The Grandchildren of Immigrants in Western Europe: Patterns of Assimilation Among the Emerging Third Generation

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ABSTRACT Migration scholars have long regarded the trajectory of the third generation as a critical test of assimilation; however, scholarship to date has been limited and largely focused on socioeconomic attainment. In this article, we rely on a large dataset of adolescent respondents in England, Germany, and the Netherlands to compare the second and third generations in terms of their social networks and cultural identities. The third generation shows stronger ties to the native fourth-plus generation alongside weaker ties to coethnics. We document comparable, albeit more moderate, dynamics of assimilation over generations in regard to national and ethnic identification, along with substantial variation by country of destination and ethnic origin group. Our results point to a dominant trend of assimilation at the third generation and suggest future challenges to provide a more durable assessment of postwar migration waves two generations after settlement.

KEYWORDS Third generation • Western Europe • Assimilation • Immigration • Ethnic boundaries

Introduction

The period of sustained economic growth following World War II and its associated reconstruction efforts led many Western European governments to admit large numbers of foreign workers from countries with whom they had colonial ties or bilateral agreements. These workers and their families—who joined them in the 1970s following family reunification policies—soon became permanent immigrant minorities in Europe. The coming of age of their children—the second generation—led to unprecedented demographic change among European nation-states that, by and large, and except for France and the United Kingdom, had not experienced a large influx of migrants from outside Europe. We now stand at a critical juncture at which the third generation—the grandchildren of immigrants—is emerging, and with them, the potential to establish a durable assessment of Western European countries' successful incorporation of the migration waves of the postwar era. Are we witnessing a pattern of assimilation or persistent ethnic segmentation in the emerging third generation?

Assimilation theories have long recognized the grandchildren of immigrants as a yardstick of assimilation (Alba and Nee 2003; Gans 1992; Jiménez et al. 2018). In

recent years, and despite issues of data availability (Duncan and Trejo 2018; Tran 2018), migration scholars have started to study the socioeconomic fate of the third generation (Becker 2011; Drouhot et al. 2023; Duncan et al. 2020; Ortiz and Telles 2017; Pupaza et al. 2023; Zorlu and van Gent forthcoming); however, limited work exists on other empirical dimensions of assimilation among the third generation. Here, we conceive of assimilation in terms of generational change in the salience of ethnic boundaries, which we empirically measure using national and ethnic identification and network integration (Alba 2005; Wimmer 2008, 2013). In the absence of large-scale data on ethnic boundaries among the adult third generation, we analyze several synthetic generations of contemporaneous adolescents sampled in secondary schools in three major European countries: Germany, the Netherlands, and England. The data we use oversample immigrant-origin adolescents and provide an early look at the assimilation of the third generation. How strongly does the third generation feel they belong to their residence country and how included are they in natives' friendship networks?[1] Conversely, how strongly do they identify with their ethnic origin group and how much do they maintain friendship ties with coethnics? Answers to these questions can help us assess how memberships in the social worlds of the native country and that of the immigrant-origin groups are articulated at the third generation.

Background: Immigrants' Grandchildren as a Litmus Test of Assimilation

The Significance of the Third Generation

Assimilation is a multigenerational convergence process in terms of socioeconomic opportunities, social relations (e.g., friendship and marriage), and cultural identities (e.g., ethnic and national identification) between immigrant-origin and native populations (Drouhot and Nee 2019:178–179). Migration scholars have long regarded the fate of the third generation as a litmus test of assimilation. In the United States, this is based on the trajectories of yesteryear's European immigrants, who collectively underwent large-scale social mobility and a general decline in the significance of ethnic origins for their life chances and identities in the third generation and beyond (Alba 1985; Alba and Nee 2003; Waters 1990). The past experiences of European immigrants—and particularly, those of their grandchildren—served to produce influential, three-generation models of cultural adaptation (Fishman 1966; Gans 1979; Hansen 1938; Herberg 1955). Empirical work on the third generation was pivotal to the revision of earlier accounts of "straight-line assimilation" (e.g., Warner and Srole 1945) and to measuring either "complete" assimilation (Gordon 1964; Lieberson and Waters 1988; Shibutani and Kwan 1965) or a "bumpy-line," nonlinear pattern of adaptation between the second and third generations (Gans 1992).

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[1] By "native," we simply refer to the portion of the population without any migration background—in effect, those with parents and grandparents all born in the survey country (i.e., fourth-plus generation).

Past Empirical Studies on the Third Generation in the United States

On the basis of past (and mostly European) migration in the United States, scholars agree that we are unlikely to see the children of immigrants reach socioeconomic parity with natives within just two generations, for it was historically "only with the third . . . generation that the powerful undercurrent of assimilation came unmistakably to the surface" (Alba and Nee 2003:215). In recent years, large-scale studies relying on newly digitalized census data have put such assertions to stringent empirical tests. For instance, a recent study (Lowrey et al. 2021) indeed shows—in line with older work (Alba 1985; Neidert and Farley 1985; Perlmann 2005; Smith 2003)—that the grandchildren of immigrants had fully caught up (and even surpassed) native-born Whites in terms of educational attainment.[2] Scholars have also documented high rates of ethnically mixed marriages (Logan and Shin 2012) and English-only language among the third-generation descendants of nineteenth-century immigrant groups, in particular those of European origin (Alba et al. 2002; Alba and Nee 2003; Lopez 1982).

Assimilation patterns among the "new" second generation—the children of non-Whites, such as post-1965 migrants in the United States—have generated much research and scholarly debate (Alba et al. 2011; Alba and Foner 2015b; Alba and Nee 2003; Drouhot and Nee 2019; Haller et al. 2011; Heath et al. 2008; Portes and Zhou 1993). Similarly, in identifying the "new" third generation as "the next and most significant chapter of contemporary assimilation" (Jiménez et al. 2018:1041), U.S. scholars are now turning to study the grandchildren of immigrants who arrived from Asia, as well as Central America, following the 1965 Hart–Celler Act (Jiménez et al. 2018; Logan and Shin 2012; Smith and Brown 2019). Thus far, empirical studies of the new third generation in the United States have focused on economic attainment (Duncan et al. 2020; Orrenius and Zavodny 2019; Ortiz and Telles 2017), linguistic practices (Alba et al. 2002), and mixed descent and racial identification (Jiménez et al. 2018). This scholarship has been limited by significant issues of data quality and availability—in particular, missing information on grandparental place of birth in most publicly available data (Duncan and Trejo 2018; Tran 2018). Beyond the American case, an interest in the emerging third generation can also be seen in recent research on Australia (e.g., Forrest and Kusek 2016; Johnston et al. 2015) and Israel (Cohen et al. 2021; Cohen et al. 2019).

The Third Generation in Contemporary Western Europe

In Western Europe, migration scholars have recently started to study the grandchildren of immigrants. The contemporary third generation reflects the heritage of older migratory movements from neighboring European countries starting in the late nineteenth century and linked to the labor needs of industrializing economies; the Polish in Germany, the Irish in England, or the Italians in France are typical in this

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[2] However, see Borjas (1994), Carliner (1980), Livingston and Kahn (2002), and Ward (2020) for studies of occupational and income attainment suggesting slower intergenerational progress, and Telles and Ortiz (2008) for a study of third-generation educational disadvantage among Mexican Americans.

regard (Lucassen et al. 2006; Moch 2003; Noiriel 1996). However, the contemporary third generation also includes populations originating from outside Europe (e.g., the Moroccans in the Netherlands, the Turks in Germany, and the Pakistani in England) and arriving to satisfy labor shortages resulting from postwar reconstruction efforts (Castles 1986; Schönwälder 2004). Although originally considered temporary workers, family reunification policies from the post-1973 period effectively turned these migrants and their families into permanent ethnic minorities, often from a markedly different ethnoracial and religious background than that of the majority populations. These populations and their descendants form "low-status" groups, concentrating stigma and disadvantage in their respective context, including at the second generation (Alba and Holdaway 2013; Drouhot and Nee 2019; Heath et al. 2008).

Research efforts to understand the fate of the third generation in Europe have largely focused on socioeconomic attainment and yielded mixed findings across countries, thus far. In Germany, third-generation youth appear to be on a path of socioeconomic assimilation, whereby gaps with natives are either nonexistent or entirely explained by family socioeconomic background (Becker 2011; Hunkler and Schotte 2023). In the Netherlands, Zorlu and van Gent (forthcoming) used registry data to document a similar pattern of relative parity. By contrast, in Sweden (Ekberg et al. 2010; Hunkler and Schotte 2023; Pupaza et al. 2023) and France (Drouhot et al. 2023; Vallot 2016), scholars have documented patterns of relative stagnation at the third generation in terms of educational and labor market outcomes. Thus, it appears that patterns of socioeconomic attainment at the third generation are country and outcome specific.

Ethnic Boundaries Among the Grandchildren of Immigrants: Networks and Identities

Despite these recent studies, knowledge on *relational* (e.g., friendship networks) and *cultural* (e.g., identities and belonging) dimensions of assimilation among the third generation in Western Europe remains lacking. Mixedness in social networks and the harmonious articulation of ethnic and national identities among immigrant descendants arguably capture the endpoint of assimilation, "whereby individuals' ethnic origins become [decreasingly] relevant to members of other ethnic groups (typically . . . the majority group), and individuals on both sides of the boundary see themselves increasingly as alike (Alba and Nee 2003:11). In line with most empirical research to date on the third generation, neo-assimilation theory heavily focuses on immigrant socioeconomic attainment—the "siren call to assimilation" (Alba and Nee 2003:67)—and assumes that assimilation on relational and cultural dimensions follows from it (Gans 2007); however, recent work has problematized these assumptions (Drouhot forthcoming; Schachter 2016). Furthermore, missing research on networks and identities at the third generation is regrettable given that literature on the second generation remains ambiguous on the intensity of network segregation (Leszczensky and Pink 2019; Smith et al. 2016) and on feelings of being a part of the "mainstream" (Alba and Foner 2015b; Alba and Nee 2003; Drouhot and Nee 2019:191; Leszczensky and Pink 2019). In this article, we wish to exploit the adjudicative potential of the third generation to formulate an early, cross-country diagnosis of assimilation in terms of networks and identities.

Among migration scholars, ethnic boundaries have become a familiar and practical way to think about how immigrants progressively gain membership in the destination society (Alba 2005; Drouhot and Nee 2019; Schachter 2016; Wimmer 2013; Zolberg and Woon 1999). At the individual level, an ethnic boundary is a subjectively felt, categorical distinction between "us" and "them" based on ethnicity (Wimmer 2013:7–10). In turn, the nature of ethnic boundaries is inherently social and depends on how such categorical distinctions map onto larger patterns of intergroup inequality and relational segregation—for instance, in terms of marital unions and friendships (Wimmer 2013). Strong or intergenerationally stable ethnic boundaries—whereby ethnic origins continue to shape networks and identities among later immigrant generations—signal limited assimilation. Hence, our approach directly builds on Alba and Nee's (2003:11) definition of assimilation as the "decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social differences."

Empirically, we regard intergenerational differences in network and identities as crucial yardsticks to measure assimilation and the decreasing salience of ethnic boundaries (Drouhot and Nee 2019:178–179; Kroneberg et al. 2021; Kruse and Kroneberg 2019; Leszczensky and Pink 2019; Wimmer 2008, 2013). Strong ethnic boundaries (i.e., "social boundaries"; Lamont and Molnár 2002:168) crystallize at the nexus of identities and networks: "a boundary displays both a categorical and a social or behavioral dimension. The former refers to acts of social classification . . . the latter to everyday networks of relationships" (Wimmer 2008:975). In other words, the strength of ethnic boundaries is predicated on both social relations and identities.

At present, it is difficult to study networks and identities among adult members of the new third generation in Western Europe because of a lack of suitable data. We therefore focus on ethnic boundaries among adolescents growing up in three European countries. Adolescents growing up in these multiethnic contexts are of interest because they are at a life stage where social relations and identities are still crystallizing. They may have plentiful opportunities for forming interethnic ties (e.g., at school) and developing a sense of belonging, but may not do so if ethnic boundaries remain strong (Zhao 2023). Conversely, their ability to form friendships across ethnic differences may be hampered by urban segregation and sorting into schools (Kruse et al. 2016; Mouw and Entwisle 2006). Our study builds on a recent but lively research tradition in Europe of sampling adolescents within ethnically diverse schools (Kalter et al. 2018; Kruse and Kroneberg 2019; Leszczensky and Pink 2019; Smith et al. 2016)—arguably a crucial institutional setting to produce social cohesion across ethnic differences.

Ethnic Boundaries at the Third Generation: Blurry or Bright?

We can derive two contrasting sets of expectations for ethnic boundaries among the grandchildren of immigrants in Western Europe. We could first expect an intergenerational dynamic of assimilation in which ethnic boundaries between the third generation and natives are "blurrier" than those between the second generation and natives. Here, minority individuals can be part of different social worlds—that of the mainstream and that of their immigrant origin group—and simultaneously identify as members of a minority, as well as the mainstream. In other words, when ethnic

boundaries are blurry, identities and networks on either side of it are *non-zero-sum* (Alba 2005:25). A key ingredient of blurry boundaries is mixed unions: intermarriage at the second generation should result in mixed networks and identities at the next generation who grow up bridging differences between the immigrant and native social worlds (Alba et al. 2017; Alba and Foner 2015b).

Conversely, we may expect "bright" ethnic boundaries at the third generation, in which networks and identities on each side are difficult to reconcile. Under bright boundaries, the distinction between minority and majority groups is unambiguous and zero-sum. This implies that assimilation is costly for minority individuals and is likely to take the form of boundary crossing—that is, resembling a conversion and entailing "growing distance from peers, feelings of disloyalty, and anxieties about acceptance" (Alba 2005:24). By and large, bright ethnic boundaries at the third generation are the scenario expected within the "segmented assimilation" framework (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou and Gonzales 2019), whereby racial barriers channel immigrant families toward ethnically segregated social relations, at times even leading to a reaction of heightened awareness of and attachment to one's ethnic origins (Rumbaut 2008). Such ethnic attachment occurs to the detriment of identification with the nation and its majority group, which may be perceived as hostile (Rumbaut 2008:110). More generally, when ethnic boundaries are bright, we may expect sharply defined identities and ethnically segregated social networks.

In practice, we expect the third generation will experience ethnic boundaries that are neither completely bright nor blurry. Furthermore, ethnic boundaries among the descendants of immigrants are not one-size-fits-all; different groups may experience a different type of boundary. This heterogeneity was already prominent in Alba's (2005) account of ethnic boundaries for the second generation in Western Europe. It is also paramount to the segmented assimilation perspective, which emphasizes different assimilation trajectories depending on the degree of racialization and exclusion different groups are subject to. In Western European contexts, we may expect that "low-status" groups (because of their stigmatized ethnic, racial, or religious origins, and typically originating outside Europe) tend to face brighter boundaries than European immigrant groups from Southern and Eastern Europe (Alba 2005; Alba and Holdaway 2013).

Research Questions

Our goal is to offer a first step toward an assessment of ethnic boundaries—as they manifest in friendship networks and cultural identities two generations after the era of settlement—among adolescents across multiple European countries. We are interested in answering the following research questions:

- *Native friendships (network inclusion):* Are members of the third generation as likely to have friendships with natives as other natives are (and does the third generation close the gap in inclusion relative to the second generation)?
- *National identification:* Do members of the third generation identify as strongly with their country of residence as the native population (and does the third generation close the gap in identification relative to the second generation)?

We are simultaneously interested in whether any increases in inclusion within native networks and increases in national identity occur without the loss of ethnic networks and identity or, alternatively, whether inclusion in native networks occurs simultaneously with weakening connections to the ethnic origin group. When the former is the case, this suggests an overall blurring of ethnic boundaries, whereas the latter suggests boundary crossing over a persistently bright boundary.

- *Coethnic friendships:* Are members of the third generation as likely to have coethnic friendships as members of the second generation?
- *Ethnic identification:* Does ethnic identification weaken among members of the third generation compared with the second generation?

Finally, we are interested in understanding whether boundaries in later generations occur consistently across ethnic origins. We differentiate between major origin groups and pay particular attention to ethnic boundaries among those deemed "low status" because of stigmatized ethnic, racial, and religious differences (Alba et al. 2011). In practice, this often means differentiating between European and non-European origin immigrant groups, although the exact groupings vary across destination contexts.

Data, Measurements, and Modeling Approach

The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey

Our analysis uses the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey of Four European Countries, or CILS4EU (Kalter et al. 2016), which began in the 2010–2011 school year, during which researchers conducted stratified random sampling of schools by geographic region, school type, and school size and oversampled pupils with a migration background. Within selected schools, researchers randomly selected two classrooms of 14-year-old students and surveyed all students within these classrooms. The overall response rate among students was approximately 85%.

The CILS4EU survey was designed to study immigrant-origin youth in four European countries (Germany, the Netherlands, England, and Sweden). Its oversampling of schools with many immigrant-origin students ensures sufficient variation across immigrant backgrounds and generations. The extent of its coverage and the quality of its instruments make the CILS4EU one of the foremost data sources on the descendants of immigrants. We focus on the German, Dutch, and English samples (and exclude the Swedish sample because of small numbers in later generations).[3] We study all native respondents (i.e., those with no discernible migration history) and all second- and third-generation immigrant respondents whose origins can be traced to the major ethnic groups in each survey country (described in Table 1). This includes 1,811, 935, and 885 immigrant-origin respondents in the German, Dutch, and English samples, respectively, as well as 2,111, 2,539, and 1,966 fourth-plus native respondents, respectively.

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[3] Note that the data on the United Kingdom that we use is restricted to England, and the data on Germany excludes Bavaria (for detail on CILS4EU fieldwork and study design, see Kalter et al. 2016).

Table 1 Definition and descriptions of immigrant generations

	Second Generation	Mixed Second Generation	Third Generation	Fourth-Plus Generation
Definition				
Number of foreign-born parents	2	1	0	0
Number of foreign-born grandparents	4	2–4	1–4	0
Germany				
N	1,018	437	356	2,111
Percentage of immigrants	56	24	20	
Weighted percentage	41	26	33	
Ethnic origin (*N*)				
Turkey	588	143	28	
Russia/Poland	183	71	112	
Other Europe	247	223	216	
Netherlands				
N	532	227	176	2,539
Percentage of immigrants	57	24	19	
Weighted percentage	32	37	31	
Ethnic origin (*N*)				
Suriname	99	42	62	
Turkey/Morocco	398	63	31	
Other Europe	35	122	83	
England				
N	279	349	257	1,966
Percentage of immigrants	32	39	29	
Weighted percentage	22	45	33	
Ethnic origin (*N*)				
India/Pakistan	229	192	72	
Jamaica	21	44	55	
Other Europe	29	113	130	

*Notes: N*s are unweighted. Frequencies show the representation of each generation within the immigrant subsample. Weighted frequencies account for survey design and nonresponse.

Measurement of Immigrant Generation and Ethnic Origins

The primary purpose of our analyses is to compare assimilation dynamics among the grandchildren of immigrants (third generation) with those of the children of immigrants (second generation), on the one hand, and with those without a migration background, on the other. The children of immigrants are born in their country of residence but have at least one foreign-born parent. The grandchildren of immigrants are not only born in their country of residence but also have at least one second-generation parent and at least one foreign-born grandparent.

We separately analyze students who have both native and immigrant-origin parentage (Emonds and van Tubergen 2015). The mixed second generation has one foreign-born parent and one native-born parent; the native-born parent may be a child of an immigrant (Dollmann et al. 2014), although we do not further distinguish among these categories within the mixed second generation for reasons of statistical power. This group comprises approximately a quarter of the immigrant-origin sample and straddles the line between the children and the grandchildren of immigrants;

however, their experiences may be distinct from both and, thus, we regard them as categorically distinct. Importantly, we cannot separately consider the mixed and unmixed third generation because of data limitations (i.e., small numbers among the unmixed third generation). Among the third generation across our three study countries, 14% have four foreign-born grandparents, 4% have three, 26% have two, and 56% have just one (unweighted frequencies).[4]

Table 1 provides definitions of each generation and describes the sample using weighted and unweighted numbers of respondents in each generation.[5]

To define ethnic background among immigrant-origin students, we use ancestral country of birth. Most cases were unambiguous (for more than 89%, 92%, and 90% of immigrant-origin respondents in the German, Dutch, and English samples, respectively, all nonnative ancestors of respondents shared the same ancestral country of birth).[6] Thus, we follow the convention of prioritizing maternal country of birth in defining a respondent's background (Dollmann et al. 2014).[7] Importantly, most immigrants with nonnative ancestors of different origins (mixed-minority origins) were members of the second generation; later generations are predominantly of mixed-generational status rather than of mixed-minority origins. This aspect motivates our empirical approach to mixedness.

Overall, we treat each country of origin as a separate ethnic group whenever possible but combine some ethnic groups because of smaller sample sizes. In Germany, the largest ethnic categories were Turkish and Russian/Polish; in the Netherlands, Turkish/Moroccan and Surinamese; and in England, Indian/Pakistani and Jamaican. We compare the generational patterns of "low-status" non-European origin groups with those of European origins, who serve as a reference category.[8] Table 1 summarizes the number of respondents that fall into each generation for each ethnic group.

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[4] We do not separate the third generation on the basis of number of immigrant grandparents because of small sample sizes, especially for analyses that also differentiate by ethnicity. This implies that any cross-national differences we observe could be from differences in intermarriage among the grandparents of the third generation (mixedness). In the Netherlands (and Germany, to some extent), most third-generation respondents have just 1–2 immigrant grandparents, while in England, most have 3–4. Sensitivity analyses that removed those with just one immigrant grandparent led to substantively similar results with one exception: in the Netherlands, it led to stronger coethnic friendships and ethnic identities (without changes to ties to natives and national identities), suggesting that in the Dutch case, the experiences of boundary crossing (as seen in the main analyses) versus boundary blurring at the third generation depends on mixedness among their grandparents.

[5] Survey weights at the student level account for nonresponse and differential probability of being sampled. All regression analyses use survey weights. Results were insensitive to the choice of whether to weight.

[6] Mixed-minority respondents were rather uncommon among groups designated as ethnically Jamaican in England, Turkish in Germany, and Turkish/Moroccan in the Netherlands (3–4%). To address whether results are driven by the intersection of generational and dual-minority mixedness, we conduct sensitivity tests that flag mixed-minority students in adjusted models. Results were substantively similar.

[7] When a second- or third-generation respondent's ancestry involves multiple immigrant origins, maternal country of birth defines ethnic background. For example, a third-generation respondent who has two German grandfathers, a Turkish maternal grandmother, and a Russian paternal grandmother would be coded as Turkish origin (however, such cases of mixed-minority ethnic origin were rare).

[8] A limitation of aggregation is that the exact composition of this European immigrant category may differ across generations. In Germany, this group consists primarily of immigrants from the former Yugoslavia in the second generation, and from Italy and other parts of Southern or Eastern Europe in later generations; however, in England and the Netherlands, the dominant subcategory of European immigrants is of Irish and German descent, respectively, and this holds across immigrant generations.

Measurement of Ethnic Boundaries and Assimilation Outcomes

To study ethnic boundaries in social networks, we analyze acceptance in the social networks of natives. The CILS4EU is commonly used to study segregation in classroom friendships between natives and immigrants (Kruse and Kroneberg 2019; Smith et al. 2016) but has not yet been used to address whether and to what extent the native population shares ties with the third generation. To do so, we use the friendship module in which respondents are asked to nominate up to five best friends[9] and then to select their friends' ethnic or racial background from a list of the most common ethnic or racial categories (in the Netherlands, this included the Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Antillean, and Dutch categories; in Germany, Turkish, Russian, Polish, Italian, and German; and in England, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, and White British).

First, we analyze whether respondents list at least one "native" as a best friend. Natives are members of the ethnic majority (e.g., those with fully Dutch ancestry in the Netherlands). Second, we analyze whether respondents list at least one coethnic best friend. Note that although we present combined results from some ethnic categories (e.g., Turkish and Moroccan), this does not have to do with whether a friendship is considered coethnic. Coethnic students share a *specific* country of origin for the Dutch and German context (e.g., a Turkish–Moroccan friendship is *not* considered coethnic in the Netherlands). In the English context, however, a Pakistani–Indian friendship is considered coethnic, as they would be classified as Asian British in the data on coethnic friendships in England.[10]

To study ethnic boundaries in terms of cultural identities, we analyze the subjective experience of national and ethnic identification among the immigrant-origin students. National and ethnic identifications were measured using responses to the questions "How strongly do you feel [survey country member]?"[11] and "How strongly do you feel that you belong to this [ethnic] group," respectively.[12] The range of responses for both questions was "very strongly," "fairly strongly," "not very strongly," and "not at all strongly," which we transform to a four-point scale.

Analytic Strategy

Our analyses aim to take stock of the dynamics of intergenerational assimilation across two main domains (networks and identities) and among multiple ethnic groups

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[9] Best friend nominations are not limited to classmates, which allows us to create comparable measures of ties to natives and to coethnics (we cannot use the classroom friendships to study coethnic ties because immigrants were often the only individual of their ethnicity in their classroom). In sensitivity analyses, we use the classroom friendship module to analyze network inclusion via incoming ties from natives. Here, the gap in network inclusion at the second and third generations remains robust, although there were some differences in the results for the mixed second generation (see Figure A1, online appendix), where standard errors were larger in the models that also differentiate by ethnic origins (Figure A2).

[10] Ethnic and racial categories in questionnaires were determined by the survey teams for the respective countries (e.g., the "Asian British" category is part of the questionnaire for England).

[11] German in the German survey, Dutch in the Dutch survey, and British in the English survey.

[12] Respondents were first asked to tick all items they identified with (e.g., Morocco, Jamaica, Pakistan, Turkey etc.). If multiple items were checked, subsequent questions on ethnic identification refer to respondents' strongest ethnic identity.

and residence countries. Within each residence country, we first separately predict each outcome, using logistic regression to model outcomes that are binary (network outcomes) and using ordinary least-squares (OLS) regression to model outcomes that are on a continuous scale (identification outcomes).[13] In most of the analyses, we use the full analytic sample. In the analyses of coethnic networks, we use only major immigrant groups for which coethnic best friendships were measured.[14] All analyses use survey weights at the student level that account for nonresponse and differential probability of being sampled, although results were not sensitive to the choice of whether to weight.

We structure our empirical analyses by comparing two categorical distinctions to examine variation in ethnic boundaries in our population of interest—generational differences and ethnic origin differences. Thus, in the first set of the analyses, the main covariate is generational status (which differentiates between the second, mixed second, third, and fourth-plus generations) to examine generational differences expected under assimilation theory. In a second set of analyses, we pay close attention to segmentation by ethnic origins (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou and Gonzales 2019) to describe potential exceptions to broad generational patterns. This is useful because some ethnic groups may be overrepresented among some generations, and especially among the mixed generations (Kalmijn and van Tubergen 2006; Kulu and Hannemann 2018). To do so, we define a separate category for each combination of ethnic origin and immigrant generation to allow the possibility of different generational patterns across ethnic groups.

Across our analyses of friendship ties and identification patterns, we specify a baseline unadjusted model and an adjusted model. Diversity and segregation in friendship ties and identification patterns are both affected by sociodemographic factors, such as parental socioeconomic status and related patterns of spatial segregation shaping opportunities for friendship (Kruse et al. 2016; Mouw and Entwisle 2006) and religious affiliation (Maxwell and Bleich 2014). These sociodemographic factors may themselves vary across generations and confound generational differences in our outcomes. Thus, we also control for socioeconomic status (as proxied by parental occupational status), religious affiliation,[15] and exposure to natives within classrooms and neighborhoods[16] in our adjusted model. We also control for gender in this second specification. Together, the baseline and adjusted models help describe and assess whether there is a dominant trend of assimilation over generations and degrees of parental mixedness, and whether such changes are mediated by intergenerational difference on other dimensions captured by our controls and expressed by the difference across the two specifications. We

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[13] Models that use ordinal logistic regressions led to substantively similar results (available on request).

[14] This includes the Turkish, Polish, and Russian ethnic groups in Germany; Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese in the Netherlands; and Indian, Pakistani, and Jamaican in England.

[15] We rely on a survey question that asks respondents about their religious affiliation. We distinguish between Christian, Islamic, nonreligious, and "other" religious respondents.

[16] Classroom exposure to natives is defined as the percentage of native classmates. Neighborhood exposure to natives is proxied using perceived exposure on a five-point scale. These controls are especially important in the analyses of networks given that ties are constrained by sorting and segregation across schools. Although differentiating between sorting and preferences is beyond the scope of our analyses, adjusted models nevertheless help assess generational differences in networks outcomes after introducing proxies for opportunity structure.

describe our sample, separately by country of residence and generation, with respect to all outcomes and control covariates in Table A1 (shown in the online appendix, along with all other figures and tables designated with an "A").

Our analyses revolve around several target quantities of interest (Lundberg et al. 2021) that depend on the specific outcome. For coethnic networks and ethnic identification, we are primarily interested in whether the third generation differs from the second; thus, we use the second generation as the reference category in our logistic regression models. For network inclusion and national identification, we are interested in the gap between each immigrant generation and the native fourth-plus generation, which we estimate by using natives as the reference category in OLS models.[17] In these analyses, we are further interested in whether and to what extent the coefficient for each later generation is statistically different from the coefficient for the second, which we test using a Paternoster test for coefficient equality (Paternoster et al. 1998). This tells us whether the grandchildren of immigrants are more similar to natives than are the children of immigrants. In other words, this last quantity tests for the difference between two differences—namely, second generation vis-à-vis natives and third generation vis-à-vis natives.

Results

Ethnic Boundaries in Social Networks

We first analyze the network incorporation of the third generation using ties to natives. Specifically, Figure 1 describes the predicted probabilities of naming at least one "native" (i.e., fourth-plus generation) best friend for each immigrant generation. The baseline models (solid bars) consider whether individuals are members of the second (red bar), mixed second (purple bar), third (blue bar), or native generation (gray bar). The adjusted models (dashed bars) also control for covariates, such as gender, parental socioeconomic status (SES), religion, and exposure to natives in classrooms and neighborhoods. Table A2 reports the models and regressions on which Figure 1 is based.

The base (unadjusted) models in Figure 1 show that, on average, only 72%, 68%, and 51% of second-generation German, Dutch, and English respondents, respectively, name a native best friend, while 99%, 99%, and 91% of third-generation respondents, respectively, do so; for reference, native students almost always name a native best friend. Visual inspection of the first-order differences in Figure 1 shows that despite a few distinct patterns in each country, the baseline propensity to have best friendships with natives is higher in the third generation than in the second. In fact, the propensity in the third generation more closely resembles that of the native population.

The adjusted models show that in England and the Netherlands, the generational gaps reflect compositional differences in parental SES and exposure to natives, especially proportion native in classrooms (see Table A2 for the results of the full model and tests of coefficient equality for the second and third generations). In Germany, however, the pattern of increasing network inclusion in the third generation persists

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[17] Such a comparison is not possible for the coethnic networks outcome, which is not defined for natives.
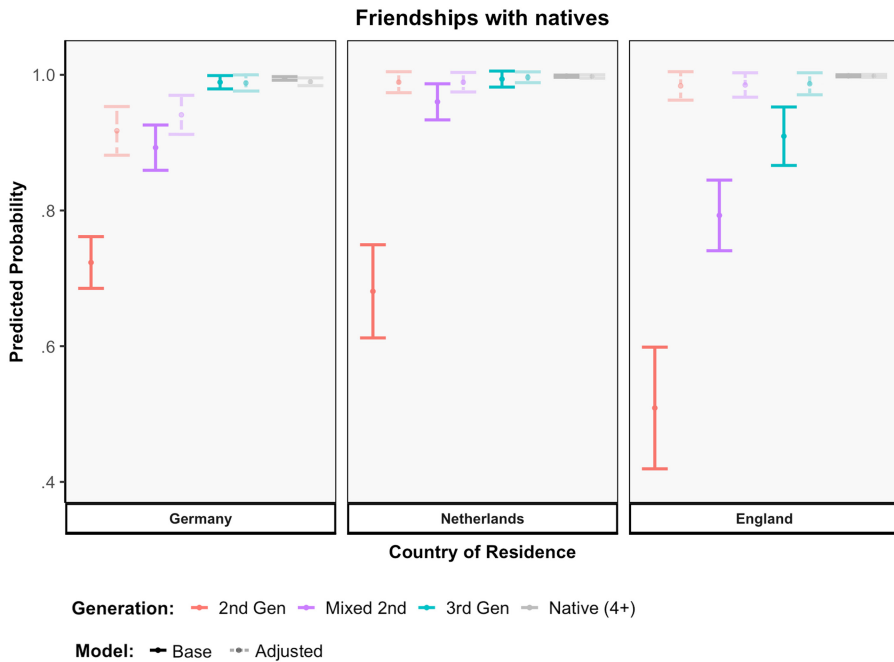
Friendships with natives

Fig. 1 Predicted probability of nominating ≥1 natives (fourth-plus generation) as best friends, by generation and country of residence. Predicted probabilities are based on estimates from separate logistic regressions for each country of residence using baseline and adjusted models reported in Table A2. Adjusted models account for parental SES, gender, religious affiliation, neighborhood, and classroom exposure to natives. Predicted probabilities from adjusted models (dashed bars) hold controls at their means or modal categories within each country. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

even after accounting for how generations differ on compositional differences and classroom exposure to natives. In the German case, the second generation is less likely than natives to hold ties to natives. In contrast, the third generation closes this gap, and the second-order difference between second- and third-generation respondents in these coefficients are statistically significant.

There are only a few exceptions to these overall trends in network inclusion when we consider differences by ethnic origin. Figure 2 summarizes predicted probabilities of nominating at least one native best friend for each combination of immigrant generation and ethnic origin (and is based on regressions in Table A3).

The results in Figure 2 show that for most ethnic groups, the third generation is significantly more likely than the second to hold native best friendships (even after adjusting for controls). For example, we observe this positive trend among those of Indian and Pakistani origin in England; among those of Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese origin in the Netherlands; and among immigrants of European origin in England and Germany.[18] Among these groups, the predicted chances of holding ties to natives in the

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[18] Note that these patterns do not hold in the case of "Other Europe" origin in the Netherlands and in England because of high levels of network inclusion already in the second generation, especially in adjusted models.
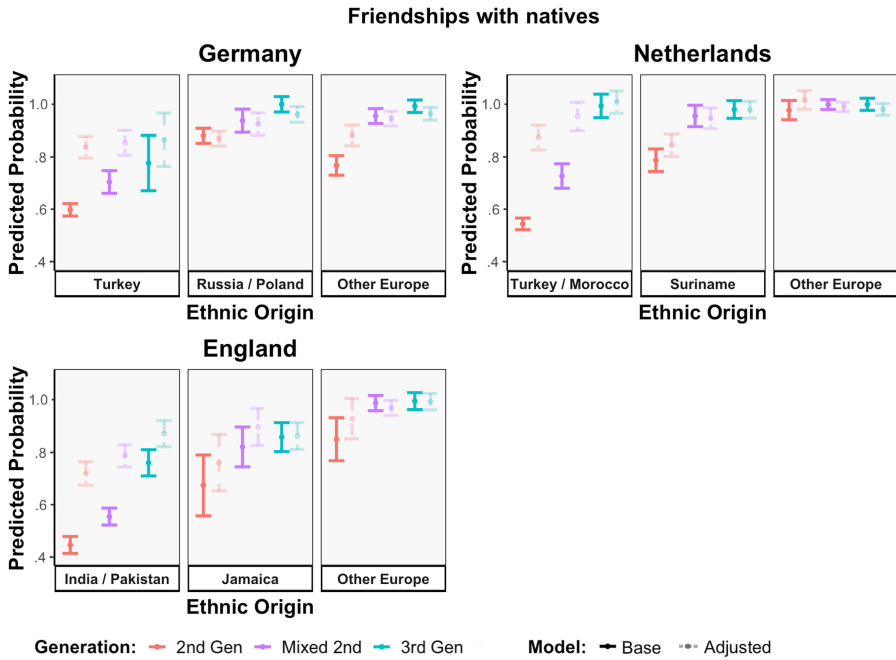
Friendships with natives

Fig. 2 Predicted probability of nominating ≥1 natives (fourth-plus generation) as best friends, by generation, ethnic origin, and country of residence. Predicted probabilities are based on estimates from separate logistic regressions for each country of residence using baseline and adjusted models reported in Table A3. Adjusted models account for parental SES, gender, religious affiliation, neighborhood, and classroom exposure to natives. Predicted probabilities from adjusted models (dashed bars) hold controls at their means or modal categories within each country. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

second generation range from below 50% to about 80%, while the predicted chances in the third generation are close to 100%; this difference in predicted probabilities is statistically significant. There are also statistically significant differences between the coefficients for the second and third generations for the relevant groups in the models on which Figure 2 is based (Table A3). The overall pattern we document so far is, thus, one of increasing probability of native–immigrant ties across generations.

However, there are two noteworthy exceptions to this trend: those of Turkish origin in Germany and those of Jamaican origin in England. Among these groups, the third generation is predicted to hold ties to natives at just below and above 80% chances, respectively, which is higher that the predicted chances of holding ties to natives at the second generation in base models (solid bars in Figure 2), but not adjusted models (dashed bars). In other words, in most groups, the tendency of stronger network inclusion in later generations goes beyond the extent we would expect on the basis of compositional change across generations. However, among Turkish-origin and Jamaican-origin students in Germany and England, respectively, we see limited intergenerational change once we adjust for compositional differences across generations (all generational changes appear to reflect compositional differences as expressed in the international stability of the adjusted estimate). Although we cannot elucidate this further, it theoretically could be because of relatively smaller sample sizes or stronger

ethnic homophily net of opportunity structure for interethnic friendships. Either way, there is ethnic heterogeneity in the extent of evidence supporting greater network inclusion in the third generation.

Finally, we note that there is some heterogeneity in ties to natives among the mixed second generation across countries and ethnic origins. Among most ethnic groups, the networks of the mixed second generation fall somewhere between that of the second and third generations, with two exceptions. First, among those of Turkish origin in Germany, the mixed second generation does not close the gap in network inclusion relative to the second generation after adjusting for covariates, which differs from the other groups under study. Second, in groups that display larger generational differences in levels of network inclusion (e.g., among European-origin immigrants, as well as the Dutch Surinamese), the mixed second generation already resembles the third generation in having a high propensity for ties to natives.

These nuances across destination countries and origin groups notwithstanding, such results are broadly in line with expectations from assimilation theory: the third generation is more likely than the second to nominate natives as best friends, and much of such cross-generational difference reflects different endowments in the resources allowing for network integration in the first place (e.g., higher parental SES). Moreover, the third generation is hardly different from natives in terms of network integration and effectively experiences a blending dynamic.

Friendship Ties With Coethnics

Friendships with coethnics is another, complementary aspect of networks that also helps capture the strength of ethnic boundaries. Figure 3 describes the predicted probabilities of naming at least one coethnic best friend among the subset of the sample for which coethnic networks are defined (see Table A4 for the models on which Figure 3 is based).

The baseline models in Figure 3 show that 69%, 71%, and 88% of second-generation German, Dutch, and English respondents, respectively, are predicted to have a coethnic best friend; in contrast, the proportions among the third generation are 14%, 6%, and 54%. Thus, for all three countries, coethnic friendships are less likely in the third generation than the second (the English case stands out with higher chances of coethnic friendships overall, which is likely related to the measurement of friendships using racial categories in the English survey).

For each country of residence and in each immigrant generation, there are significantly lower chances of coethnic best friendships in the third generation than the second. Adjusted models show that the drop in coethnic friendships in the third generation is not explained by generational differences in factors such as parental SES, neighborhood composition, and classroom composition in Germany and the Netherlands. In the mixed second generation, the chances of coethnic ties fall somewhere between those for the second and third generations; these estimates do not differ statistically from the second generation after adjusting for covariates. Overall, cross-generational differences are marked in the German and Dutch cases.[19] In England,

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[19] While 95% confidence intervals on predictions slightly overlap in the Dutch case (Figure 3), the difference between the third and second generations is statistically significant (Table A4).
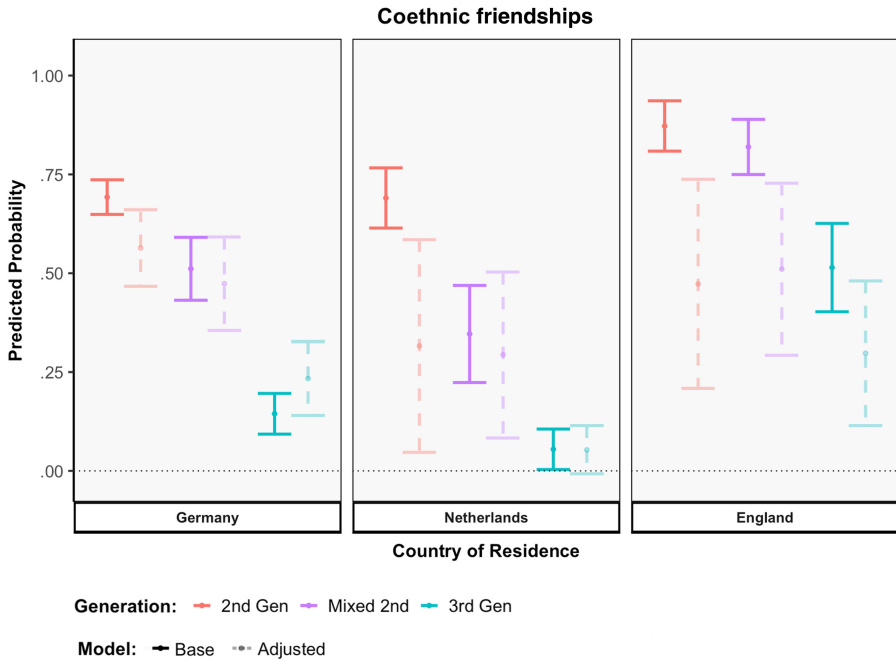
Fig. 3 Predicted probability of nominating ≥1 coethnics as best friends, by generation and country of residence. Predicted probabilities are based on estimates from separate logistic regressions for each country of residence using baseline and adjusted models reported in Table A4. Adjusted models account for parental SES, gender, religious affiliation, neighborhood, and classroom exposure to natives. Predicted probabilities from adjusted models (dashed bars) hold controls at their means or modal categories within each country. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

there are elevated probabilities to maintain friendship ties within racial groups even by the third generation.[20]

Figure 4 describes generational patterns of coethnic ties by ethnic origins among the ethnic groups for which coethnic friendships were measured in the survey (see Table A5 for the models on which Figure 4 is based, as well as relevant significance tests). Overall and at baseline, coethnic friendships are less common in the third generation than the second across ethnic groups. In the Netherlands, the third generation is significantly less likely than the second to have coethnic friendships among those of Turkish/Moroccan and Surinamese origin. In Germany, coethnic friendships among third-generation immigrants of Russian and Polish origin are significantly less likely than among their second-generation counterparts, even in adjusted models.

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[20] Large standard errors on predicted probabilities of coethnic friendships in the Dutch second generation and same-racial friendships in the English case are because of smaller sample sizes along with the choice to predict the outcome holding the religious affiliation variable to "no religion" (i.e., if all immigrants were to have the modal religious affiliation of their destination country as a whole). Because religion is very important for coethnic friendships (Table A4) and there are few nonreligious individuals in these generations and in these countries (Table A1), this rendered estimates imprecise. Holding religious affiliation to other values led to similar issues for other generational categories.
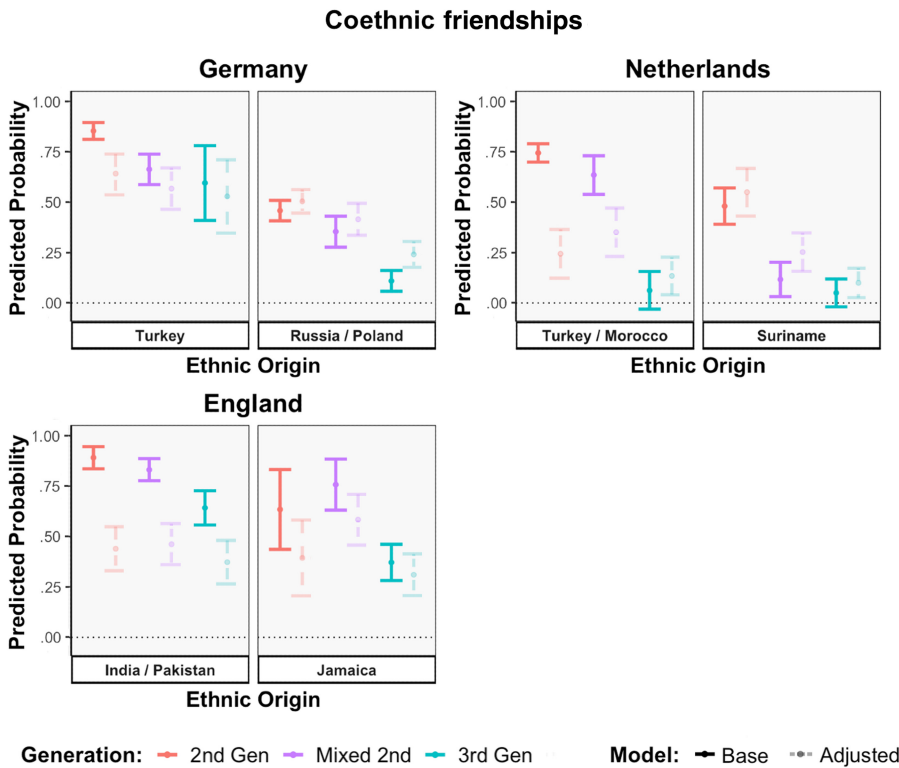
Coethnic friendships

Fig. 4 Predicted probability of nominating ≥1 coethnics as best friends, by generation, ethnic origin, and country of residence. Predicted probabilities are based on estimates from separate logistic regressions for each country of residence using baseline and adjusted models reported in Table A5. Adjusted models account for parental SES, gender, religious affiliation, neighborhood, and classroom exposure to natives. Predicted probabilities from adjusted models (dashed bars) hold controls at their means or modal categories within each country. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

However, among those of Turkish origin in Germany, Turkish and Moroccan origin in the Netherlands, and Indian/Pakistani and Jamaican origin in England, lower chances of ties to coethnics in the third generation than the second largely reflect compositional differences in SES and especially classroom exposure to natives.

Overall, results do not support the idea that immigrant-origin third-generation adolescents are on both sides of blurred ethnic boundaries, but rather that they "cross" over into the mainstream when it comes to network ties. In addition, the extent of boundary crossing in later generations exceeds what we would expect on the basis of compositional differences across generations. For most ethnic groups in our study, the third generation is significantly more likely than the second to hold ties to natives and less likely to hold ties to coethnics. However, for those of Turkish origin in Germany, we note a different pattern of cross-generational stability in the probability for both native and coethnic friendships, which suggests bright network boundaries.

Finally, there were a few mixed second-generation ethnic groups whose networks are best characterized by boundary blurring: among those of Indian/Pakistani origin in England and the Turkey/Morocco group in the Netherlands, the mixed second

generation is significantly more likely than the second to hold ties to natives, while maintaining coethnic networks. These results evoke non-zero-sum patterns of friendship ties and are consistent with the significance of mixed unions in reflecting much of the expansion of the "mainstream" and the blurring of ethnic boundaries among children of mixed descent (Alba et al. 2017; Alba and Foner 2015a).

National Identification

Our results reveal intergenerational progress, but also gaps in national identification between the immigrant-origin and native groups that remain across generations. Figure 5 shows how strongly each immigrant generation identifies with their country of residence; these findings are based on OLS regression models predicting identification on a four-point scale, in which higher values represent identifying more strongly with countries of residence (models and relevant significance tests are reported in Table A6). In all three study countries, there is a large gap in national identification between the second generation and natives.

In Germany and the Netherlands, the third generation is closer to natives but does not completely close the gap in identification. In these countries, although the grandchildren of immigrants identify more strongly with their country of residence than the second generation, they generally still do not do so as strongly as the native population. These patterns hold in both baseline and adjusted models, although in Germany, it is worth noting that identification at the second generation greatly increases after controlling for compositional factors. In England, although there is a smaller gap in identification between the second generation and the native population than in the other countries, the third generation shows little difference in national identification compared with their second-generation counterparts, evoking a pattern of blocked assimilation.[21]

The experiences of the mixed second generation are heterogeneous and depend on the resident country. In England, the mixed second generation has relatively similar levels of national identification as both the second and third generations. In Germany and the Netherlands, the national identification of the mixed second generation falls somewhere between that of the second and third. These patterns again support the idea of mixed unions as a hallmark of changes to ethnic boundaries among the children and grandchildren of immigrants.

Whether the third generation closes the gap in national identification relative to the second depends on both ethnic origin and country of residence. Figure 6 describes predicted levels of national identification by ethnic origin across ethnic groups (models and relevant significance tests are reported in Table A7).

Levels of national identification are similar in the third, mixed second, and second generations among those of Turkish origin in Germany, as well as those of Indian/Pakistani and Jamaican origin in England, to some extent. Among these groups, the

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[21] Tests in brackets in Table A6 show that the difference in the coefficients on the second and third generations is not statistically significant in England (so we do not have evidence to support the idea that the gap in national identification between natives and immigrants shrinks in later generations). We interpret this nonsignificance with caution because of small sample sizes. However, relatively small confidence intervals in Figure 5, as well as the magnitudes of coefficients, lend further support to our interpretation of results.
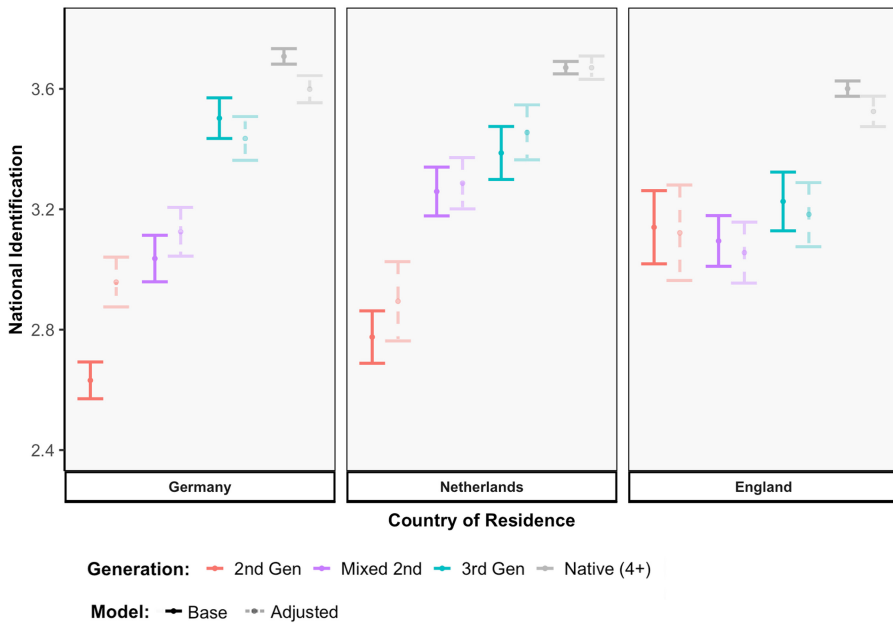
Fig. 5 Strength of national identification by generation and country of residence. Predicted strength of national identification—which is measured on a four-point scale where larger values indicate stronger national identification—is based on estimates from separate OLS regression models for each country of residence, which are reported in Table A6. Adjusted models account for parental SES status, gender, religious affiliation, neighborhood, and classroom exposure to natives. Predictions from adjusted models (dashed bars) hold controls at their means or modal categories within each country. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

gap in national identification with natives appears stagnant across immigrant generations. Although the failure to reject the null here should not lead to the conclusion of no generational difference in national identities among these groups (more research with a larger sample is needed), tendencies are already visible in our sample. Altogether, we note ethnic heterogeneity in the extent of evidence supporting greater national identification in the third generation. For example, in Germany, the average native respondent feels relatively close to "very strongly" German, whereas the average Turkish-origin respondent's identification falls between "not very strongly" and "fairly strongly" across all three generations. In England, the average Jamaican-origin respondent's identification falls just below "fairly strongly" British, but this does not change much in the three generations of Jamaican-origin respondents; native students feel close to "very strongly" British.

In contrast, those of European origin (e.g., Southern or Eastern Europe) have significantly higher levels of identification with their countries of residence in the third generation than in the second in all three destination countries. In other words, they progressively close the gap in national identification with natives in later generations. This also holds for major immigrant groups of non-European origin in the Netherlands: here, the third generation tends to feel as much (or almost as much) of a member of their country of residence as the native population does. Hence, while considering ethnic origins, changes in identification patterns across generations appear to vary across national contexts: they resemble a linear assimilation dynamic
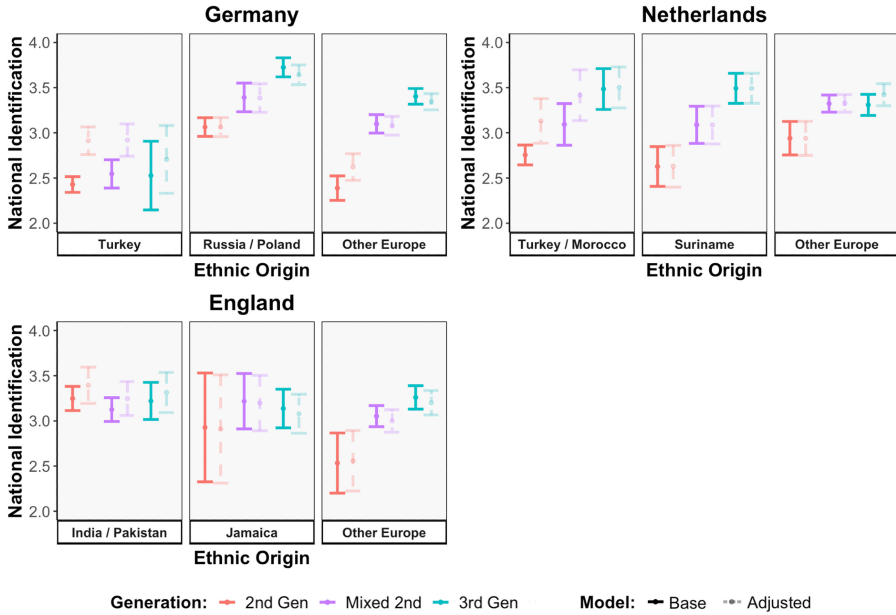
Fig. 6 Strength of national identification by generation, ethnic origin, and country of residence. Predicted strength of national identification—which is measured on a four-point scale where larger values indicate stronger national identification—is based on estimates from separate OLS regression models for each country of residence, which are reported in Table A7. Adjusted models account for parental SES, gender, religious affiliation, neighborhood, and classroom exposure to natives. Predicted probabilities from adjusted models (dashed bars) hold controls at their means or modal categories within each country. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

in the Netherlands but are closer to persistently bright boundaries in England and especially in Germany, with fewer intergenerational differences at the third generation among "low-status" origin groups (Alba and Holdaway 2013).

Ethnic Identification

Figure 7 summarizes how strongly each generation identifies with their ethnic origins; identification was measured on a five-point scale, in which higher levels represent stronger identification and a level of zero represents no ethnic identification.[22] Models and regressions on which Figure 7 is based are given in Table A8.

In each country, levels of coethnic identification are low in the third generation, middling in the mixed second, and highest in the second. Among the fourth-plus generation, levels of ethnic identification are close to but slightly above zero, indicating that few among the native population identify with an ethnic group other than the native majority group.

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[22] In sensitivity analyses that define ethnic identification on a four-point scale instead of a five-point scale (dropping those who do not identify with an ethnic minority group), results are overall similar, although the Dutch case stands out even more strongly (Figures A3 and A4).
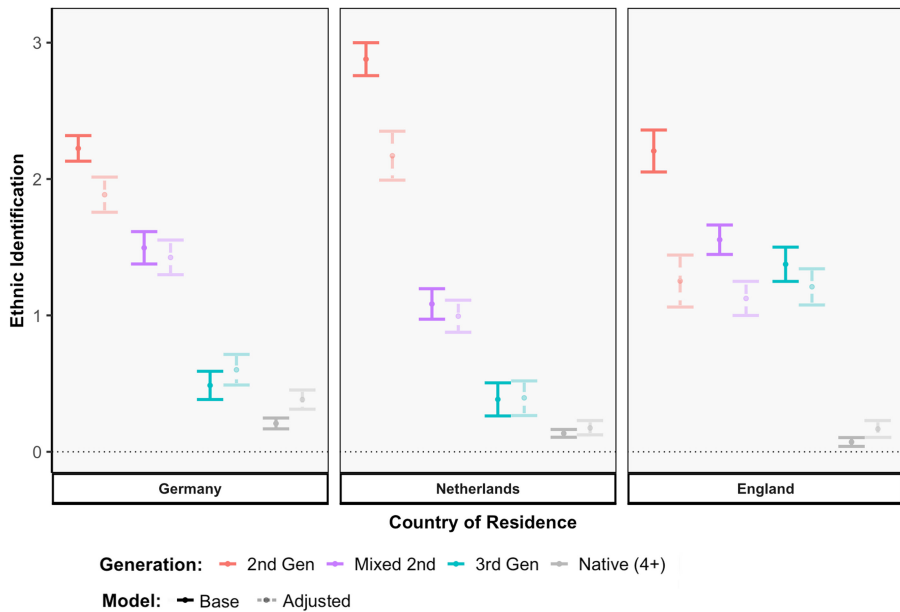
Fig. 7 Strength of ethnic identification by generation and country of residence. Predicted strength of ethnic identification—which is measured on a five-point scale where a value of 0 indicates no ethnic identification and a value of 1–4 indicates strength of main ethnic minority identity, with larger values indicating stronger identification—is based on estimates from separate OLS regression models for each country of residence, which are reported in Table A8. Adjusted models account for parental SES, gender, religious affiliation, neighborhood, and classroom exposure to natives. Predictions from adjusted models (dashed bars) hold controls at their means or modal categories within each country. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

In addition to the overall trends of weakened ethnic identification across generations, two other trends stand out. First, the baseline patterns we observe are robust to the inclusion of control covariates. This suggests that cross-generational differences in ethnic identification do not simply reflect differences in social resources or religious orientation across generations. Second, we note cross-country variation: although there are strong assimilatory trends in Germany and the Netherlands in terms of weakened ethnic identification in later generations, levels of ethnic identification are of middling strength in all three generations in England. This is especially true when adjusting for covariates such as SES and religion.

Figure 8 summarizes generational differences in ethnic identification by ethnic origin (models and relevant significance tests are reported in Table A9). In Germany, the tendency of weakened ethnic identification in the third generation appears among immigrants of European but not Turkish origin. In contrast, for all ethnic groups studied in the Dutch context, ethnic identification is weaker in the mixed second and third generations than in the second. This pattern of linear assimilation also holds once we adjust for relevant covariates. By contrast, generational patterns in the strength of ethnic identification do not show weakening ethnic identification in later generations among major ethnic groups in England, such as those of Indian/Pakistani and Jamaican origin. In fact, after adjusting for differences in
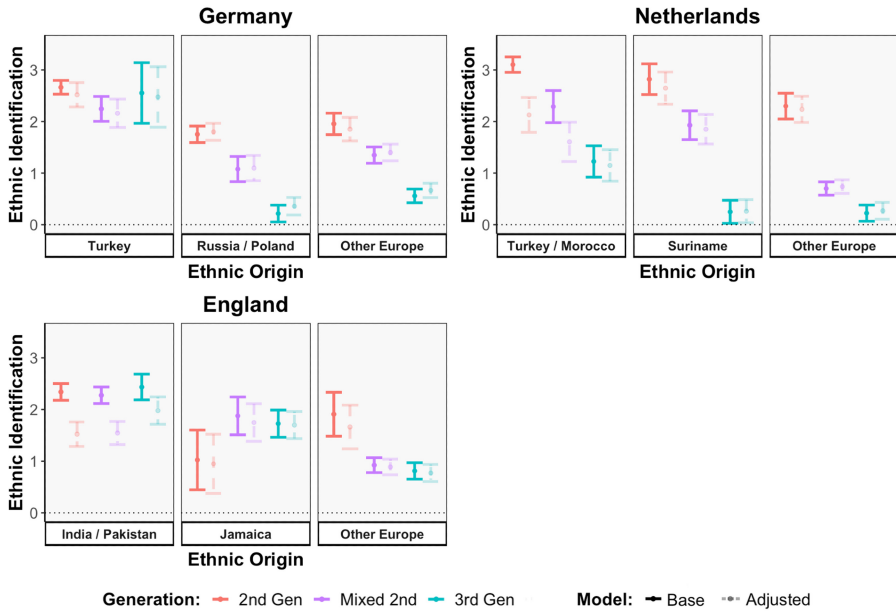
Fig. 8 Strength of ethnic identification by generation, ethnic origin, and country of residence. Predicted strength of ethnic identification—which is measured on a five-point scale where a value of 0 indicates no ethnic identification and a value of 1–4 indicates strength of main ethnic minority identity, with larger values indicating stronger identification—is based on estimates from separate OLS regression models for each country of residence, which are reported in Table A9. Adjusted models account for parental SES, gender, religious affiliation, neighborhood, and classroom exposure to natives. Predicted probabilities from adjusted models (dashed bars) hold controls at their means or modal categories within each country. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

SES, religion, and exposure to natives across generations, third-generation individuals from those ethnic groups identify *more* strongly with their ethnic origins than their second-generation counterparts (although these differences are not statistically significant among those of Indian/Pakistani origin).

Comparisons of national and ethnic identification between the third and second generations underscore context-specific patterns in the salience of ethnic boundaries. Among the third generation in the Netherlands, the third generation of Russian/Polish origin in Germany, as well as the third generation of other European origin in Germany and England, we observe what resembles a zero-sum relationship between *increasingly stronger* national and *increasingly weaker* ethnic identification compared with the second generation. These patterns are consistent with the idea of boundary crossing, whereby it is difficult to simultaneously belong in native and immigrant social worlds (Alba 2005:24). However, among the third generation of Turkish origin in Germany and of Indian/Pakistani and Jamaican origin in England, we note that neither national nor ethnic identification changes much across generations. National identification remains low while ethnic identification remains at moderate levels across generations, evoking bright boundaries in the German case.

Discussion and Conclusion

Although migration scholars have long considered the third generation a litmus test of assimilation, there are few empirical studies to date on the "new" third generation and fewer still that do not exclusively focus on socioeconomic attainment. Here, we studied ethnic boundaries in networks and identities among the new third generation in Western Europe. Specifically, we analyzed a dataset of young adolescents in three Western European countries (Germany, the Netherlands, and England) to offer a glimpse at differences in the assimilation of the third generation relative to the second.

Four core dynamics emerge from our analyses. First, we observe increased network inclusion within natives' friendship networks among third-generation adolescents relative to their second-generation counterparts. In the third generation, immigrant–native friendship ties are very common, and native–immigrant friendship segregation nearly disappears. For the most part, this increase in network inclusion comes alongside weakened coethnic ties relative to the second generation. This speaks to a version of assimilation—defined as the "decline of an ethnic distinction" over generations (Alba and Nee 2003:11)—that involves "boundary crossing" by the third generation into the mainstream. For those of Turkish origin in Germany and of Jamaican origin in England, expanded ties to natives and diminished ties to coethnics in the third generation are more ambiguous and are accounted for by change in sociodemographics influencing tie formation across generation. Yet for the other ethnic groups, patterns of boundary crossing in later generations are robust to sociodemographic differences across generations. Overall, our results do not support the idea that immigrant-origin third-generation adolescents straddle ethnic boundaries by keeping one foot in each social world (Wimmer 2013:7–10). Rather, they show attachments to social worlds that appear to be zero-sum: the grandchildren of immigrants enter mainstream networks while simultaneously retreating from ties with their ethnic origin group.

Second, we document a dominant trend of assimilation in the form of boundary crossing when it comes to cultural identities, albeit a more nuanced one than in the case of networks. In terms of broad differences across generations and in some ethnic groups, we see a classic assimilation trend of increasing national identification and decreasing ethnic identification across generations. Yet in other cases, such as among the largest immigrant groups in England and Turkish-origin adolescents in Germany, we observe that neither national nor ethnic identifications differ much between the second and third generations. In conjunction with the foregoing results, this implies that third-generation adolescents from these groups do not convert increased network inclusion into associated trends in identification (i.e., higher national identification and lower ethnic identification). Past research has linked ethnic homophily to patterns of ethnic (Leszczensky and Pink 2019) and national identification (Kruse and Kroneberg 2019), albeit with a cautious interpretation of a causal relationship between identification and friendship. Yet our findings suggest a decoupling between networks and identification not clearly foreseen in theories of ethnic boundary formation (Alba 2005; Wimmer 2013). Relatively stagnant generational patterns of identities despite network inclusion at the third generation among some origin groups are noteworthy and warrant further research.

Third, and relatedly, generational differences in assimilation vary by origin group and destination country. The Dutch case stands out as a clear story of boundary crossing at the third generation, with relatively comparable patterns across ethnic minorities. We speculate this Dutch exception may be because of the strength of the well-documented "integration discourse" that has permeated Dutch society since the late 1990s—starting around or before when most of our respondents would have been born (Slootman and Duyvendak 2015). Indeed, the strong assimilatory demands on ethnic minorities as a part of this discourse could have later resulted in patterns of de-ethnicized networks and identities, such as what we uncovered. Such a discourse, however, does not explain high rates of ancestral mixedness at the grandparental generation in the Netherlands, which may also be an important ingredient in the assimilation trend in that national context. In Germany, we observe bifurcated or segmented patterns of blocked assimilation in terms of national and ethnic identity for the Turkish-origin third generation, in contrast to clearer patterns of weakening ethnic identification across generations among the Russian/Polish-origin and other European-origin groups. Meanwhile, the English case stands out because of moderate levels of both national and ethnic identification at the second generation (which suggests initially blurrier boundaries than in the other countries), but few differences across generations, which contradicts an assimilation story. One avenue to shed light on blocked assimilation patterns may lie in the study of discrimination and the disaffiliation from the mainstream it may engender—as theorized in the rejection–identification model in the case of African Americans, for instance (Branscombe et al. 1999). Our attempts to unpack these patterns were limited by data constraints, such as the excessively generic questions on feelings of discrimination.

Fourth, we identify a gradient in terms of mixed descent for several outcomes (Alba and Foner 2015a). The mixed second generation is of particular interest because they are the children of both immigrants and native populations and may thus straddle the line between different social worlds. This generation is in between the second and third generations in terms of their networks and identification patterns. Our results do not suggest that mixedness is associated with blurry boundaries and an ability for dual belonging, as surmised by Alba and colleagues (Alba 2005; Alba et al. 2017; Alba and Foner 2015a). Instead, we locate the mixed second generation at an earlier stage of the same process of boundary crossing as the third generation (Kalmijn 2015). Because of the limited statistical power in the current study, future studies are needed to understand the role of mixedness in the third generation. Although our results are only a first step toward understanding assimilation among mixed and later generations, mixed (native–immigrant) unions appear endogenous to a larger process of intergenerational boundary crossing—*not* boundary blurring (Alba 2005; Alba et al. 2017). Nevertheless, more research is needed regarding the significance of mixed ancestry at the third generation. Future work should aim at better understanding how immigrant origins matter in the subjective experience of belonging and networks, especially among those with only one immigrant grandparent.

This study has several limitations. Our synthetic generations approach of comparing the contemporaneous second and third generations (rather than comparing second-generation parents with their third-generation children) warrants further dis-

cussion. The generational differences we document represent the total of not only assimilation-related changes between parents and children but also cohort differences, given that individuals making up our samples are of similar age. Thus, we cannot by design disentangle these cohort effects from the assimilation occurring through intergenerational change. In addition, although we chose the adolescent population here to be able to assess social inclusion and identification of the third generation in Europe, our results require confirmation among adults. During adolescence, peer influence becomes increasingly important and social attitudes, identities, and friendships with natives are in flux (Zhao 2023).

Relatedly, and despite its unique breadth, the CILS4EU nevertheless features a rather limited subsample of third-generation individuals, and one that is over a decade old now. Although it remains the best data source to study networks and identities among the grandchildren of immigrants, we point to the need for new data sources to tackle this research problem (Duncan and Trejo 2018; Jiménez et al. 2018; Tran 2018). Longitudinal data collection efforts that survey a broad range of assimilation outcomes among both second-generation adults and their third-generation children at a comparable age would be particularly desirable. A more feasible possibility in the near term is to simultaneously survey generations in a linked family design, whereby interviews take place with grandparents, parents, and grandchildren from the same family. Registry data also allow for efficient within-family linkages, but these types of data are not consistently available across European countries and typically do not allow for the study of identity-related and relational aspects of assimilation.

We hope our results will help advance a holistic view of assimilation and ethnic boundaries in Western Europe—one that can, in turn, help inform future demographic scholarship. As the third generation reaches adulthood, it will be crucial to further analyze the linkages between structural, relational, and cultural domains, and to possibly revisit the causal relationships that are implicit in past research (Drouhot forthcoming; Drouhot and Nee 2019; Schachter 2016). For instance, although many of our results support the idea that variation in network inclusion and identification co-occur, patterns of blocked identification despite network inclusion in England and among those of Turkish origin in Germany clearly beg the question of such links. Much past theorizing on assimilation has implicitly assumed that larger processes of immigrant social mobility are converted into identification and belonging with natives (Drouhot forthcoming; Gans 2007; Schachter 2016). Future studies should explore the mechanisms involved in the (non)conversion of attainment in certain domains (e.g., social networks, labor market positions) into blending dynamics within other domains (e.g., identity and belonging). This may well hold a key to understanding the processes by which immigrants, their children, and now their grandchildren participate in expanding the circles of community in nation-states that have also become *de facto* migration societies. ■

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