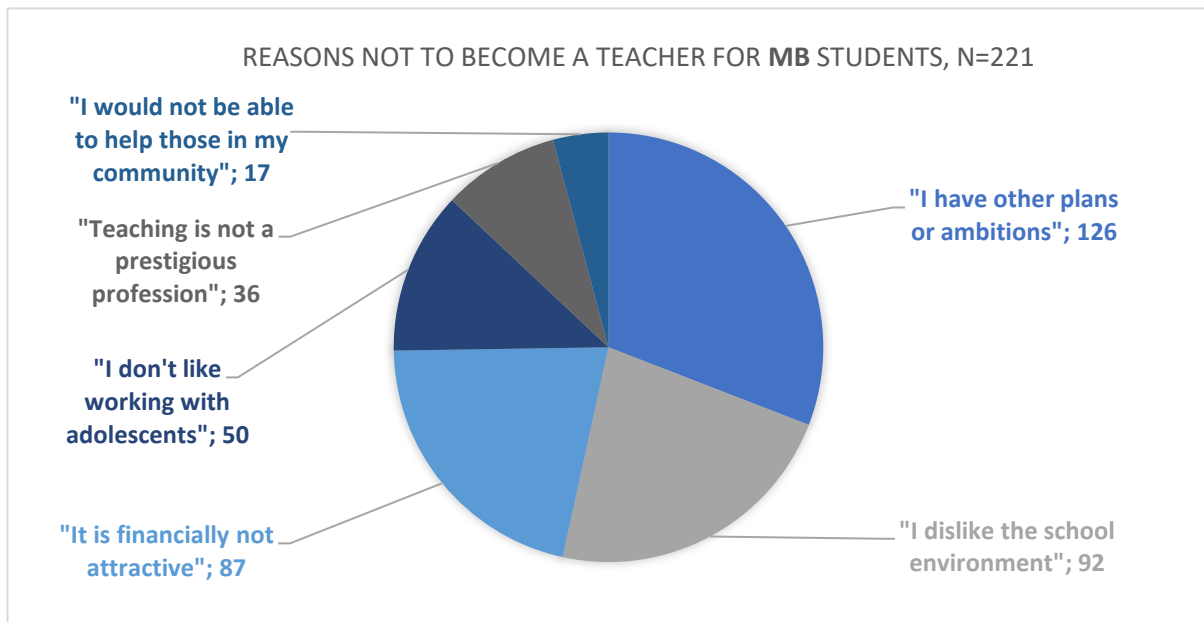


Figure 10. Reasons MB students selected for not choosing the teaching profession

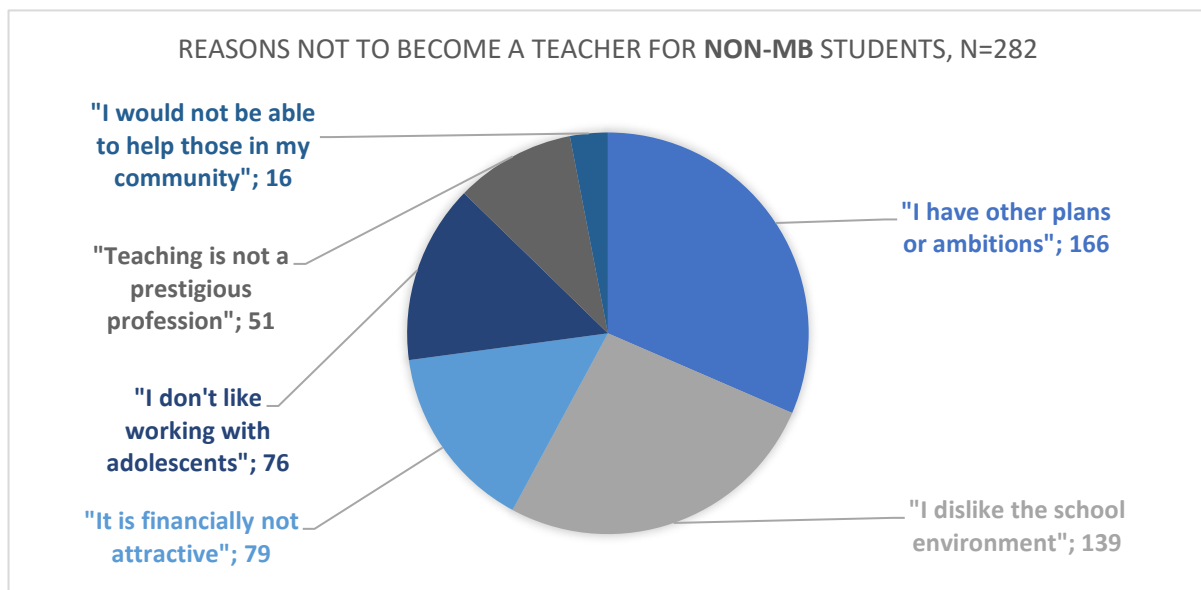


Figure 11. Reasons non-MB students selected for not choosing the teaching profession

When observing the reasons against choosing teaching, given by the MB students who agreed to be seeking to help a) others in general or b) those in their communities specifically, the order of priority remains unchanged (see Table 19). ‘Having other plans or ambitions’ even increases in importance for both subgroups, whereas the rate of those ‘not liking to work with adolescents’ decreases.

<i>Reasons not to become a teacher</i>	1. Other plans	2. School env.	3. Financial	4. Young people	5. No Prestige	6. No impact	N
<i>MB students who seek to help others in their job</i>							
<i>Total</i>	90 63%	64 44%	58 41%	26 18%	24 17%	14 10%	144 100%
<i>MB students who seek to help specifically their community members in their job</i>							
<i>Total</i>	38 67%	25 44%	18 32%	11 17%	11 17%	6 11%	57 100%

Table 19. The reasons MB students who seek to help others & specifically those in their community give for not wanting to become a teacher

Also, six reasons *in favor of* choosing the teaching profession were presented to the respondents. Again, they were asked to tick off the reason(s) that applied to them and to suggest other reasons if applicable. Ranked from most to least common among all respondents, the reasons are:

1. “I would get a lot of holidays”
2. “Teaching seems fun”
3. “I like working with young people”
4. “I would be able to help those in my community”
5. “it is financially attractive”
6. “It is regarded as a prestigious profession”

Once more, there is unanimity between the major subgroups about the order and importance of the reasons that are pro teaching (see Figure 12 and Figure 13). Both MB and non-MB students regard the amount of holidays as a very attractive factor. In both groups, about 14% perceives ‘being able to help those in their community’ as a major reason to consider becoming a teacher.

Like before, an extra option allowed respondents to give free text input. The answers can be grouped as follows:

- “I want to make a difference for adolescents” (2)
- “I think it can be enjoyable to let other people learn about something that interests you” (2)

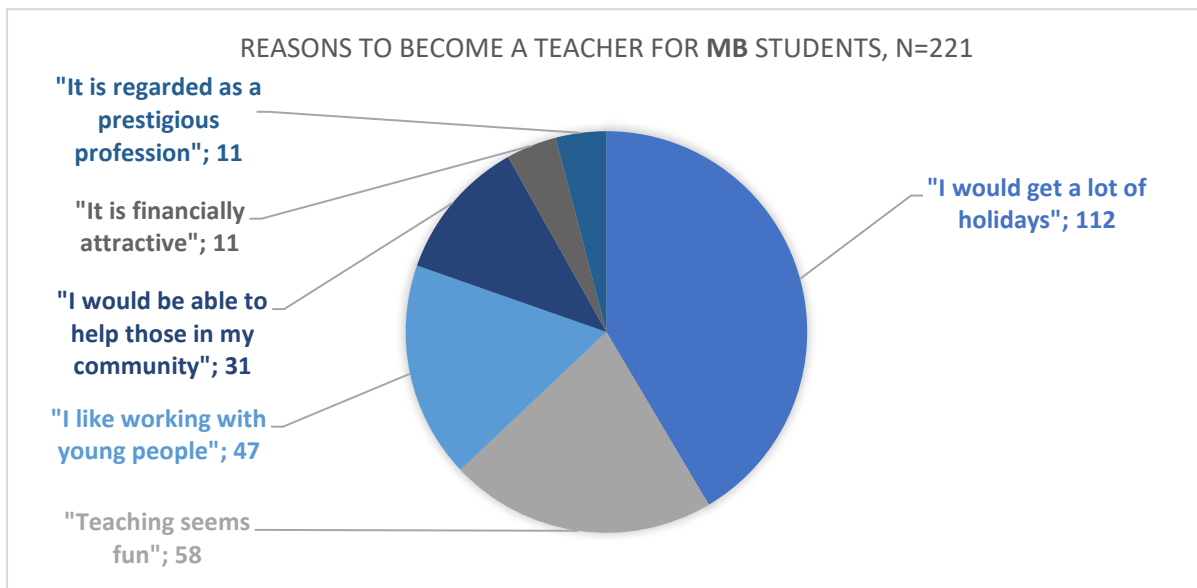


Figure 12. Reasons MB students selected for choosing the teaching profession

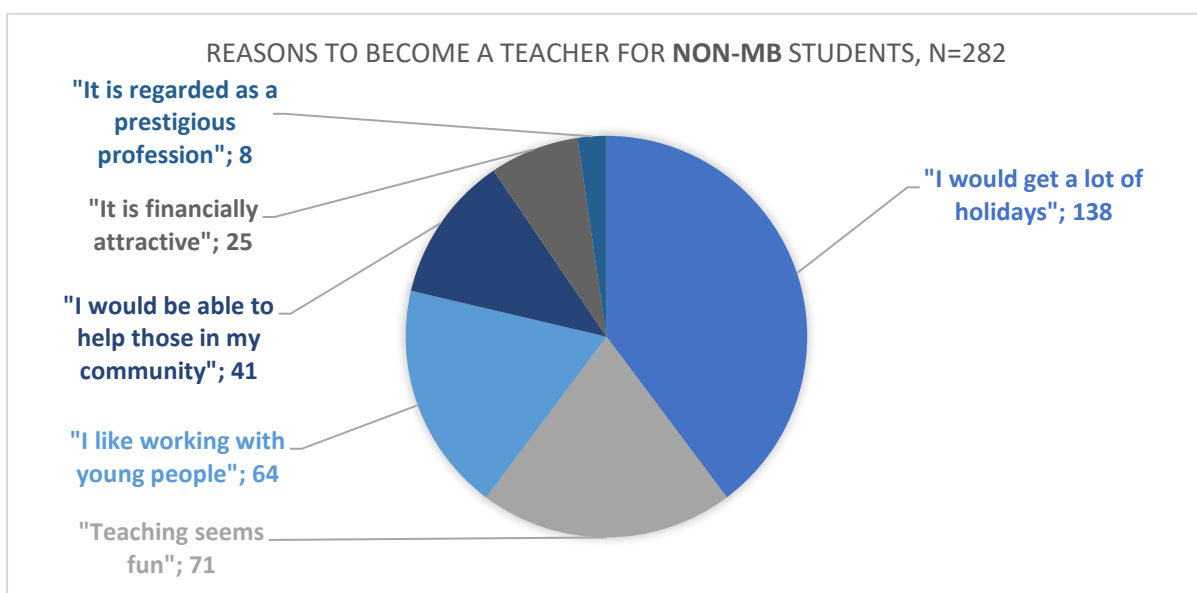


Figure 13. Reasons non-MB students selected for choosing the teaching profession

Discussion

Achievement gap and teacher homogeneity awareness

Looking back at the research questions, the first important finding is that even though Flemish MB students experience a clear backlog when it comes to major academic skills (PISA-team UGent, 2019), less than a third of the MB respondents believe these students structurally underachieve at school, in comparison to non-MB students. Moreover, merely five percent of the MB respondents indicated they 'definitely' agreed to believing in the existence of an ethnic achievement gap (as became apparent in Table 9). On the other hand, a large majority (78%) of the MB respondents refutes the idea of MB students being less motivated for school tasks than non-MB students (see Table 10), which is in line with the findings of Lacante and her colleagues (2007), who pointed out an even initial degree of motivation between the two major subgroups. Also, a majority (62%) of the MB students thinks non-MB students are having an easier time at school. The fact that they perceive themselves as a generally motivated student population and that, yet, many of them indicate they experience a more difficult time at school, may explain their overall refusal of the existence of an ethnic achievement gap as a result of their increased effort compensating for a more challenging environment.

More pronounced is the notion the MB respondents have of the lack of ethnic diversity among Flemish teachers: 69% of them signal a discrepancy between the cultural backgrounds of Flanders' secondary school teachers on the one hand and students on the other. Both major subgroups strongly disagree to their school employing many MB teachers. Significantly more so than their autochthonous peers, MB students flag their teachers do not know nor understand their world, which might contribute to their feeling of having a more difficult time at school. The fact that they demonstrate this social mismatch and feeling of being rather disconnected from their White teachers reaffirms what Claassen had found in her report: MB students would often feel uncomfortable (and underperform) as a consequence of fearing to confirm a negative bias by White teachers (2021). Similarly, Agirdag warned for MB students' demotivation and even cultural opposition as a result of the dissimilarity between the predominantly White middle class culture and the minority students' cultures (2020). Even in the late eighties, Irvine concluded that having teachers' and students' cultures match positively affected student motivation and performance (1988).

Teacher diversity for climbing the socio-economic ladder

Clearly being convinced of the cultural mismatch between Flemish teachers and students, the MB respondents in this study were inclined to express being generally misunderstood by their teachers. Not only did they acknowledge autochthonous students experience less difficulties at school, a small (56%) majority even put the latter forward as having an easier *life*. In this context, it might be relevant to note that there is an unmistakable overlap between the MB respondents in this study and the share of students with lower SES. The same tendency has been mentioned by Agirdag (2020) and can partly explain why one group would perceive the other group's lives as easier.

The fact that a large majority of MB respondents seems to be ignorant of the ethnic achievement gap in Flemish secondary education forbids this study to conclude that the lack of diversity among teachers is perceived by MB students as a cause for their (socioeconomic) difficulties in life in general and in school in particular. The lack of diversity among teachers, in other words, seems *not* to be a major suspect for social inequality. This, however, would be an essential insight for them to realize the potential impact that a more diverse teaching force could have on their communities' students' grades and their SES. It can therefore be concluded that, according to MB students, increased teacher diversity is not regarded as a bridge to social equality.

Change agents: a calling?

No less than 24 out of the 191 MB respondents who answered the question whether they would once become a teacher *at least slightly agreed* to it. That is more than one out of eight. Given the fact that nearly four million Belgian inhabitants have foreign roots¹⁸, and that the proportion of people with a migration background is largest among the younger generations, the issue described here as ‘the shortage of teachers of color’ would soon be history. It would speak of naivety and overenthusiasm, however, to underestimate the meaning of ‘slightly’, here. Having other (professional) plans or ambitions – possibly ones that allow for more prestige – and generally disliking the school environment, seem to be the main deal breakers for the target audience to actually join teacher education programs. The observation that prestige (as a means of climbing the social ladder) is an important factor for MB students *and* their parents confirms the findings of both De Cartier¹⁹ (2022) and Lacante (2007) and can be explained by the Stereotype Threat Theory to which these students (and those with low SES in general) are vulnerable (Wetenschap Centraal, 2022). Remarkably, the head scarf ban, though not a selectable option for reasons to choose against teaching, has been mentioned three times by the respondents. No data were collected about respondents’ gender, so no statements can be made about the size of the subgroup for whom wearing a head scarf may be relevant. ‘Three’ should not be viewed as ‘three out of 221 MB students’, but as ‘three out of much smaller subgroup’: male and non-Muslim respondents are excluded from this denominator, leading to much higher ratio and increasing the importance of their mentioning the ban. This finding confirms the commentary by Girls In The City’s coordinator Chichi that the ban is keeping many women with a migration background from teaching (personal communication, 2022, May 17).

The current state of affairs in Flanders tells us that MB students do not feel very attracted to teaching – otherwise there would be no use in dedicating a study around it. Still, the survey discovered that 12.5% of the MB respondents does not reject ever becoming a teacher, compared to 24% of the non-MB respondents. Even though there is a clear difference between the groups, reality is very far from reaching this 1:2 ratio. The reasons that might negatively influence the MB students’ perception of the job must therefore be more serious when push comes to shove. These reasons, it appeared, mostly revolve around financial or prestigious shortcomings and disliking the school environment. Possibly, the latter is caused by it coming across as unwelcoming, as pointed out before by Claassen (2021), Ndombe (Orbit vzw) (2022) and Chichi (personal communication, 2022, May 17). The school environment appearing unwelcoming may be partly caused by the very lack of MB teachers, leading to a vicious cycle. On the other hand, 49% of the non-MB students seem to dislike the school environment, too. Perhaps their reasons deviate from those of the MB students.

It is informative to also examine the most prominent reasons *in favor* of the teaching profession. Although the MB respondents, more so than their autochthonous peers, indicated to be seeking to help people professionally, and contrasting their convincing perception of the teaching profession being potentially impactful, being able to ‘have social impact’ did not get a third of the number of votes that ‘getting a lot of holidays’ received (14% versus 51%, respectively). Likewise, almost twice as many MB respondents pose ‘teaching being inherently fun’ as an affirmative reason superior to ‘having social impact’. Ndombe had found the same tendency among the target audience (2022). Oppositely, Teach For Belgium noted their MB participants value social impact higher than prestige. This might naturally be more common among the participants, though: being participants, they do not need to be convinced anymore. In addition, Teach For Belgium does not know whether this preference for social impact had been present in their participants *before* they joined the program, or that

¹⁸ <https://statbel.fgov.be/nl/themas/bevolking/herkomst#news>

¹⁹ <https://www.klasse.be/180314/hoelossenwehetlerarentekort-op/>

bringing awareness about this impact persuaded them to join (Vandewerken, D., personal communication, 2022, April 5).

It can thus be concluded that, among Flemish MB students, a sense of a calling to be change agents for the children and adolescents in their community – as observed by Enchandia and colleagues in the U.S. (2007) – is largely absent. Perhaps it is this observation, namely that Flemish MB students differ from MB students in the U.S. with regard to the reasons that *do* attract them to teaching, that should determine the approach of pursuing a more diverse teaching force.

The road to bridging the gaps

What will it take for students with a migration background to choose the teaching profession more often?

Potentially having impact has proven not to be a major motivator at this point. On the other hand, being able to help others has shown to be an important future career aspect for the MB respondents. To even consider teaching as a way of helping others or of having impact, one needs to be aware of the implications of the problematic state of affairs. This study has shown that this awareness is currently lacking among the target audience. The recommendations put forward below therefore revolve around raising awareness of both the problem and solution at hand. They are threefold:

1. **Make sure the problem is known.** It would be unfounded and sloppy to assume that the knowledge shared by academics and policy makers is shared across all generations, socioeconomic statuses and ethnic groups. It would therefore be at least as unfounded and sloppy to expect the target audience to feel an urgency of jumping to the rescue. As long as awareness of the achievement gap remains an isolated insight, a ‘calling’ will logically not come to exist. Moreover, in order to proceed to the next step, it is important to frame the achievement gap as a form structural exclusion by a White teaching force, rather than as a result of personal factors.
2. **Highlight they can be part of the solution.** If the target audience can be thoroughly informed about the causes and implications of the achievement gap and about the role that the current ethnically homogeneous teaching force plays in it, they will be one major step closer to taking agency. Having them truly realize a minority teacher can change minority students’ lives for the better should be a targeted policy’s or campaign’s ultimate objective and is the furthest a it can go to organically and sustainably increase teacher diversity. From there on, it is hoped that the right students will hear the call and become a teacher for the right reasons – which contributes to the solution being sustainable.
3. **Emphasize the fact that it isn’t badly paid.** When suggesting a solution following the survey results, it would be unwise to ignore the MB students’ general insistence on financial well-being. As proved to be a global and local obstacle, alternative career options might seem (or simply *be*) more financially attractive (Center for American Progress, 2011; Lacante et al., 2007). Perhaps the compensations Flemish teachers enjoy are underestimated and should be put in the picture. The average gross starter salary for Flemish employees was 1 972 euro in 2020²⁰. A starting secondary school teacher *without* a master’s degree earns 2 674 euro per month²¹. Moreover, given the teacher shortage, there is a not-to-underestimate value in the guarantee to find work easily. Those looking for a teaching job might therefore more often

²⁰ <https://www.vdab.be/magazine/09-2020/loon>

²¹ <https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/je-salaris-als-leraar-secundair-onderwijs>

have multiple schools to choose from, allowing them to, for example, work close to their homes. Further, a job as a teacher is known to go well with raising children, as parents' and children's daily schedules tend to match. Lastly, and this perk has not been going unnoticed, as the study has shown, there is a lot of paid holiday. More unnoticed or unknown among the target audience, though, might be the fact that one is not *obliged* to spend their time lying on the beach during these holidays. To comply with their requirement of earning more money, why not inform them that in Flanders, teachers can work "flexi-jobs" during their holidays and earn extra money – unlimited *and* completely untaxed²²?

²² <https://www.vdab.be/flexi-job>

Conclusion

Superdiversity has been manifesting itself in Belgium's majority-minority cities, especially among the younger members of the population, and will continue to do so in and outside these cities over the following years or even decades. The question is not whether this will happen, the question is whether we – the people, the government – will take agency and turn this challenge into an opportunity. Education forms the first intersection between established and new cultures and plays a crucial role in setting the tone for children's and adolescents' perception of and participation in society. It is therefore in *everybody's* interest that bridges are not burned here. The implications of Flanders' ethnically homogeneous teaching force are clearly standing in the way of reaching our collective goal.

This study has mapped and analyzed local and global teacher diversity efforts and standpoints on the topic. Being able to have social impact on minorities has proven to be an important motivator for preservice teachers of color in the United States. In Belgium, several initiatives cater to this incentive, too, yet the results are not materializing here as they do across the ocean. Based on the findings of a literature review, new, unanswered questions have been posed. A survey questioning more than 500 secondary education students sought to collect the data required for answering these questions. In doing so, it laid bare the gap of *knowledge* about the gap in *achievement* that is at the heart of social inequality.

For this reason, in order to spark a sense of social agency or activism among students *and* adults with a migration background, they need be somehow informed that:

- a) there is such a thing as an ethnic achievement gap in education;
- b) this achievement gap can have detrimental consequences to ethnically diverse adolescents' future SES and well-being;
- c) Flanders' structurally White middle-class teaching force, *not* the students are responsible for it;
- d) they can take matters in their own hands and turn the tide by becoming a teacher.

A final remark should warn small and large-scale teacher diversity efforts: even though a sense of 'having social impact' might be present and burning after a successful campaign sparking it, it might never be able to outweigh the feeling of *unwelcomeness* or being subjected to micro-hostility that MB students and MB teachers experience in a predominantly White teaching force. In addition, schools need be cautious of exclusively trusting these MB teachers with the task of teaching for diversity. "Although well-intentioned, such strategies can backfire [...] by avoiding the need for teachers and student teachers from the majority population to also become actively involved in and take responsibility for diversity issues" (OECD, 2007, p. 5). Taking responsibility toward dealing with student diversity is a task for *all* teachers. Breaking the vicious cycle of MB students not wanting or daring to join an ethnically homogeneous team *because of its homogeneity* will be a major obstacle in diversifying the Flemish teaching force. Perhaps withdrawing the head scarf ban could solve this cold-start problem and get the ball rolling.

Research contribution

This study demonstrated that more radical nation-wide teacher diversity efforts and dedicated research on the topic of attracting ethnically diverse teachers have not been occurring in Belgium or Flanders as they have in the United States. Former and current Belgian initiatives, albeit they are often supported by the government, have been drawing from a very limited amount of resources. Although

their efforts are well-intended and their results may sometimes be called impressive given their restricted means, they often lack the scientifically supported fundamentals to build their approach upon. Moreover, this study was able to identify a major shortcoming in common Belgian teacher diversity efforts and wants to position itself as an advisory guidebook for future attempts to diversify the teaching force.

Limitations and avenues for future research

A quantitative research, this study was not able to qualitatively grasp the reasons that really keep students with a migration background from choosing the teaching profession, as well as the motivators that *do* make them consider it. Personal in-depth interviewing of these students might shed a brighter light on the motives of the target audience. This would allow dedicated efforts to respond to the issue at hand with more efficiency.

Furthermore, when it comes to describing and leveraging 'social impact', this study has mainly focused on in-group favoritism. In other words, it was inspired by the idea that students with a migration background could find an incentive in supporting the adolescents within their own migrant community. Maybe this scope is too narrow. It would therefore be interesting for future research to zoom in on the presence and nature of between-group favoritism; to investigate whether a sense of mutual connection between (specific) ethnic minority groups 'opposing' the majority group could bring about the insights that are needed for designing a targeted campaign or approach.

Lastly, this research revolves around secondary school students specifically. In their attempts to attract more teachers (independently from their cultural backgrounds), the Flemish government aims to address career changers to join education, too. Being generally older and possessing more work-related and life experiences, professionals with a migration background's knowledge and incentives may greatly differ from those of adolescent students. This particular audience is potentially valuable and should also receive adequate attention from researchers and policy makers.

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Attachments

Additional tables

MB students' identification

<i>"The people in my community are having a good life in Belgium"</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	0 0%	0 0%	22 76%	7 24%	29 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	1 4%	3 12%	16 64%	5 20%	25 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	1 2%	3 6%	38 70%	12 22%	54 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	2 8%	2 8%	18 69%	4 15%	26 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	0 0%	3 6%	37 74%	10 20%	50 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	2 3%	5 7%	55 72%	14 18%	76 100%
Total	3 2%	8 6%	93 72%	26 20%	130 100%

<i>"The people in my community are being treated correctly in Belgium"²³</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	3 10%	5 17%	14 48%	7 24%	29 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	2 8%	7 28%	14 56%	2 8%	25 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	5 9%	12 22%	28 52%	9 17%	54 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	0 0%	9 35%	14 54%	3 12%	26 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	2 4%	8 16%	35 70%	5 10%	50 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	2 3%	17 22%	49 64%	8 11%	76 100%
Total	7 5%	29 22%	77 59%	17 13%	130 100%

²³ By education, law, police, healthcare and social security, as mentioned in the survey. This question only showed up for the respondents who indicated they were part of a community.

<i>"I can have an impact on the well-being of the people in my community"</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	2 7%	7 24%	15 52%	5 17%	29 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	1 4%	5 20%	17 68%	2 8%	25 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	3 6%	12 22%	32 59%	7 13%	54 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	2 8%	3 12%	19 73%	2 8%	26 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	3 6%	13 26%	23 46%	11 22%	50 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	5 7%	16 21%	42 55%	13 17%	76 100%
Total	8 6%	28 22%	74 57%	20 15%	130 100%

Cultural representation

<i>“My school has a lot of students with a migration background”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>MB students</i>					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	5 10%	11 22%	16 31%	19 37%	51 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	2 5%	4 10%	14 34%	21 51%	41 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	7 8%	15 16%	30 33%	40 43%	92 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	0 0%	9 21%	20 48%	13 31%	42 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	0 0%	8 11%	25 36%	37 53%	70 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	0 0%	17 15%	45 40%	50 45%	112 100%
<i>Total (MB students)</i>	7 3%	32 16%	75 37%	90 44%	204 100%
<i>Non-MB students</i>					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	11 17%	26 24%	23 35%	6 9%	66 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	4 10%	12 29%	15 36%	11 26%	42 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	15 14%	38 35%	38 35%	17 16%	108 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	2 2%	13 16%	42 51%	25 30%	82 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	1 1%	10 13%	43 54%	25 32%	79 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	3 2%	23 14%	85 53%	50 31%	161 100%
<i>Total (Non-MB students)</i>	18 7%	61 23%	123 46%	67 25%	269 100%
<i>Total</i>	25 5%	93 20%	198 42%	147 31%	473 100%

<i>“In my school, the teachers have the same cultural backgrounds as the students”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	11 22%	17 33%	15 29%	8 16%	51 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	15 38%	17 43%	6 15%	2 5%	40 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	26 29%	34 37%	21 23%	10 11%	91 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	7 17%	20 48%	13 31%	2 5%	42 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	20 29%	32 46%	14 20%	4 6%	70 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	27 24%	52 46%	27 24%	6 5%	112 100%
Total (MB students)	53 26%	86 42%	48 24%	16 8%	203 100%
Non-MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	0 0%	11 17%	42 64%	13 20%	66 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	10 24%	8 19%	18 43%	6 14%	42 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	10 9%	19 18%	60 56%	19 18%	108 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	5 6%	28 34%	46 56%	3 4%	82 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	11 14%	27 34%	40 50%	2 3%	80 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	16 10%	55 34%	86 53%	5 3%	162 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	26 10%	74 27%	146 54%	24 9%	270 100%
Total	79 17%	160 34%	194 41%	40 8%	473 100%

<i>“School classes, tests and exams are better tailored to non-MB students”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	12 24%	26 51%	10 20%	3 6%	51 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	11 28%	17 43%	10 25%	2 5%	40 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	23 25%	43 47%	20 22%	5 5%	91 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	8 20%	23 56%	7 17%	3 7%	41 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	22 34%	28 43%	12 18%	3 5%	65 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	30 28%	51 48%	19 18%	6 6%	106 100%
Total (MB students)	53 27%	94 48%	39 20%	11 6%	197 100%
Non-MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	19 28%	23 34%	23 34%	2 3%	67 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	9 24%	15 39%	14 37%	0 0%	38 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	28 27%	38 36%	37 35%	2 2%	105 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	21 27%	37 47%	19 24%	2 3%	79 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	30 39%	34 45%	10 13%	2 3%	76 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	51 33%	71 46%	29 19%	4 3%	155 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	79 30%	109 42%	66 25%	6 2%	260 100%
Total	132 29%	203 44%	105 23%	17 4%	457 100%

Professional aspirations

<i>"I often think about what I will do after secondary education"</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
MB students					
5 th grade, GSE	3 6%	8 15%	21 40%	20 38%	52 100%
6 th grade, GSE	1 2%	3 7%	14 33%	24 55%	42 100%
GSE total	4 4%	11 12%	35 37%	44 47%	94 100%
5 th grade, TSE	5 12%	5 12%	15 36%	17 40%	42 100%
6 th grade, TSE	4 6%	17 24%	25 35%	25 35%	71 100%
TSE total	9 8%	22 19%	40 35%	42 37%	113 100%
Total (MB students)	13 6%	33 16%	75 36%	86 42%	207 100%
Non-MB students					
5 th grade, GSE	6 9%	8 12%	32 47%	22 32%	68 100%
6 th grade, GSE	0 0%	2 5%	19 45%	21 50%	42 100%
GSE total	6 6%	10 9%	51 46%	43 39%	110 100%
5 th grade, TSE	8 10%	24 29%	37 45%	13 16%	82 100%
6 th grade, TSE	3 4%	11 14%	33 41%	33 41%	80 100%
TSE total	11 7%	35 22%	70 43%	46 28%	162 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	17 6%	45 14%	121 44%	89 33%	272 100%
Total	30 6%	78 16%	196 41%	175 37%	479 100%

<i>"I find it important to choose a job that I like"</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
MB students					
5 th grade, GSE	1 2%	0 0%	15 29%	36 69%	52 100%
6 th grade, GSE	1 2%	2 5%	7 17%	31 76%	41 100%
GSE total	2 2%	2 2%	22 24%	67 72%	93 100%
5 th grade, TSE	1 2%	0 0%	10 24%	31 74%	42 100%
6 th grade, TSE	0 0%	1 1%	16 23%	54 67%	71 100%
TSE total	1 1%	1 1%	26 23%	85 76%	112 100%
Total (MB students)	3 1%	3 1%	48 23%	152 74%	206 100%
Non-MB students					
5 th grade, GSE	1 1%	0 0%	8 12%	59 87%	68 100%
6 th grade, GSE	0 0%	0 0%	7 17%	35 85%	42 100%
GSE total	1 1%	0 0%	15 14%	94 85%	110 100%
5 th grade, TSE	0 0%	2 2%	21 26%	59 72%	82 100%
6 th grade, TSE	0 0%	0 0%	11 14%	69 86%	80 100%
TSE total	0 0%	2 1%	32 20%	128 79%	162 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	1 0%	2 1%	47 17%	222 82%	272 100%
Total	4 1%	5 1%	95 20%	374 78%	478 100%

<i>“My parents find it important for me to like my future job”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	1 2%	3 6%	21 41%	26 51%	51 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	3 7%	2 5%	17 41%	19 46%	41 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	4 4%	5 5%	38 41%	45 49%	92 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	1 2%	4 10%	19 45%	18 43%	42 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	0 0%	7 10%	27 38%	37 52%	71 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	1 1%	11 10%	46 41%	55 49%	113 100%
Total (MB students)	5 2%	16 8%	84 41%	100 49%	205 100%
Non-MB students					
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	2 3%	2 3%	17 25%	47 69%	68 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	0 0%	0 0%	9 21%	33 79%	42 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	2 2%	2 2%	26 24%	80 72%	110 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	1 1%	4 5%	25 31%	51 63%	81 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	1 1%	2 3%	17 21%	60 75%	80 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	2 1%	6 4%	42 26%	111 69%	161 100%
Total (Non-MB students)	4 1%	8 3%	68 25%	191 70%	271 100%
Total	9 2%	24 5%	152 32%	291 61%	476 100%

Impactful professions

<i>“By becoming a DOCTOR or NURSE, I can improve the lives of those in my community”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	2 8%	5 19%	11 42%	8 31%	26 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	3 13%	6 25%	8 33%	7 29%	24 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	5 10%	11 22%	19 38%	15 30%	50 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	1 4%	2 8%	9 36%	13 52%	25 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	1 2%	10 20%	18 37%	20 41%	49 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	2 3%	12 16%	27 36%	33 45%	74 100%
Total (MB students)	7 6%	23 17%	46 37%	48 39%	124 100%
Score	-14	-23	46	96	105

<i>“By becoming a PSHYCHOLOGIST, I can improve the lives of those in my community”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	2 8%	7 27%	10 38%	7 27%	26 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	1 4%	6 25%	10 42%	7 29%	24 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	3 6%	13 26%	20 40%	14 28%	50 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	0 0%	6 24%	11 44%	8 32%	25 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	2 4%	12 24%	21 43%	14 29%	49 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	2 3%	18 24%	32 43%	22 30%	74 100%
Total (MB students)	5 4%	31 25%	52 42%	36 29%	124 100%
Score	-10	-31	52	72	83

<i>“By becoming a LAWYER, I can improve the lives of those in my community”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	1 4%	6 23%	13 62%	6 23%	26 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	2 8%	6 25%	10 42%	6 25%	24 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	3 6%	12 24%	23 46%	12 24%	50 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	4 16%	4 16%	9 36%	8 32%	25 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	3 6%	10 20%	22 45%	14 29%	49 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	7 9%	14 19%	31 42%	22 30%	74 100%
<i>Total (MB students)</i>	10 8%	26 21%	54 44%	34 27%	124 100%
<i>Score</i>	-20	-26	54	68	76

<i>“By becoming a TEACHER, I can improve the lives of those in my community”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	3 12%	5 19%	11 42%	7 27%	26 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	3 13%	7 29%	12 50%	2 8%	24 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	6 12%	12 24%	23 46%	9 18%	50 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	2 8%	5 20%	11 44%	7 28%	25 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	2 4%	8 16%	28 57%	11 22%	49 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	4 5%	13 18%	39 53%	18 24%	74 100%
<i>Total (MB students)</i>	10 8%	25 20%	62 50%	27 22%	124 100%
<i>Score</i>	-20	-25	62	54	71

<i>“By becoming a SOCIAL WORKER, I can improve the lives of those in my community”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	1 4%	7 27%	11 42%	7 27%	26 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	1 4%	7 29%	12 50%	4 17%	24 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	2 4%	14 28%	23 46%	11 22%	50 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	3 12%	7 28%	8 32%	7 28%	25 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	2 4%	13 27%	22 45%	12 24%	49 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	5 7%	20 27%	30 41%	19 26%	74 100%
Total (MB students)	7 6%	34 27%	53 43%	30 24%	124 100%
Score	-14	-34	53	60	65

<i>“By becoming a POLITICIAN, I can improve the lives of those in my community”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	1 4%	7 27%	13 50%	5 19%	26 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	1 4%	11 46%	10 42%	2 8%	24 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	2 4%	18 36%	23 46%	7 14%	50 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	2 8%	5 20%	10 40%	8 32%	25 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	1 2%	15 31%	25 51%	8 16%	49 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	3 4%	20 27%	35 47%	16 22%	74 100%
Total (MB students)	5 4%	38 31%	58 47%	23 19%	124 100%
Score	-10	-38	58	46	56

<i>“By becoming a POLICE OFFICER, I can improve the lives of those in my community”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	2 8%	8 31%	12 46%	4 15%	26 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	3 13%	5 21%	13 54%	3 13%	24 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	5 10%	13 26%	25 50%	7 14%	50 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	4 16%	2 8%	11 44%	8 32%	25 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	4 8%	19 39%	15 31%	11 22%	49 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	8 11%	21 28%	26 35%	19 26%	74 100%
Total (MB students)	13 10%	34 27%	51 41%	26 21%	124 100%
Score	-26	-34	51	52	43

<i>“By becoming an ENTREPRENEUR, I can improve the lives of those in my community”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	2 8%	9 35%	12 46%	3 12%	26 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	2 8%	13 54%	6 25%	3 13%	24 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	4 8%	22 44%	18 36%	6 12%	50 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	2 8%	7 28%	11 44%	5 20%	25 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	0 0%	18 37%	21 43%	10 20%	49 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	2 3%	25 34%	32 43%	15 20%	74 100%
Total (MB students)	6 5%	47 38%	50 40%	21 17%	124 100%
Score	-12	-47	50	42	33

<i>“By becoming a CRAFTS(WO)MAN, I can improve the lives of those in my community”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	5 19%	11 42%	9 35%	1 4%	26 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	2 8%	12 50%	7 29%	3 13%	24 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	7 14%	23 46%	16 32%	4 8%	50 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	3 12%	12 48%	7 28%	3 12%	25 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	7 14%	24 49%	12 24%	6 12%	49 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	10 14%	36 49%	19 26%	9 12%	74 100%
Total (MB students)	17 14%	59 48%	35 28%	13 10%	124 100%
Score	-34	-59	35	26	-32

<i>“By becoming a SHOP ASSISTANT, I can improve the lives of those in my community”</i>	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree	Total
<i>5th grade, GSE</i>	4 15%	14 54%	7 27%	1 4%	26 100%
<i>6th grade, GSE</i>	6 25%	12 50%	5 21%	1 4%	24 100%
<i>GSE total</i>	10 20%	26 52%	12 24%	2 4%	50 100%
<i>5th grade, TSE</i>	8 32%	12 48%	5 20%	0 0%	25 100%
<i>6th grade, TSE</i>	8 17%	30 63%	7 15%	3 6%	48 100%
<i>TSE total</i>	16 22%	42 58%	12 16%	3 4%	73 100%
Total (MB students)	26 21%	68 55%	24 20%	5 4%	123 100%
Score	-52	-68	12	6	-102

Survey questions

Dutch question (original) <i>English translation</i>	Answer type
In welk studiejaar zit je? <i>What grade are you in?</i>	Multiple choice (exclusive)
Wat is de postcode van het adres van je school? <i>What is your school's ZIP code?</i>	Open ended
Heb jij een migratieachtergrond? Er zijn meerdere antwoorden mogelijk. <i>Do you have a migration background? Multiple answers are possible.</i>	Multiple choice (inclusive)
In welke landen (buiten België) liggen jouw roots? <i>In which countries (apart from Belgium) do you have roots?</i>	Open ended
Wat is het hoogste diploma dat je vader op school behaalde? <i>What is the highest educational degree your father received?</i>	Multiple choice (exclusive)
Wat is het hoogste diploma dat je moeder op school behaalde? <i>What is the highest educational degree your mother received?</i>	Multiple choice (exclusive)
Ik zie mezelf als Belg. <i>I consider myself a 'Belgian'.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Ik zie mezelf als iemand uit een ander land. Bijvoorbeeld: Turkse Belg. <i>I consider myself 'someone from another country'. For example: Turkish Belgian.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Ik voel mij extra verbonden met personen in België die dezelfde roots hebben als ik. <i>I feel extra connected to people in Belgium who have the same roots as I have.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Ik maak deel uit van een gemeenschap van mensen met dezelfde roots als ik. <i>I am part of a community of people who share my roots.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
De mensen in mijn gemeenschap hebben een goed leven in België. <i>The people in my community have a good life in Belgium.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
De mensen in mijn gemeenschap worden goed behandeld door België (door onderwijs, politie, recht, sociale zekerheid, zorg). <i>The people in my community are being treated well in Belgium (by education, police, law, social security, healthcare).</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Ik kan een invloed hebben op het welzijn van de mensen in mijn gemeenschap. <i>I can have an impact on the well-being of the people in my community.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Ik ben veel bezig met wat ik na mijn secundaire school wil gaan doen. <i>I spend a lot of time thinking about what I will do after secondary education.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Ik vind het belangrijk om een job te kiezen die ik leuk vind. <i>I find it important to choose a job that I like.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Ik vind het belangrijk om een job te kiezen met veel aanzien. <i>I find it important to choose a job that is regarded as prestigious.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)

Ik vind het belangrijk om een job te kiezen waarmee ik mensen kan helpen. <i>I think it's important to choose a job that allows me to help people.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Ik vind het belangrijk om een job te kiezen waarmee ik vooral de mensen uit mijn gemeenschap kan helpen. <i>I think it's important to choose a job that allows me to help specifically the people in my community.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Ik vind het belangrijk om een job te kiezen waarmee ik veel geld verdien. <i>I think it's important to choose a job that makes me a lot of money.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Mijn ouders vinden het belangrijk dat ik een job kies die ik leuk vind. <i>My parents think it's important that I choose a job that I enjoy.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Mijn ouders vinden het belangrijk dat ik een job kies met aanzien. <i>My parents think it is important that I choose a job with prestige.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Door zakenman of -vrouw te worden kan ik de mensen uit mijn gemeenschap een beter leven geven. <i>By becoming a businessman or -woman, I can give the people of my community a better life.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Door politicus te worden kan ik de mensen uit mijn gemeenschap een beter leven geven. <i>By becoming a politician, I can give the people of my community a better life.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Door winkelmedewerker te worden kan ik de mensen uit mijn gemeenschap een beter leven geven. <i>By becoming a shop assistant, I can give the people of my community a better life.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Door politieagent te worden kan ik de mensen uit mijn gemeenschap een beter leven geven. <i>By becoming a police officer, I can give the people of my community a better life.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Door advocaat te worden kan ik de mensen uit mijn gemeenschap een beter leven geven. <i>By becoming a lawyer, I can give the people of my community a better life.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Door dokter of verpleger te worden kan ik de mensen uit mijn gemeenschap een beter leven geven. <i>By becoming a doctor or nurse, I can give the people of my community a better life.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Door leraar te worden kan ik de mensen uit mijn gemeenschap een beter leven geven. <i>By becoming a teacher, I can give the people of my community a better life.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Door psycholoog te worden kan ik de mensen uit mijn gemeenschap een beter leven geven. <i>By becoming a psychologist, I can give the people of my community a better life.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Door vakman of -vrouw te worden kan ik de mensen uit mijn gemeenschap een beter leven geven. <i>By becoming a crafts(wo)man, I can give the people of my community a better life.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)

Door sociaal werker te worden kan ik de mensen uit mijn gemeenschap een beter leven geven. <i>By becoming a social worker, I can give the people of my community a better life.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
In mijn school zijn er veel leerlingen met een migratieachtergrond. <i>In my school, there are many students from immigrant backgrounds.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
In mijn school zijn er veel leraren met een migratieachtergrond. <i>In my school, there are many teachers from immigrant backgrounds.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
De leraren op mijn school hebben ongeveer dezelfde culturele achtergrond als de leerlingen. <i>The teachers at my school have roughly the same cultural background as the students.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
De leraren in heel Vlaanderen hebben ongeveer dezelfde culturele achtergrond als de leerlingen in Vlaanderen. <i>The teachers in all of Flanders have roughly the same cultural background as the students.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
De leraren op mijn school kennen en begrijpen mijn leefwereld. <i>The teachers at my school know and understand my world.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Leerlingen met een migratieachtergrond halen gemiddeld genomen slechtere cijfers op school dan leerlingen zonder migratieachtergrond. <i>Students with a migrant background, on average, get worse grades in school than students without a migrant background.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Leerlingen met een migratieachtergrond zijn gemiddeld minder gemotiveerd om goed te presteren op school dan leerlingen zonder migratieachtergrond. <i>Students with a migrant background are, on average, less motivated to perform well in school than students without a migrant background.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Leerlingen zonder migratieachtergrond hebben het doorgaans gemakkelijker op school. <i>Students without a migrant background generally have an easier time in school.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Leerlingen zonder migratieachtergrond hebben doorgaans een gemakkelijker leven. <i>Students without a migrant background generally have an easier life.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
De lessen, toetsen en examens zijn beter afgestemd op leerlingen zonder migratieachtergrond. <i>Lessons, tests and exams are better tailored to students without a migration background.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Ik wil zelf ooit leraar worden. <i>I want to become a teacher one day.</i>	Likert-scale (4 point)
Duid de redenen aan waarom leraar worden niets voor jou is. Er zijn meerdere opties mogelijk. <i>Indicate the reasons why becoming a teacher is not for you. Several options are possible.</i>	Multiple choice (inclusive)
Duid de redenen aan waarom leraar worden wél iets voor jou zou kunnen zijn. Er zijn meerdere opties mogelijk.	Multiple choice (inclusive)

*Indicate the reasons why becoming a teacher might be right for you.
Several options are available.*

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